
**POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AS THE RELATIVELY
WELL USED CHANCE OF PROMOTING INTERESTS
IN TIME OF CRISIS –
AN ATTEMPT AT ASSESSMENT**

by Radosław Grodzki

On the 1st of July 2011 Poland accepted its first in history Presidency of the Council of the European Union (CEU) and for six months has chaired its work, co-participating and co-managing the European Union. While holding presidency, the main tasks are: chairing the work of the Council of the European Union and its auxiliary bodies (committees and working groups) and chairing the meetings of European Council (organizing in substantive and logistical dimensions union meetings with a very broad spectrum of issues being taken), representing the Council during contacts with other institutions (mainly the European Commission and the European Parliament); representing the EU in relations with the third countries and the international organizations in cooperation with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commissioner for the External Relations¹.

¹ A. Kosowska, Czy jest o co walczyć? Prezydencja Rady Unii Europejskiej i jej znaczenie dla państw członkowskich, [in:] 2011 Polska Prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej, ed. R. Riedel, P. Klimontowski, Opole 2010, pp. 140–143.

Janusz Ruzkowski put forward a thesis about a generally government-neutral character of presidency, i.e. independent from the interests of a government exercising it on a rotation basis². Nonetheless, the analysis of chances created for the EU member state by assuming the presidency of the EU allows to draw a conclusion that such a subject may use the possibilities of influencing the decision-making process connected with the presidency in order to accomplish its own particularistic interests. The fact results from both formal and informal roles attributed to presidency, and from information advantage which manifests by obtaining the influence on shaping the agenda and the course of negotiations within the CEU and with other subjects. It is important particularly for small and medium countries whose structural reserves and the number of weighted votes in the Council are harder to use when building their position within the EU³.

Coordinating, administrative, mediatory and the representative functions of the presidency for member states constitute the opportunities to influence the European policy more than usually. Furthermore, rotary presidency gives them a chance of improving or promoting their image, or building their own brand (brand building).

In Poland it was assumed that efficiently and dynamically lead chairmanship is a chance to present itself as a good organizer or a skilful mediator and in this way to attract the attention of the public opinion. It is all the more important because after the accepting of the Treaty of Lisbon, the presidency was deprived of a representative role. Reducing its the significance is even stronger because of the strengthening of the role of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who took over the right to represent the EU in the international arena which was previously reserved for the leader of a country assuming presidency. On the other hand it is pointed out that the Presidency gives a great opportunity in the scope of creating the agenda of the EU (agenda-shaping). A presidency makes for the assuming countries a chance to control the legislative activity of the EU, with the reference to the national

² J. Ruzkowski, *Prezydencja jako mechanizm koordynujący wewnątrz Unii Europejskiej*, [in:] *2011 Polska Prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej...*, pp. 55–57.

³ M. Kleinowski, *Wpływ sprawowania Prezydencji Rady na kształtowanie się siły państw członkowskich*, [in:] *2011 Polska Prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej...*, p. 79.

priorities as well⁴. The above-mentioned premise proved to be right, which was pointed out by many favourable opinions.

The document accepted by the government on the 22th of June says that the main aims of the Polish Presidency were among others concentrated on Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020, the relations with the East, the internal market, the strengthening of the common energy policy of the EU, the common policy of security and defence, the signing of the accession treaty with Croatia, the beginning of the debate about the union strategy towards Russia, and the strengthening of the Eastern Partnership⁵. It must be said that not all these guidelines were distinctly inserted in the agenda of the EU.

The Polish Presidency coincided with the beginning of the talks about the union 2014–2020 budget. In this case it was the coordinating role of chairing the CEU rather than the opportunity to promote the particularistic interests that proved to dominate, especially as Poland was and is interested in maintaining the high financing of the cohesion policy, which allows the new members of the EU to make up for the civilization disparity.

The old members of the EU reacted nervously to the Polish Presidency report about the budget talks because the needs of the member states were mentioned and therefore the increasing of the budget was called for. There were even the opinions about Polish misuse of its presidency but it was admitted that Poland handled it in velvet gloves because it was made during the reviewing of the negotiating positions⁶.

The discussion initiated during the Presidency lead after its completion to the beginning of the international cooperation for the future of the cohesion Policy. It's the new EU member states mainly which are interested

⁴ J. Jaskiernia, Polska jako gospodarz posiedzenia Konferencji Komisji Wspecjalizowanych w Sprawach Wspólnotowych i Europejskich Parlamentów Unii Europejskiej (COSAC) w ramach Prezydencji w Unii Europejskiej, [in:] 2011 Polska Prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej..., pp. 193–197.

