

THE DETERMINANTS OF THE POLISH PRESIDENCY IN THE EU – 2011

ABSTRACT

Chairing the Council of the European Union underlines the importance of the state in integrated Europe. However, the recent amendments to the Treaty have given rise to significant changes in the functioning of this institution. Our understanding of this concept as well as of its functions and methods has changed. This is particularly important for Poland, which in July 2011 will take over the half year presidency. The new conditions of operation pose both opportunities and challenges. This article presents the model of the Presidency and its role both before the Treaty of Lisbon and immediately after it. It also discusses the ability of countries holding presidency, especially Poland, to handle these changes. The author examines the conditions, strengths and weaknesses of Poland with respect to exercising this function.

Keywords: presidency, Treaty of Lisbon, Poland in the European Union, European integration

ON JULY, 2011, Poland will take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It is an opportunity, but also a great challenge in terms of politics, logistics and culture. A rich tradition of presidencies in the EU structures shows that their character varied, from being strongly political to only administrative. Each of presidencies, which will also be the case of the Polish one, wanted to bequeath something concrete and visible to future Europe. What will definitely make the Polish presidency different from the presidencies of Germany, France,

Belgium and other “old” member states of the EU is not only the fact that as the Treaty of Lisbon came into force the formal model of presidency has changed, but also the fact that Poland will exercise this function for the first time ever. The new legal situation may be both an advantage and a great challenge. Many mechanisms are still in the development phase. Minister Mikołaj Dowgielewicz estimates that it may even take a few years for some of them to become fully established.¹ This fact may be of an extremely high value for Poland as it makes it possible to form the shape of certain instruments of the European Union in the 21st century.

Moreover, we must become aware of the fact that Poland will take over the presidency in the EU as the first country in a trio of states alongside Denmark and Cyprus, thus, theoretically, for the period of eighteen months. This assumption should determine the development of the priorities of the Polish presidency. According to T.G. Gross, it is a chance for Poland to promote its image as an active and effective country.² On the other hand, there are opinions that it is an overstatement to say that owing to holding the presidency Poland will have a remarkable chance to strengthen the position of the leader in the EU. There is no doubt that it will be a very important instrument of reinforcing Poland’s position in integrated Europe and the opportunity for the development of a more effective integration policy, which should not be wasted.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to analyse the Polish conditions and preparations for holding the presidency of the European Union, with particular emphasis on the changes brought by the Treaty of Lisbon.

PRESIDENCY BEFORE AND AFTER THE TREATY OF LISBON

Presidency has been part of the integration process of the European Union from the very beginning. Its importance has continually grown, although only a few provisions in the Treaties themselves directly referred to it. The increasing significance of the presidency might have resulted from the fact that in the 1960s the active “founding fathers” withdrew from a large part of their activities in the Communities. It helped to focus attention on the presidency, as a form of leadership in

¹ M. Dowgielewicz, *Pozycja Polski po wejściu w życie Traktatu Lizbońskiego*, “Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 2010, no. 2, p. 7.

² T.G. Gross, *Ocena rządowego programu przygotowań przewodnictwa w UE. Brief Programowy Instytutu Kościuszki*, Kraków (November 2009), p. 2.

the European Community.³ As early as in the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community we could read that the leadership in the Council, i.e. the presidency, shall be held by member states rotationally, in the alphabetical order for the period of three months.⁴ This period was extended to six months in the Treaty of Rome (art. 146).⁵ The Treaty establishing the European Community (art. 204) stipulated that such a state would convene and chair meetings of the Council, initiate a decision-making process on the legislative and political issues, as well as reach a compromise in case of discrepancies among member states. These tasks were extended to the function of representing the European Union in the field of foreign and defence policy at international conferences and meetings.⁶ Moreover, the Council's Rules of Procedure specified that the Presidency would organise meetings of various committees and working parties.⁷ Such a big number of tasks caused that a country holding the presidency needed a staff of people, who were perfectly trained in different fields so that they could perform and improve specific actions. It is one of the reasons for which from the very beginning of the presidency there have been demands that its form should be changed. One of the most important documents which contained such claims was the Tindemans Report from the 1970s. in which the author proposed that the presidency be extended to one year in order to strengthen the importance of this institution.⁸ However, it appeared to be impossible to be accepted. The Treaty of Lisbon introduced fundamental changes, but they were far from original ideas. Some countries suggested the introduction of group presidency, which would be composed of more countries, at the same time extending its period. Others proposed that the time of holding or waiting for the EU leadership should be dependent on the size of a country. The compromise in the Treaty of Lisbon only partly settled this issue,

³ M. Zuber, *Rola Prezydencji Rady Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2010, p. 28.

⁴ „Art. 27: The office of President shall be held for a term of three months by each member of the Council in turn, in alphabetical order of the Member States.” The Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, 1951.

⁵ „Art. 146: The office of President shall be exercised for a term of six months by each member of the Council in rotation according to the alphabetical order of the Member States.” The Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, 1957.

⁶ *Ustrój Unii Europejskiej i ustroje państw członkowskich*, P. Sarnecki (ed.), Warszawa 2007, p. 49.

⁷ Council Decision of 22 March 2004 adopting the Council's Rules of Procedure (2004/338/WE, Euratom), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:106:0022:0045:EN:PDF>, accessed 11.08.2010.

⁸ L. Tindemans, Report on European Union (29 December 1975), http://www.ena.lu/report_european_union_29_december_1975-2-16956, accessed 8.03.2011.

by appointing a trio without clear authority and specified responsibilities. Another extremely important change was the establishment of two new institutions, the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.⁹ Both institutions have considerably reduced the competence of the country presiding the Council. In the long run, it may lead to an increase in the level of citizens' distrust of the European Union, which seems to be keen on the reduction of the role and importance of member states in the unified structure.¹⁰ The support for the proposed concepts obviously depended on the integration model backed by specific countries. As a result of these changes, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced the model of the EU presidency, which combines rotational leadership of member states and the establishment of new institutions of a permanent character, which would partly take over its functions.¹¹ The main aim of the appointment of the so-called President of the European Union and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, apart from extending the term of office and strengthening the role of these positions, was to give these posts a European rather than a national mandate, which is strongly dependent on the country currently presiding the Council.¹²

What is of utmost importance is the change in the way the institution of presidency is defined. In order to recognize this difference, we need to examine this notion as stipulated in the treaties before and after Lisbon. The Treaty on European Union, art.4, stipulates that "(...) the European Council shall meet at least twice a year, under the chairmanship of the Head of State or Government of the Member State which holds the Presidency of the Council."¹³ This provision implies that presidency is an institution, whereas chairmanship is an activity performed by a specific person – the head of state or government. This situation looks different in the Treaty of Lisbon. The presidency is assigned to a group of three countries, while a chairperson is no longer an individual, but the country which currently holds the presidency. Thus, it is a shift from the model of a single-person chairman-

⁹ K. Smyk, *Prezydencja w Traktacie z Lizbony: Główne postanowienia i wnioski dla Polski*, [in:] *Biuletyn Analiz UKIE, Prezydencja Polski w Unii Europejskiej – 2011 r.*, UKIE. Departament Analiz i Strategii, Warszawa 2009, p. 27.