⁵ Wstępne priorytety polskiej Prezydencji zaakceptowane, http://www.premier.gov.pl/rzad/decyzje_rzadu/id:5071/ (updated: 12.02.2011.).

⁶ J. Pawlicki, Świeboda: To była solidna, menedżerska prezydencja, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 29.12.2011.

in the reduction of the budget after 2013. On the 22nd of March 2012 during the Prague informal meeting of the ministers of the regional development Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia accepted a joint declaration about this issue. It was agreed that the union cohesion policy must remain the strength stimulating the economic growth and the creating of new jobs, and the countries opposed the budget cuts. The countries which provide the most for the EU budget call for financial cuts sometimes as big as 80 bn euro reasoning it with the European financial crisis. These countries are: Germany, France, Great Britain, Sweden and Holland. Meanwhile the European Commission intends the new 2014–2020 EU budget as big as 972,2 bn euro, of which 336 bn euro for the cohesion policy. 40 bn euro is intended for the new instrument Connecting Europe Facility, which would finance the transeuropean transport, energy and telecommunications networks (Poland would get 80 bn euro).

On account of this situation Poland was trying to create a counterbalance. The part of this idea was the meeting of “friends of the cohesion policy” which was held in Bruxelles on the 26th of March (the group consists of countries belonging to the Visegrad Group, Slovenia, the Baltic states, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Spain). Moreover in May Polish Department of Development put forward a calculation saying that old member states of the EU (EU-15) in the years 2004–2015 will make a 75 bn euro profit on the completion of the cohesion policy in the Visegrad Group countries only⁷.

The course of accomplishment of the Polish Presidency was undoubtedly influenced by the current events, especially the financial crisis. The task of this presidency was the continuation of the reforms in the EU zone by accepting so called Six Acts. On the 12th of September 2011 the finance ministers of the EU countries reached an agreement about six deeds which strengthened the coordination of the economic policies in the EU and strengthened the discipline of

⁷ A. Osiecki, Polska tworzy budżetową koalicję w regionie, „Rzeczpospolita” 24.03.2012.

the public finances. The main principles of the accepted acts are: the controlling of the debts of the states, the introducing of fines for countries which do not obey the principles of the budgetary policy, and the strengthening of the governments in obeying the common agreements.

The effects of the meeting of the finance ministers of the EU countries allowed the Polish Presidency to finish the essentials formal procedures, which in turn enabled the European Parliament to vote through the package of six acts in September 2011. The fact sped up the bringing the regulations concerning economic management into effect⁸. The reaching of the compromise by the Polish Presidency was a great success and has risen the prestige of Poland in the international arena. It is all the more significant that Poland is not a member of the euro zone, and in the light of its activities concerning the crisis it is hard to think about ensuring a country assuming a rotary presidency the proper place if the country is not a member of the economic elite. The only role left for such a country is not leading but coordinating and supporting. On the other hand Poland, despite the lesser after the Lisbon Treaty opportunity to influence the union foreign policy, during its presidency set about realizing several ambitious undertakings within the framework of the external policy of the EU.

Three of them played a crucial role and were among wide-defined problems of security and international cooperation: the relations with the Russian Federation, Eastern Partnership and the European security (with among others energy security), and the strengthening of the union policy of security and defence. As a part of the union Policy towards Russia, Poland intended to achieve a very ambitious goal: the initiating long-term strategy to refrain some European countries from trying to build bilateral relations with Russia, which often takes place against the interests of other member states. So far the EU has not got any real strategy towards the Russian Federation as opposed to the

⁸ Tzw. sześciopak reform finansowych UE uzgodniony, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 16.09.2011.

rest of the Eastern neighbours, which were proposed the concept of the Eastern Partnership.

This task was intended by Poland for a period longer than its presidency and is not easy because there is a number of areas with the potential conflicts, among others often contradictory interests in the foreign policy of the EU and Russia, for which the concept of the Eastern Partnership is interpreted as the infringement of the Russian interests in their area of influence, the disparate perception of the future of the security system in Europe, and the difference between the political cultures and the system of values⁹.

Among the strategic priorities of the Polish Presidency the concept of the Eastern Partnership and the promoting of the Eastern Policy had the prominent place. They consisted in pushing through the above-mentioned accession treaties, creating free trade zones, the visas and trade liberalization and the intensified economic cooperation. It became a part of a wider context of the union concept of building the international security and the context of the connected with it idea of counteracting the asymmetrical threats, which is written in the European Security Strategy.

One of the most important events of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union was the Summit of the Eastern Partnership, which took place on the 28–29th of September. This two-day meeting of the leaders of the countries and the governments took a strategic decision concerning the shape of the Eastern Partnership in the coming years. The Summit gave a political signal to further deepen the European integration of the Eastern neighbours of the EU, and at the same time the participants summed up the achievements of the Partnership to date which contribute to bringing the partner countries closer to the European norms, standards and values, and facilitating the political association and the economic integration with the EU. The meeting was closed with the accepting of the joint declaration, which was a clear sign for all six partner countries that the EU is ready to help them, to talk about their European

⁹ See: A. Dudek, *Szansa polskie Prezydencji – wkład w politykę wschodnią Unii Europejskiej...*, pp. 389–409.

aspirations and the forms of the closer integration¹⁰. The failure of the meeting was not signing the Ukraine-EU association treaty (among others because of the France's opposition), which was settled by the imprisonment and the sentencing (after a trial which was an insult to the principles of a law-governed state) of the former Prime Minister Julia Tymoszenko. The treaty was supposed to be the flagship of the Polish Presidency. The failed Polish diplomatic offensive consisted in the meeting of the Presidents of both countries, the mission of Aleksander Kwasniewski, and the meeting of the minister Radosław Sikorski with Rinat Achmetow. However, the conditions of establishing a non-visa travelling were agreed on, and the negotiations concerning the conditions for creating a free trade zone with Ukraine. The disadvantage of the Summit of the Eastern Partnership was the absence of Belarus. It may seem that the Eastern Partnership does not bring in much but this is one of the most advanced and the best financed programmes in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and is designed as a long term activity.

The strengthening of the energy policy and the issues concerning the energy security of the EU were another important tasks. Poland has proposed a deepened discussion on new solutions which would enable preserving the competitiveness of the European energy sector, and has taken up the initiative to work out the mechanisms of conducting a joint and competitive energy policy based on the new regulations of the Lisbon Treaty¹¹.

During the Polish Presidency our aim concerning the European security was to carry on a debate on these 4 key aspects which will influence the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) which should draw the attention of the EU institutions and its member states to the need of work-

¹⁰ M. Wojciechowski, *Przybliżymy Unii Rosję. Przed polską prezydencją w UE*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 14.10. 2010; See: L. Koćwin, *Partnerstwo Wschodnie. Aktorzy i interesy regionalnej geopolityki Unii Europejskiej*, [in:] 2011 Polska Prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej..., pp. 357–371.

¹¹ K. Załucki, *Polityka energetyczna i bezpieczeństwo energetyczne Unii Europejskiej jako jeden z priorytetów polskiej Prezydencji*, [in:] 2011 Polska Prezydencja w Unii Europejskiej, ed. R. Riedel, P. Klimontowski, Opole 2010, pp. 409–431.

ing out a systematized stand on this matter¹². In the both above mentioned matters one should have not expected the effects during the half-year Presidency.

The general international situation was the extremely vital factor which was harmonizing with the Presidency because decisions are not taken autonomously and must have the acceptance of the other countries. It seems that this scope of influence in the context of generally difficult international situation brought the least number of solutions.

The urgent problem was the situation in the Northern Africa. Poland had a very complicated role to balance between the aspiration of France, Italy and Great Britain, which have special interests in the region. It seems that our refusal to Take part In the military operations In Libya has weakened the negotiating position of Poland, especially as the importance of the voice in the European debate on the union security is measured in the strength of the practical military involvement in the problems connected with it and the capabilities member states in this scope. If we demand respect for our country as the substantial player in the EU, we should take decisions up to such a position, especially as the main arguments in the case of Libya concerned values like the human rights. Poland did not questioned the goals of the intervention but justified its decision with the limited means, which reflects badly on our approach to the idea of a European solidarity.

The last and the most important accent of the Polish Presidency was the Minister Radosław Sikorski's address „Poland and the Future of the European Union” on Polish European Policy and its European vision at the forum of the German Society for the Foreign Affairs. The speech took place during the visit to Berlin on the 28th of November 2011.

The head of the Polish diplomacy in a brilliant way used the asset which was the end of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union to, being in the centre of events, put forward to Europe an unusually interesting vision. Soon after the prestigious weekly magazine “The Economist”

¹² Klich: cztery priorytety polskiej prezydencji w dziedzinie bezpieczeństwa, <http://www.euractiv.pl/polityka-zagraniczna/artykul/klich-cztery-priorytety-polskiej-prezydencji-w-dziedzinie-bezpieczestwa-002476> (updated: 08.03. 2011).

praised Sikorski by saying that this speech showed “a great change” in the Polish foreign policy, and by underlying wholly deserves the attention of the world media: “We can see a historic moment: the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs addresses the Berlin listeners like a political heavyweight contestant with serious ideas and demands”. Sikorski in the capital of Germany demanded changes¹³.