¹⁰ J. Barcz, *Polska w systemie instytucjonalnym nowej UE*, "Sprawy Międzynarodowe" 2010, no. 2, p. 49.

¹¹ K. Smyk, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

¹² K.D.Borchardt, *The ABC of the European Union law*, Luxembourg 2010, p. 53.

¹³ The Treaty of the European Union, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:321E:0001:0331:EN:pdf>, accessed 11.08.2010.

ship to a group one.¹⁴ Previously, the head of state or government which holds the presidency could effectively affect the debate at the European Council's meetings for half a year. Now, the emphasis is on efficient administration. To sum up, the Treaty of Lisbon strongly reduced the importance of the presidency, by officially separating it from the European Council and linking it directly with the Council of the European Union.

Another important change concerned the composition of the Council. Before the Treaty of Lisbon the Council met in nine different functional configurations. Each of them was headed by the minister of the country which currently held the presidency.¹⁵ After the recent treaty amendments the General Affairs and External Relations Council was divided into the General Affairs Council and the Foreign Affairs Council, thus increasing the number of possible Council's formations to ten.

However, for the sake of this article it is a lot more important that the minister of the presiding country does not chair the Foreign Affairs Council. Art. 16, par. 9, of the Treaty on European Union stipulates that the Presidency of Council configurations, other than that of Foreign Affairs, shall be held by Member State representatives in the Council on the basis of equal rotation, in accordance with the conditions established in accordance with Article 236 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.¹⁶ It is the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy that is responsible for external relations. Nevertheless, the other Council configurations are still headed by the ministers of the country which holds the presidency.¹⁶ However, the fact that the head of the presiding state no longer chairs the meetings of the European Council and the its Minister of Foreign Affairs does not head the Foreign Affairs Council is an obvious proof of the reduced role of this institution. It is enough to examine the priorities of previous presidencies to find out that many of them actually concerned the issues of foreign policy (table 1). Hence, the country which holds the presidency in the Council of the European Union, the President of the European Council and

¹⁴ A. Jaskulski, *Struktura i funkcje prezydencji w Radzie Unii Europejskiej*, [in:] *Przewodnictwo państwa w Radzie Unii Europejskiej – doświadczenia partnerów, propozycje dla Polski*, Z. Czachór, M. Tomaszuk (eds.), Poznań 2009, p. 48.

¹⁵ The Council's configurations from before Lisbon: the General Affairs and External Relations Council, Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin), the Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA), the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), the Competitiveness Council, the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, the Environment Council, and the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council.

¹⁶ K.D.Rochardt, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will have to agree on new methods of procedure in this field.

Table 1. An overview of priorities of selected Presidencies

Country	Time of presidency	Principal priorities
France	July – December 2008	1. Energy and climate 2. Issues of population migrations 3. Agriculture 4. Security and defence
Czech Republic	January – June 2009	1. Economy 2. Energetics 3. The European Union in the world
Sweden	July – December 2009	1. Economy and employment 2. Climate 3. The judiciary and internal affairs 4. The EU's strategy for the Baltic Sea 5. The EU, its neighbourhood and the world 6. The new Parliament, the Commission and the Treaty of Lisbon
Spain	January – June 2010	1. The full and effective implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon 2. Strengthening the recovery of the European economy 3. Strengthening the EU's presence and its influence in the new international scenario 4. Putting European citizens at the heart of the Union's policies – the citizen's rights
Belgium	July – December 2010	1. The battle with the economic crisis 2. Environmental protection 3. Building the open and safe European Union 4. Building a cohesive social model 5. Efforts towards the EU's common foreign policy
Poland – initial priorities	July – December 2011	1. New EU financial framework 2014–2020 2. Strengthening of the EU internal market 3. Eastern Partnership 4. EU energetic sector (solidarity and competitiveness) 5. Cooperation in the field of defence 6. Knowledge based economy

Source: Self-study based on data: Sz. Ruman, *Doświadczenia wybranych państw w zakresie przygotowań do prezydencji w Radzie UE*, „Analizy. Biuro Analiz Sejmowych” 2009, no. 15 and *Wstępna lista priorytetów polskiego przewodnictwa w Radzie Unii Europejskiej w II połowie 2011 r.*, KPRM, Warszawa, 21.07.2010.

As regards extending the period of presidency, we should refer to the *Declaration annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon*, which says that “The Presidency of the Council, with the exception of the Foreign Affairs configuration, shall be held by pre-

established groups of three Member States for a period of 18 months. The groups shall be made up on a basis of equal rotation among the Member States, taking into account their diversity and geographical balance within the Union.¹⁷ Such solution means, however, that each country will in fact chair the European Union every thirteen and a half years, given the present number of member states. Therefore, we can definitely say that the idea of shortening the waiting time for the presidency has failed.¹⁸ The Treaty of Lisbon did not also clarify the issue of chairing working parties and the role of the head of state or government of the country which holds the presidency in a given half year.¹⁹ A very brief description of the competences which they may have causes that they can act both in a very wide and narrow scope.

To sum up, as a result of the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, the basic tasks of the presidency include the administration and coordinating the Council's work. Therefore, the presidency will continue to shape the Council's agenda, gaining an opportunity for promoting selected initiatives. It is especially important from the point of view of small member states, which owing to this, get the chance of appearing on the international arena and speaking the voice of the whole Union.²⁰ The tasks of the presidency will also include seeking a compromise between member states in case any disagreements arise.²¹ Today, it is difficult to determine the role of the presidency in the EU. It seems that the development of its form is one of the principal tasks of the countries which will hold it in the near future.

MODELS OF PRESIDENCY

A long-standing practice of the Union's presidencies brought a number of different models of this institution in the literature on the subject. The most widely discussed one divides the presidency into the national and the Brussels one. In the first approach it is the capital city of the presiding country that is the management centre. It is here where all logistical and content-related activities are undertaken.

¹⁷ Declarations annexed to the Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference which adopted the Treaty of Lisbon, December 13, 2007. Declaration no. 9, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0335:0360:EN:PDF>, accessed 1.08.2010.

¹⁸ K. Smyk, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 32.

²⁰ K.D. Rochardt, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

²¹ K. Smyk, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

The Permanent Representation in Brussels is only one of executive instruments. In the Brussels model, in turn, it is the Representation of a given country in Brussels that plays the role of the strategic centre. A specialized group of people is responsible for the logistics of operations and solves all problems, following consultations with state authorities. Experience shows that Brussels presidencies work better. It may result from the fact that they are better organized in technical terms. Nevertheless, it is enough to recall the last presidency of France and the role of President Sarkozy to say that technical issues are not always the most important. It should be remembered, however, that, in practice, clearly defined models are rare. Mixed models are the most common. The Polish government also declares its willingness to choose this type of model. *The Programme of the Preparations of the Republic of Poland for Taking Over and Holding the Presidency in the Council of the European Union*, adopted by the Council of Ministers on January 13, 2009, in attachment 4 says that on the basis of talks and gathered data: “The Office of the Committee for European Integration proposes that the concept of a mixed system should be adopted. Out of the total number of 216 identified formations of the EU Council’s preparatory bodies, as regards 113 of them, government departments recognize no need for running working parties from Brussels; in case of 70, government departments indicated the need for handling them by an expert based in Brussels.”²² The most important thing in the mixed model appears to be the finding of an effective method of communication between the domestic head office and the Representation in Brussels.²³ However, it seems that this division is no longer sufficient after the changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. According to its provisions, the presidency is held by a trio of countries. Therefore, the efficient model of the presidency, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, should take this level into consideration, both in the Brussels model and the national one. It may turn out that some presiding countries will hold the leadership on their own, and meeting within the framework of the Trio will be obligatory rather than useful. A good example of unsuccessful coordination is the lack of cooperation between the French and Czech governments during their consecutive presidencies.²⁴ On

²² Zał. nr 4: Informacja na temat sposobu obsługi organów przygotowawczych Rady Unii Europejskiej – określenie modelu prezydencji polskiej w 2011 r., [in:] *Program Przygotowań Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej do Objęcia i Sprawowania Przewodnictwa w Radzie Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa (January 13, 2009), p. 1.

²³ A. Jaskulski, op.cit., p. 49.

²⁴ *Prezydencja grupowa UE: doświadczenia z lat 2007–2009*, L. Jesień, R. Kołatek (eds.), “Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny” 2010, no. 3, p. 40.

the other hand, the creators of the Treaty of Lisbon intended to establish the platform for cooperation, mutual support and developing the directions of the EU's policy. A good example here is the Slovenian presidency, which "used" specialists of the German administration, the General Secretariat and the European Commission.²⁵ Thus, the presidency may be managed both from Brussels, through the cooperation of its Representations, or from the capital cities of the Trio countries. In the latter approach it may be a very difficult task, given the fact that such presidencies are usually political. Moreover, there may be situations, in which one or two countries of the Trio will follow the Brussels models, while the others will choose the national one. The resulting model might be referred to as "hybrid presidency." This "hybridity" is additionally reinforced by an unspecified role of the head of government of the presiding country. A possible solution to this situation might be to choose only the Brussels model of holding the presidency. All the activities would be coordinated by the Representation of a given country in Brussels, which would find it a lot easier to consult and cooperate with other Union institutions and Representations of member states. At present, given strong leadership ambitions of some EU countries, this idea does not seem plausible.

THE MEANING OF PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES

The EU presidency is intrinsically associated with formulating and implementing clearly defined priorities by the presiding country. They may be referred to as the keywords specific to the country which chairs the Council. Moreover, they help to evaluate the efficiency of a given country's actions in the Council. For example, the Greek presidency of 2003 is associated with Poland's signing the Accession Treaty, whereas the German and Portuguese presidencies are associated with the Treaty of Lisbon. One must also be aware that the period of the presidency in the European Union should be preceded by a few years of preparations rather than the time for presenting proposals. There is too little time for this. What is more, the process of preparations for the presidency seems to be far more important than the time of actual chairmanship, which seems to be a kind of splendour and the crowning of the presiding country's efforts. The presidency, which one cannot forget, is a specific instrument of member states' foreign policy. It is known that each state has its national interests, the implementation of which it must secure

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

through its membership in the EU, and the presidency is one of the methods. While chairing the Council, a given country becomes more visible in the whole Union, or even outside the EU. Thanks to available mechanisms, it exerts significant influence on what is currently being discussed and implemented. Minister Dowgielewicz notes that the presidency will make it possible for Poland to present “the priorities of Polish policy, emphasize its key areas and present its own ideas and initiatives”²⁶ on the EU forum. One disadvantage is the fact it lasts only six months. Especially if a given country, like Poland, holds the presidency in the EU in the second half of a year, when additional breaks shorten this time even more. The next chance will come in thirteen years. Thus, each country which wants to achieve something while presiding the Council faces an enormous challenge. All the more so because the priorities do not have to meet the expectations of this country, but should be perceived as relevant for the whole Community. However, in order to combine those two interest areas, it is believed that the priorities should meet two principal criteria: desirability and feasibility. The criterion of desirability requires choosing such priorities which will first of all appear to be useful for the whole Union, will promote its goals and values and correspond to the current problems and challenges, and at the same time will implement the national interests of a given member state. It must be remembered that the key role of the country holding the presidency is to be an “impartial mediator.”²⁷ The presidency should serve the whole European Union rather than a single country.²⁸ On the one hand, it gives a lot of opportunities, but, on the other hand, it is a constraint. In case controversial issues arise, the presiding country should make efforts towards settling them rather than deepening them. This role of Poland may be very important in discussing issues connected with, e.g. the EU’s New Financial Framework or the 2012 budget. In case there is a conflict of interest, Poland will have to propose solutions which will bring benefit not only to itself, but also to the other member states. It may also have to give up some of its own guidelines in order to reach a compromise. It is obviously a matter of proper preparation and actions.

²⁶ M. Dowgielewicz, *Dlaczego Prezydencja to szansa i wyzwanie dla Polski?*, <http://www.prezydencjaue.gov.pl/polskie-przygotowania-do-prezydencji>, accessed 11.08.2010.

²⁷ *Dobór priorytetów przez państwa członkowskie sprawujące przewodnictwo w Radzie UE w latach 2002–2008. Wnioski dla Polski*, M. Jatczak, B. Słowińska (eds.), [in:] *Biuletyn Analiz UKIE...*, pp. 52–53.

²⁸ S.M. Grochalski, *Ewolucja instytucji Prezydencji od traktatów powołujących Wspólnoty do Traktatu Lizbońskiego*, [in:] *2011 Polska Prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej*, R. Riedel, P. Klimontowski (eds.), Opole 2010, p. 42.

Apart from the issues connected with establishing the priorities of the presidency according to the proposed criteria, another important factor is their number. As the presidency period is very short, there is no point setting too many goals as it may only weaken the efficiency of a given country, which could then be perceived as unable to accomplish all its objectives. Most countries decide to adopt from four to six priorities.²⁹

This strategy depends on a number of determinants. They are worth closer examination. First of all, each country which begins to prepare for presiding the European Union has to know exactly what is currently happening in its structures. It needs to monitor them closely in advance. This thorough analysis helps to predict and establish the scope of further actions that a given country will be able to undertake in a specific area so that it would not waste time trying to implement unfeasible projects. All the more so because, apart from carrying out the objectives established by the government of a given country, the presidency fulfils a number of other technical and administrative functions.