Berlin was not chosen accidentally, because Sikorski addressed Germans to save the euro zone. Poland wanted to be a significant player in the context of French-German-Italian proposals to change the union treaties to strengthen the finance discipline in the euro zone. The Minister was convincing that the crisis was not caused by the recent extending of the EU because, on the contrary, the EU was strengthened by the fact (for example the German export to the member states admitted in 2004 grew from 15 bn euro in 1993 to 95 bn euro in 2010). He diagnosed the euro crisis as the dramatic manifestation of the European powerlessness “because its founders created a system which can be lead to a collapse by each of its members, for which both it and the surrounding will pay an appalling price”. The Minister called for the strengthening the European institutions and the deepening the integration where necessary but with the maintaining the national prerogatives in some areas such as the national identity, religion, lifestyle, public morality, and the income and VAT tax rates¹⁴.

Minister Sikorski stated that the cooperation in the EU could be the answer to the present economic crisis and he called on Germany for defending the eurozone naming its collapse as the biggest threat for Poland: “We ask Germany to admit that it is the biggest beneficiary of the present agreements and because of it the duty to save them is with Germany [...] on account of the size and the history of your country you are held responsible for preserving peace and democracy on our continent [...]. What, as the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, do I consider the biggest risk for the European security and prosperity today, on the 28th

¹³ “The Economist”: Historyczne wystąpienie Sikorskiego, polityczna waga ciężka, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 29.11.2011.

¹⁴ J. Pawlicki, Sikorski w Berlinie. Polska ustawia Unię, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 28.11.2011.

of November 2011? (...) It is not a terrorism, it is not the Taliban, and for sure it is not the German tanks. It is not even the Russian missiles we were threatened with by President Medvedev when he had said about deploying them on the order with the EU. The biggest threat for the safety and prosperity of Poland would be the collapse of the eurozone. And I demand help from Germany. You know full well that nobody else can do it”.

Minister Sikorski also suggested the reducing and simultaneous strengthening the European Commission, introducing pan european list of candidates for the European Parliament, and joining the posts of the Chairperson of the European Council and the European Commission. Polish Minister diagnosed the European crisis as not only the debt crisis but also the confidence crisis or, to be more precise, the crisis of credibility in the eyes of investors: “Let us be honest to ourselves and let us admit that the markets have full right to doubt the credibility of the eurozone as the Stability and Development Pact was contravened 60 times¹⁵, and not only by the smaller countries which have troubles but also by the founders in the heart of the eurozone”¹⁶.

The measure of the success of the Radosław Sikorski’s address in Berlin is also the fact that in the years to come almost every discussion considering the future of the EU will have to refer to it. Not only did the head of the Polish diplomacy skilfully sum up the European deficiencies but also submit the extremely interesting comment which is hard to ignore.

Polish comments after the completion of the Presidency were more neutral than these ones in Europe. Jacek Pawlicki in “Gazeta Wyborcza” has headlined his article: “Poland has managed”. According to him “the agreement about the common European patent and the signing of the accession treaty with Croatia can be viewed at as the problems taken care of”. By contrast the list of failures should be topped by the collapse of the EU’s Eastern policy proved by the powerlessness of Poland and the EU towards the regime in Belarus, and in the Ukraine proved by the missing

¹⁵ http://www.monstersandcriticp.com/news/europe/news/article_1675056.php/LEAD-Merkel-affirms-demand-for-financial-transaction-tax (updated: 2012.03.03).

¹⁶ Wizyta Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych R. Sikorskiego w Berlinie, portal Ambasady Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Berlinie, <http://www.berlin.polemb.net/?document=2297> (updated: 2012.03.20)

the moment before the arrest of the former Prime Minister Julia Tymoszenko. In his opinion Poland managed as “the one of the last guardians of the vanishing slowly common Union. The crisis has highlighted the crack and the shift of Europe towards something officially called the intergovernmental union but what in fact is the return to the dominance of the national interests over common European interest. [...] Half-year Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union was, because of the eurozone crisis, probably the most difficult in the history of this undertaking. There were no fireworks but also no slip-ups.”