Another important factor is the political situation in the country which is going to hold the presidency. If we look at the example of the Czech Republic, we will see that the collapse of the government influenced the evaluation of that presidency. Elections are often an obstacle. An electoral campaign and political change may lead to turbulence and disturb the decision-making process regarding the European policy. Thus, each country must find a way of dealing with such a situation. Another extremely important factor is the international situation, the example of which might be the present events in Africa. They may dominate discussions at the Union's summits. In today's globalized world, many decisions or events require fast reaction from EU countries or institutions. Although the Treaty of Lisbon introduced the position of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, his or her role has not been fully shaped yet, so the countries which hold the presidency will be certainly able to take advantage of this opportunity. Another problem is a threat of unpredictable crisis situations in the European Union and the world. Each country holding the presidency must be perfectly prepared for such events, because they often determine the evaluation of a given presidency.

The Programme of the Preparations of the Republic of Poland for Taking Over and Holding the Presidency in the Council of the European Union (January 13, 2009) specifies that Poland is going to establish priorities within three or four levels. As

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 57.

regards the key interest areas of the whole Union, they will be the New Financial Framework, including the Common Agricultural Policy and the Baltic Sea Strategy. The second level, i.e. the Polish initiatives, involves the Eastern Partnership and the energy policy. The third area refers to the continuation of the actions undertaken by its predecessors and the Union's institutions. The fourth level encompasses unpredictable situations, for which Poland must adequately prepare.³⁰

It must be emphasized that Polish preparations are based on the experiences of previous presidencies. However, although these priority levels have been established in the government document, they are not the final objectives, but the most probable proposals, which may yet be changed. Prime Minister Tusk referred to these levels as the "first outline of Polish priorities," saying that "the adopted programme should specify particularly those actions which should be taken in the years 2009–2011 so that Poland would effectively prepare for holding the Presidency in the Council of the European Union."³¹ Moreover, in July 2009, at the meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Foreign Minister Jan Kohout, Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski said that the issue of the European security and defence policy would be one of the priorities of the Polish presidency,³² while the above-mentioned document does not mention it. The Polish government did not deny this proposal. However, given the importance of the problem and the new offices in the EU, this priority might turn out to be very difficult to implement. Poland could raise this issue within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, thanks to which it may take care of its own interest and meet the general challenges of the EU at the same time. This subject was also discussed on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, especially after the recent political change in the USA. Moreover, at the Polish-French Summit for Security and Defence in November 2009, Prime Minister Tusk and the President of France Nicolas Sarkozy issued a joint declaration, in which it is clearly stated that both countries would make efforts to develop their cooperation in the field of security and defence in NATO and the European Union. The Polish presidency

³⁰ Program Przygotowań Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej do Objęcia i Sprawowania Przewodnictwa w Radzie Unii Europejskiej, 13.01.2009, Warszawa, pp. 19–20.

³¹ M. Konarski, *Tusk przedstawił priorytety polskiej prezydencji*, <http://www.psz.pl/tekst-16148/Tusk-przedstawił-priorytety-polskiej-prezydencji-w-UE>, accessed 8.08.2010.

³² Sikorski: *Obronność priorytetem polskiej prezydencji w UE*, http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/341325,sikorski_obronnosc_priorytetem_polskiej_prezydencji_w_ue.html, accessed 8.08.2010.

ought to be one of its components and instruments.³³ At the summit both countries also declared that they would cooperate in the field of agriculture and energy. The speech delivered by the Foreign Minister of Poland in the Polish Sejm on April 8, 2010 seems to confirm these premises. In the annual *Report on Poland's foreign policy guidelines in 2010*, the Minister said: "We have already established preliminary priorities, which include: 1) a heavyweight task: the negotiations of the Multiannual Financial Framework; 2) the internal market – new ways of stimulating the economic growth after the crisis; 3) relations with the countries of Eastern Europe; 4) the energy policy and energy security of the Union; 5) the Common Security and Defence Policy."³⁴ The word "preliminary" should be highlighted here as it shows that final decisions in this respect have not been made yet. Another step towards the establishment of the priorities of the Polish presidency was the acceptance of *The Initial Priorities for the Polish Presidency in the Second Half of 2011* by the Council of Ministers on July 21, 2010. The document specified that the Polish priorities would focus, as it was indicated in *The Programme of the Preparations (...)*, on the Multiannual Financial Framework, relations with the East, the Internal Market, the Common Security and Defence Policy and, which was not included in the above-mentioned documents, exploiting the intellectual capital of Europe. The document also contained the important information that the final list of priorities would be presented in June 2011.³⁵

It must be acknowledged that these problems are of the utmost importance for the whole Union. As regards the "heavyweight task" of the New Financial Framework 2014–2020, the first steps were taken as early as at the turn of 2008/2009, when the preliminary debate on this issue began. However, the elections to the European Parliament, the formation of the new composition of the European Commission, problems related to the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, and the economic crisis caused that the debate lost momentum. However, it is likely to be revived soon, and the key decisions as well as problems and disputes will become

³³ *Polish-French Summit Declaration for Security and Defence*, November 5, 2009. http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,7226679,Deklaracja_Francusko_Polskiego_Szczytu_w_sprawie_Bezpieczenstwa.html?as=1&startsz=x, accessed 10.08.2010.

³⁴ R. Sikorski, *The Minister of Foreign Affairs Report on Poland's foreign policy guidelines in 2010*, Warsaw, April 8, 2010. http://www.msz.gov.pl/Informacja_Ministra_Spraw_Zagranicznych,o_zalozeniach_polskiej_polityki_zagranicznej,w_2010_roku,34836.html, accessed 10.08.2010.

³⁵ *The Initial Priorities for the Polish Presidency in the Second Half of 2011*, http://www.premier.gov.pl/rzad/decyzje_rzadu/id:5071/, accessed 10.08.2010.

evident in the second half of 2011 and 2012.³⁶ Thus, Poland must be prepared for the role of a negotiator between member states. It will also make efforts to take care of its own interests. Within the framework of this priority the debate on the future shape of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Regional Policy will certainly be necessary.

The second priority proposed by minister R. Sikorski, which concerns the internal market, requires launching a number of initiatives now, so that there would be any visible effects in a year and a half. *The Programme of the Preparations (...)* includes only a short provision which specifies that in 2011 the so-called directive on services, which Poland is interested in, will be reviewed.³⁷ The discussion and activities in this area need to be intensified. All the more so because it is Poland which is highly likely to pilot very difficult and important negotiations on the introduction of the unitary European patent. So far, this issue has not been settled.³⁸

The third of the above priorities also appears to be very important from the perspective of the objectives of Poland's foreign policy. The Eastern Partnership project was presented by the Foreign Minister of Poland Radosław Sikorski with assistance of his Swedish counterpart Carl Bildtin May 2008.³⁹ It is also worth noting that while Poland is holding the presidency, Jerzy Buzek will be still the President of the European Parliament, Štefan Füle from the Czech Republic will be the Com-

³⁶ M. Kałużyńska, *Polska prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej – jak pomyślnie zdać egzamin dojrzałości?*, [in:] *Biuletyn Analiz UKIE, Prezydencja Polski...*, p. 9.

³⁷ *Program przygotowań...*, p. 19 The Directive on services in the internal market (commonly referred to as the Bolkestein Directive) was adopted in December 2006. In its original version it introduced the complete liberalization of the flow of services in the EU. However, as a result of strong opposition from the French, German and Belgian politicians it was adopted in a much amended form, bringing just a few changes to the existing system. For more details see: The European Commission site, http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/index_en.htm, accessed 20.08.2010.

³⁸ A. Łada, *Patent na Prezydencję*, http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,9216006,Patent_na_Prezydencje_.html, accessed 12.03.2011.

³⁹ The project was officially inaugurated in Prague on May 7, 2009. Its geographical scope consists of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It is a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The aim of this initiative is to strengthen the Eastern dimension of the ENP and to tighten the political and economic relations between the European Union and Eastern Europe countries. It must be pointed out, however, that the Partnership is meant to bring its member states closer to the EU, but it does not guarantee their accession to the Union. The Partnership succeeded in securing the budget of 600 million euro which it will receive from the European Union in the years 2010–2013. For more details see: Sz. Ananicz, *Partnerstwo Wschodnie*, "Biuro Analiz Sejmowych" 2009, no. 17.

missioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy and Hungary holds the chairmanship in the EU before Poland.⁴⁰ This favourable situation may cause that the EU's Eastern Policy will gain momentum and it may provide a perfect opportunity for strengthening the role and importance of the Visegrád Group countries in the Community. A very important event for Poland will be the summit of the Eastern Partnership it is to hold. Initially, it was planned for the first half of 2011, during the Hungarian presidency. However, because Hungary had to prepare the Union's representation for the G20 summit, the date of the meeting devoted to Eastern issues was postponed until the period of the Polish presidency. It is a significant tool, which might be effectively applied.⁴¹ In this case, the greatest challenge will be to efficiently cooperate with the President of the European Council and, most importantly, with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. All the more so because the European Union is currently concerned with the difficult situation in Africa. Poland will have to show great negotiation skills in order to convince its Union partners that even in such circumstances the "Eastern issues" cannot be overlooked.

Poland also has great expectations as to the shape and role of the European energy policy and security. This policy has grown insignificant following the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon which refer to it directly. Article 194 of this Treaty says that "in the context of the establishment and functioning of the internal market and with regard for the need to preserve and improve the environment, Union policy on energy shall aim, in a spirit of solidarity between Member States, to:

- (a) ensure the functioning of the energy market;
- (b) ensure security of energy supply in the Union;
- (c) promote energy efficiency and energy saving and the development of new and renewable forms of energy; and
- (d) promote the interconnection of energy networks."⁴²

This article also includes the provision that the measures necessary to achieve the above objectives will be established in accordance with the ordinary legislative

⁴⁰ Rok 2011 szansą dla V4 na przejęcie roli lidera UE w stosunkach ze wschodnimi sąsiadami, <http://www.euractiv.pl/rozszerzenie/arttykul/rok-2011-szans-dla-v4-na-przejcie-rol-lidera-ue-w-stosunkach-ze-wschodnimi-ssiadami-001565>, accessed 12.08.2010.

⁴¹ *Stosunki ze Wschodem*, "Monitor Polskiej Prezydencji 2011. Biuletyn nr 1" 2011, p. 5.

⁴² The Treaty of Lisbon, <http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-the-functioning-of-the-european-union-and-comments/part-3-union-policies-and-internal-actions/title-xxi-energy/485-article-194.html>, accessed 12.08.2010.

procedure by the European Parliament and the Council after the consultation of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. However, if such measures are primarily of a fiscal nature or they affect a member state's energy policy, the Council will act in accordance with a special legislative procedure. The latter assumption seriously reduces the possibility of making decisions which will be binding for the whole European Union. Nevertheless, entering provisions concerning energy issues in the Treaty must lead to concrete decisions in the near future. This is where the countries of Eastern Europe have a chance to show what they can do together. Poland can take advantage of its presidency period here. All the more so because at the last energy summit in Brussels, in February 2011, José Manuel Barroso announced that the "North-South natural gas interconnection plan" would be formally accepted in the second part of the year. It is to link the energy systems in the area located among the Baltic Sea in the North, the Adriatic in the Southwest and the Black Sea in the Southeast, covering selected European countries. This project is to a large degree promoted by Poland.⁴³ Like in the case of other priorities, it requires a well-thought strategy and taking proper actions in advance, so that the effects will be satisfactory.

It seems that the priorities established by present and future presidencies should also take into consideration the issues included in the "Europe 2020" strategy. It is a document which identifies five headline targets that the European Union has to accomplish by 2020. It is to replace the unimplemented Lisbon Strategy. Its main aims are to build knowledge-based economy, to develop low-emission economy and to increase social inclusion.⁴⁴ There is no room here for the evaluation how feasible these goals are. Nevertheless, even a short analysis helps to observe that these priorities will be present and discussed during the Polish presidency in the EU. First of all, they are inextricably connected with discussing the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework, its internal market and intellectual capital. These priorities might become common guidelines and objectives for the group presidency. It must be added that the Polish government presented its own proposals for this Strategy. Prime Minister Tusk sent a letter to Herman Van Rompuy, José Manuel Barroso i José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, in which he emphasized that the efforts within "Europe 2020" should focus on investment in roads, railway and telecom-

⁴³ *Wzmocnienie zewnętrznej polityki energetycznej Unii Europejskiej*, "Monitor Polskiej Prezydencji 2011...", p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Nowa strategia dla Europy*, http://ec.europa.eu/polska/news/100303_europa_2020_pl.htm, accessed 12.08.2010.

munication networks, and the cohesion policy covering all regions in the Union rather than only supporting “innovativeness.”⁴⁵ The Polish proposals were taken into consideration and included in the document, therefore Poland may take advantage of it while it is holding the presidency. However, the real battle for the implementation of the “Europe 2020” objectives will take place when the EU’s Multiannual Budget is being established.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POLISH PRESIDENCY

In the context of the facts about the presidency presented above, it is worth analysing the process of Polish preparations for this role in the EU. First of all, Poland is monitoring the situation and changes in each sector of the European Union. The calendar of Union institution clearly shows what events have been planned for the second half of 2011. In most cases Poland will be their organizer or host. Thus, these events are highly predictable in advance. During the period of the Polish presidency six EU summits with third countries – China, India, Russia, Ukraine, Canada and Brazil – are going to be held. Hence, Poland should establish cooperation with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in this respect. Moreover, in 2011 the European Union is planning to make a review of specific directives, including the directive on services in the internal market, which is of great importance for Poland.⁴⁶ As the government document stipulates, in this period the UE intends to discuss the directive on the establishment of a European Works Council or a procedure in Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale groups of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting employees, the maternity leave directive, the directive on simplifying terms and conditions of transfers of defence-related products within the Community, and many others.⁴⁷ Poland should be well prepared and recognize its objectives with regard to each of these fields. It should also be aware of other

⁴⁵ K.Niklewicz, T.Bielecki, *Premier Tusk pisze Brukseli: Inwestujmy w “twardą” infrastrukturę*, http://wyborcza.biz/biznes/1,101562,7694528,Premier_Tusk_pisze_Brukseli__Inwestujmy_w_twarda_.html, accessed 12.08.2010.

⁴⁶ Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on services in the internal market, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:376:0036:0068:en:PDF>, accessed 12.08.2010.

⁴⁷ For more details see: *Zał. 1: Założenia organizacji przygotowań programowych do Prezydencji w Radzie UE – przykłady*, [in:] *Program przygotowań...*, pp. 2–4.

member states' requirements with respect to them, so that it could suggest a compromise. Poland also intends to launch its own initiatives. For example, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage announced the initiative towards the introduction of a wide package concerning the protection of intellectual property. It became possible because some steps regarding this area had been taken before, thus it is not a completely new thing.⁴⁸ It seems that only those few issues are the evidence how important it is for the EU's presiding country to efficiently use the legislative procedures of the Union and to be able to predict what it can achieve in a given field.

Another area in which Poland has to make thorough preparations includes current issues, projects and proposals of great importance for the whole European Union. The key issue is obviously the New Financial Framework 2014–2020 and the 2012 budget. The fact that Janusz Lewandowski from Poland is the current Commissioner for Financial Programming and the Budget in the EU causes that the future Financial Framework and next year's budget may be considered our country's success or failure. What is particularly interesting from the Polish point of view is the size of the budget, the issue of European grants and the Common Agricultural Policy.

Other problem areas which Poland needs to have deep knowledge of – as they are continuously being debated on the European forum – include the EU's enlargement, possibly by Croatia, which is now ending its negotiation process, and Bulgaria and Romania's accession to the Schengen Area. It is extremely important to thoroughly examine the opinions of all member states on these issues as well as to be able to express its own view and propose solutions.

Poland must also be ready for the European anniversaries and celebrations, which are typically organized by the country which holds the presidency. 2011 is the European Year of Volunteering. Poland will have to continue the activities initiated by Hungary and come up with some new ones. Another important event is the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. Poland will probably cooperate with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the President of the European Council in order to find the best form of celebration and discuss the main problems related to terrorism.

Krzysztof Szczerski underlines the importance of the internal determinants of the presiding countries. He lists factors such as: the ability to maintain consensus on the domestic political scene, personal characteristics of the ruling elite, the

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

ability to effectively include the state administrative bodies in the presidency activities, the choice of adequately prepared experts and the appropriate promotion and media policy.⁴⁹

The biggest challenge that Poland faces is connected with its lack of experience in holding the presidency and the internal political situation. It is complicated, inasmuch the elections to the Polish parliament are going to be held in the autumn of 2011, which will result in the formation of the new government. It may significantly weaken the Polish chairmanship in the Council of the European Union. The Polish decision-makers even thought of swapping the sequence of holding the presidency, e.g. with Denmark, but this idea was rejected. There is also a possibility of shortening the term of office of the parliament and conducting early elections, but this seems quite an unlikely solution. The change of a government during the presidency is obviously not something extraordinary. However, it requires a big political compromise, which is difficult to reach during an electoral campaign. By calculations, in accordance with the Constitution, the day of October 30, 2011 is the last date on which the parliamentary elections have to be held. The first session of the new parliament could be held on November 29, 2011, at the earliest. Given such dates and the good will of newly elected members of parliament the Prime Minister and the future members of the Council of Ministers might be appointed on December 13, 2011. If Poland pursued such a solution it would be able to efficiently manage working groups and perfectly organize summits of the European Council, having a team of competent people capable of making decisions.⁵⁰ It is directly connected with the fact that the formal end of the presidency, usually in Brussels, could take place just before Christmas break, as well as with the fact that the role of the head of state or government in holding the presidency has been significantly reduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. This assumption, however, requires great determination from the Polish government and a big consensus for the sake of Poland's interest. We will find out about the result not earlier than in the second half of 2011. However, it is evident today that there is too little debate on the issue of the Polish presidency in parliament. This is not an unusual situation in the EU. The analysis of the presidency in other EU countries shows that political parties rarely join the preparations for this event. The presidency is perceived as a chal-

⁴⁹ K. Szczerski, *Instytucja Prezydencji w Unii Europejskiej – uwagi do analiz politologicznych*, [in:] *Prezydencja w Radzie Unii Europejskiej* (ed.) K.A. Wojtaszczyk, Warszawa 2010, pp. 35–36.

⁵⁰ Zał. 2: *Wstępny kalendarz posiedzeń lipiec – grudzień 2011*, [in:] *Program przygotowań...*, pp. 1–2.

lenge for the government administration.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the period of the Polish presidency will overlap the final stage of the electoral campaign to parliament. Political parties will certainly address this issue, but it is quite likely they will do it in a populist way rather than through decent debate. Moreover, party leaders and representatives should have in mind the importance of the presidency for Poland. Conflict situations may badly affect Poland's image among the Union's structures. It is an enormous challenge for Polish politicians. All the more so because the Polish public opinion is not interested in this subject. The survey conducted by the research and marketing information company TNS OBOP in February 2011 showed that 33% of Poles do not know that their country will chair the Council of the European Union, and 44% of the respondents cannot accurately define the time of the presidency.⁵²

Apart from the biggest threats, there are also some minor ones. According to the report of the NIK (the Supreme Audit Office) of January 2011, the government administration has been well prepared for the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union. NIK auditors have found, however, certain minor irregularities in the preparation processes. The biggest delays have been found with regard to the area of internal affairs, IT systems, communication systems and tasks of special services. The Supreme Audit Service has also indicated that the role of the Prime Minister during Poland's Presidency in the EU Council has to be clarified as it has changed since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force. The auditors were also worried about the staff fluctuations in the Presidency Service.⁵³

As regards the international factors, the biggest challenge for Poland is whether it will be able to cooperate with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and how to clearly define the tasks of each side. In 2011 the above-mentioned summits and the Doha Development Round are going to be held, which are especially important after the world economic crisis. Moreover, Poland is going to host the International Tourism Trade Show and the European Culture Forum. They are extremely important events from the point of view of the development of tourism in our country and because of the fact that Poland co-hosts

⁵¹ A. Pacześniak, *Krajowe elity partyjne wobec polskiej Prezydencji w Unii Europejskiej*, [in:] *2011 Polska Prezydencja...*, p. 227.

⁵² *Polacy nie wiedzą o przejęciu Prezydencji*, <http://www.rp.pl/artykul/621604.html>, accessed 11.03.2011.

⁵³ *Informacja o wynikach kontroli realizacji zadań w ramach przygotowań organów administracji rządowej do sprawowania przez Rzeczpospolitą Polską przewodnictwa w Radzie Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2011.

Euro 2012 with Ukraine, and Wrocław will be the European Capital of Culture in 2016. All these events should be promoted and reminded in debates in order to enhance positive effects and arouse interest in the European issues among the public opinion.

It is vital that each presidency be well prepared for emergency situations. This is one of the biggest challenges, which each presiding country must be ready to face. All countries have to establish the efficient crisis management system, which will be able to cope with any problems in a fast and effective manner. Such events largely affect the general opinion of the presidency. Therefore, it is essential that each country which chairs the Council make efforts to find solutions to problems that may be anticipated in advance, so that it could also manage those which come up all of the sudden.

The preparations for the presidency also include the area of coordination, logistics and technology. In order to coordinate all activities, by the Government Order of July 15, 2008 (The Official Journal of Law, no. 133, item 843), the office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Preparation of the Government Administration Bodies to Hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union by Poland was established.⁵⁴ The position was assumed by the Secretary of State for European Affairs Mikołaj Dowgielewicz. At the end of 2008, the above-mentioned *Programme of the Preparations (...)* was issued. On May 28, 2009, the Office of the Committee for European Integration initiated meetings with independent experts from the EU member states,⁵⁵ on February 16, 2010, the so-called Presidency Corps was formed,⁵⁶ and in June 2009, the budget for the Polish presidency was adopted. In February 2009, the Polish presidency preparations website – www.prezydencja.gov.pl – was launched, and in August of the same year, the programme of cultural activities was established. Moreover, in order to familiarize Polish people with the presidency, it became visible on community sites, such as Facebook or GoldenLine. Poland also cooperates intensively with representatives of the countries which have already held the presidency and the countries of the Trio in order to agree on joint objectives. Therefore, it seems that the process of the preparations is running swiftly. Soon the main motto of our presidency should be

⁵⁴ *Program Przygotowań...*, p. 4.

⁵⁵ *Uwarunkowania i wyzwania polskiej prezydencji w UE w 2011 r. – zapis z debaty z udziałem ekspertów zagranicznych*, “Biuletyn Analiz UKIE...”, p. 13.

⁵⁶ The Presidency Corps is composed of officials who will represent us during the Presidency, about 1200 people.

chosen. Among the first proposals was the slogan: “growth through opportunity.”⁵⁷ In order to ensure proper coordination, the Government Plenipotentiary for the Preparation of the Government Administration Bodies to Hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union by Poland set up four advisory teams for:

- 1) budget;
- 2) logistics and security;
- 3) promotion and culture;
- 4) human resource management.⁵⁸

The Polish presidency budget amounts to 430 million zloty. The money will be spent on training people who will be responsible for carrying out presidency-related tasks, and then on the realization of these tasks during the Polish chairmanship and promotional activities.⁵⁹ We still don't know the final list of venues for meetings and conferences. It is a huge challenge for Poland. First of all, such places should combine the criteria of attractiveness with easy access. Moreover, they should offer facilities for handicapped people, which is still a problem in many places in Poland. The presidency website is going to be up and running soon and the logo of the Polish presidency will be presented in May 2011. The Presidency liaison officers are being recruited and the government is finalising talks with the so-called Presidency Partners (among others, Peugeot Polska, Coca-Cola, Orange, Microsoft).⁶⁰ Konrad Niklewicz was appointed the Spokesperson for the Polish Presidency.⁶¹

The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage will be responsible for promotion and culture during the Polish chairmanship in the EU: the National Audiovisual Institute in the country, and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute abroad. In August 2009, *The strategic principles of the Polish Presidency cultural programme in the second half of 2011* were adopted. According to the document, the main objective of the Programme is to promote Poland in the European Union and outside it, as well as to promote the EU in our country. These activities are going to be carried

⁵⁷ *Uwarunkowania i wyzwania polskiej prezydencji w UE w 2011 r. – zapis z debaty z udziałem ekspertów zagranicznych*, “Biuletyn Analiz UKiE...”, p. 18.

⁵⁸ *Program Przygotowań...*, p. 26.

⁵⁹ *Budżet Prezydencji*, www.prezydencjaue.gov.pl/obszary-przygotowa/budzet, accessed on August 12, 2010.

⁶⁰ J. Pawlicki, *Odliczanie do polskiej Prezydencji*, http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,9022158,Odliczanie_do_polskiej_prezydencji_w_UE.html, accessed 12.03.2011.

⁶¹ *Konrad Niklewicz rzecznikiem polskiej prezydencji*, http://europarlament.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_ep.pap.pl&_PageID=1&_menuId=17&_nrDep=27140&_CheckSum=1272455722, accessed 12.03.2011.

out in five selected cities of Poland and six European capitals (probably in Berlin, Paris, Rome, Madrid, London and, obviously, Brussels). The cities from outside the Union in which Poland intends to hold some cultural events include: Beijing, Moscow, new Delhi, Tokyo, Washington, Seoul, Ankara, as well as Kiev and Minsk within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.⁶² The document also informs that Poland's cultural programme will be cohesive, compatible, based on cooperation and on the quality rather than quantity of projects. Its creators also intend to present a uniform image of Poland abroad and organize some competitions. The programme specifies each institution's scope of responsibility.⁶³ However, it does not identify the specific actions to be taken. The document appears to be a set of guidelines rather than a programme. It does not specify events with their venues or dates. The main objective seems to be vague, as well. The cultural strategy should focus on the promotion of Polish art and culture abroad rather than promote the whole country. These institutions should not be required to support the Polish economy or industry.

However, it is not only *The Cultural Programme* that lacks specific solutions. In *The Programme of the Preparations (...)* proportions of the proposed actions seem to be a bit distorted. There are only a few pages about the priorities, whereas, for example, the issue of training has been widely discussed. It is particularly important in the face of the fact that on March 31, 2010, the European Commission presented its Work Programme 2010. The Commission agreed a list of 34 strategic priorities that would be implemented before the end of that year. It also specified another 280 major proposals under consideration during 2010 and beyond. The main interest areas included in the *Commission Work Programme* concern tackling the crisis, building a citizens' agenda which puts people at the heart of European action, developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach, and modernising EU instruments and ways of working.⁶⁴ *The Programme of the Preparations (...)*, in attachment1, includes only one example of a Polish initiative and ten examples of projects under monitoring in EU institutions. It is far too little. It should be emphasized once again that our priorities, which are of the key

⁶² *Strategiczne założenia Programu Kulturalnego Polskiej Prezydencji w II połowie 2011 r. Departament Współpracy z Zagranicą MKIDN, Instytut Adama Mickiewicza, Narodowy Instytut Audiowizualny w konsultacji w ramach prac Międzyresortowego zespołu opiniodawczo-doradczego ds. promocji i kultury, Warszawa, 2009, p. 4.*

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ For more details see: *Komisja ma plan*, http://ec.europa.eu/polska/news/100331_plan_pracy_komisji_pl.htm, accessed 12.08.2010.

importance, are discussed in the Polish document to a much smaller extent than the issues related to logistics or training officials.

THE POLISH PREPARATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – SUMMARY

It must be emphasized that Poland has been praised for the state of its preparations for the presidency. The Supreme Audit Office (NIK) in the report mentioned earlier estimated that the Polish administration is well prepared for performing this task.⁶⁵ The appropriate institutions and units responsible for the preparations for the presidency have been set up, the government has adopted *The Programme of the Preparations (...)*, staff are being trained, top-level meetings are being held and the presidency website, which provides up-to-date information about this issue, is up and running. In May 2009, Minister Dowgiałewicz announced that meetings with “eminent authorities in their fields” devoted to integration policy in the EU are going to be held. Among the experts invited to cooperation by the government are: L. Cohen-Tanugi, who produced a report on globalization for President Sarkozy; the representatives of a think-tank *Notre Europe*; A. Mayhew from the Sussex European Institute, who was a member of the cabinet of the European Commission under the leadership of Jacques Delors; D. Helm, a professor from Oxford, a specialist in energy policy, who advised to Tony Blair’s government; and a number of other people with great knowledge of European challenges and problems. The first meeting of this group was held at the end of May 2009 and the next one in the autumn of the same year. As the outcome of both meetings, their participants produced a report to the Polish government.⁶⁶ However, what Prof. Mayhew emphasized in an interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, experts will propose interesting solutions for Poland, but whether Poland will use them depends on its government’s decision.⁶⁷ At the first convention of experts in Warsaw, Poland was praised for the state of its preparations. At the same time, experts indicated that Poland’s main task during its presidency will be to tackle the economic crisis. This is a great chance to show one’s competences within the scope of the uniform internal mar-

⁶⁵ Informacja o wynikach kontroli realizacji zadań...: NIK

⁶⁶ J. Pawlicki, *Jadą mózgi z Europy*, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6609801,Jada_mozgi_z_Europy.html, accessed 12.08.2010.

⁶⁷ Ibidem.

ket.⁶⁸ Moreover, the European Union must also face the challenge of the present African crisis. It may dominate the debate at the Union's summits. Nevertheless, the Polish priorities seem to have been established to a large extent. Poland will hold the presidency in the circumstances in which Poles occupy important positions in the EU. What is more, Poland's role in the Trio is also significant. First of all, it is the biggest of the three countries. What is more, Cyprus, which maintains quite strained relations with Turkey and Greece, may find it difficult to handle many problems on its own. Finally, it should be remembered that Denmark enjoys a few exemptions, but the period of its presidency of 2002 is considered to have been successful. Hence, Poland may either effectively cooperate or compete with Denmark.⁶⁹ Moreover, Poland is perceived as a country which coped with the crisis better than other European countries. These are enormous advantages which must be exploited.

However, it must also be remembered that the Polish presidency may be weakened or even completely destroyed by the parliamentary elections and the political battle they entail. The presidency requires a great deal of cooperation and political consensus, which seems to be hard to achieve during an electoral campaign. Another weakness of the Polish presidency is our country's lack of experience in conducting similar undertakings. On the other hand, the Presidency is present on community sites, which is a very good solution, given the fact that more and more people are actively participating in online discussions. A serious drawback in the preparations is also the lack of social debate on this issue. There is too little information about it in mass media. A good example of such activity is the recent launch of the website: www.slaskie2011.pl, through which the Silesian voivodeship is trying to promote the Polish presidency among citizens and tries to encourage them to join various actions. The preparations for the presidency are also a good time for serious debate about the future of the European Union and the role that Poland might play.⁷⁰ The presidency should be also used as a tool for the intensified promotion of the country in Europe. It is not the matter of the promotion of tourism, as it is too general and does not bring much effect. European politicians move from place to place in a very short time and they have no chance to admire landscapes and enjoy local attractions. It would be a lot better idea to promote Poland's

⁶⁸ P. Świeboda, *Euro 2011, czyli kryzysowa narzeczona*, http://wyborcza.pl/1,97738,6666020,Euro_2011_czyli_kryzysowa_narzeczona.html, accessed 12.08.2010

⁶⁹ *Prezydencja grupowa...*, p. 58.

⁷⁰ P.J. Borkowski, "Wsiąść do pociągu byle jakiego..." – dokąd zmierza IC Europa i czy możemy być maszynistą?, [in:] *2011 Polska Prezydencja...*, p. 176.

unique characteristics for the whole period of the presidency. They might include human capital, the best specialists in Europe, e.g. in information technology. Thanks to this, promotional activities could take place at any time and place, and they would bring about new associations with Poland, changing stereotypical thinking about our country and its citizens. Poland has a chance to show Europe what it wants to specialize in.

The presidency is an organizational and technological challenge for Poland. After all, the only success which is certain today will be a team of perfectly trained people from the Presidency Corps, who may later help to build a more effective European policy in Poland. They will also learn how to improve cooperation with Union institutions and how to apply the available instruments for shaping European policy. It is legitimate to say that it will be a time of learning and gaining experience for Poland. We cannot expect any spectacular effects of the Polish presidency, especially after the recent treaty changes. There is too little time, too little experience and there are too many problems. On the other hand, it cannot be said that as a result of those amendments the presidency has completely lost its importance. The introduction of changes requires reflection and implementing a new strategy. It creates an opportunity for establishing a new model of holding the presidency. Poland may also contribute to the development of this new model. However, it requires having a clear vision and taking consistent actions.

It should be pointed out that the EU member states can actually influence European policy on a regular basis, not just during the time in which they hold the presidency. The presidency is the crowning of the work done, a promotional instrument rather than a tool for introducing changes which could be relevant for the presiding country. Thus, for the sake of evaluating the Polish presidency we must focus on the actions that Poland has taken a lot earlier. The presidency provides an opportunity for strengthening European policy in a given country.

To conclude, the success of the presidency means the efficient and decent preparations for holding it and for active membership in the European Union. Poland's success will largely depend on the measures it has already taken and will take soon. From July 2011 we will be subject to continuous evaluation and we will have to settle disputes or dilemma by means of the methods developed in advance.