Igor Janke in the conservative daily paper „Rzeczpospolita” stated that it was „a phoney presidency” because „the management centre was not only not in the country exercising the Presidency but even not in the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and in the European Parliament. It was in two capitals: Berlin and Paris. (...) Today we know that for this half a year Poland was a conference centre and that over this period we were administering the huge number of gatherings, meetings and negotiations. We had a lot of office work, some of it concerning the substance but it had not much in common with the real governing.” This comment is a show of the lack of knowledge what the essence of the Presidency is. On the other hand it was aptly pointed out by Zbigniew Parafinowicz in “Dziennik Gazeta Prawna” that “the Polish government from the very beginning cranked up the atmosphere around the Presidency. Needlessly. There is no sense to create great expectations around the function which by definition is devoid of spectacular nature. [...] For those who naively want to believe that over this half a year we were the navel of the EU I will give you an example from the last EU summit. Last Friday the biggest televisions in the world were relating the Tusk-Barroso-Rompuy conference up to the beginning of the meeting of Angela Merkel with the journalists. Even the being in an irritating way and overly euro-enthusiastic EURONEWS TV switched from Tusk-Barroso-Rompuy to Merkel”¹⁷.

¹⁷ Polska dała radę – bez fajerwerków, ale i bez wpadek, <http://www.presseurop.eu/pl/content/press-review/1293661-polska-dala-rade-bez-fajerwerkow-ale-i-bez-wpadek> (updated: 2012.03.12)

The Polish Presidency was recapitulated on the 14th of December 2011 in Strasbourg in a forum of the European Parliament, where “Europe” appraised the Presidency highly. The critical opinion were expressed by the member of the Polish opposition sitting in the European Parliament during a rather embarrassing spectacle consisting in presenting the inner political feuds in the forum. Tomasz Poręba (PiS) stated that “my impression is that the Presidency was weak, withdrawn and not very ambitious” and that the Polish Presidency „from the beginning assumed falsely that we in the EU will only administer”. Similarly critically the Presidency was recapitulated by Jacek Kurski (Solidarna Polska): „I am torn today between pride and disappointment: the pride comes from the fact that Poland and Poles were exercising the Presidency, the disappointment is caused by its results”.

While it is hard to deny the Polish Presidency successes and efficient organization, the arguments put forward by the opponents, especially those expressed before the end of the half-year Presidency of the Council of the EU, in many cases seemed premature, often unjustified or arising from the political fierceness, and not infrequently were the effect of a sheer lack of knowledge about the essence of the presidency or its mythicizing¹⁸.

The Chief of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso stated that Poland has risen the standards for the next, Danish, Presidency. He added that “the Polish Presidency has been working with a great professionalism and enthusiasm. 30 years after the introducing of martial law Poland has demonstrated its attachment to Europe, democracy and our shared values (...) We can say that Poland has proved its reputation and fulfilled our expectations, maintained the partnership spirit in the European institutions and in the member states”. He has emphasized that our country kept pressing for more Europe during the crisis which took place not only in the financial sphere, and he recapitulated that while exercising the presidency Poland got itself out of the collision of its own and the

¹⁸ Szerzej: P. Stefaniak, Plus za organizację dla polskiej prezydencji UE, minus – za brak inicjatyw, Economic portal wnp.pl (updated: 30.08.2011); Ostra ocena polskiej prezydencji. “Może jeszcze lot w kosmos?”, in: <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/ostra-ocena-polskiej-prezydencji-moze-jeszcze-lot> – (updated: 20.10.2011); P. Żerko, Polityczny teatr zamiast dyplomacji, „Rzeczpospolita” 30.09. 2011.

European problems: “Poland has found the best way to recognize and treat its national interests as the European interests. It was feasible and Poland has introduced some new elements of the priorities such as the external energy policy and the neighbourhood policy”.

Jerzy Buzek, who was at that moment finishing his tenure, has assessed that the half a year has proved to Europe that “Poland is not a country which has continuant problems with its neighbours or a country which is poorly organized” and he referred to the predominating favourable opinions about the Polish Presidency in the European Presidency. Jerzy Buzek among the achievements has mentioned the passing of the six acts, progress in the matter of the uniform European patent, the signing of the accession treaty with Croatia, the summit of the Eastern Partnership and passing the regulations protecting the crime victims in Europe.

The Polish Presidency was also praised by the leaders of the social democrats, Martin Schulz, and of the European Peasants, Joseph Daul, who said: “You have presented the vision of Europe which is proud of its values and its success, the vision of Europe which is confident in its ability to influence the whole world. Paradoxically, the crisis we have been experiencing may be a great opportunity for the Europeans to become enthusiastic again”. On the other hand Martin Schulz stated that the Polish Presidency „beyond a shadow of a doubt was the best one over the last few years” and he added that „the Polish government and Polish Office workers displayed tremendous professionalism”. Olle Schmidt from the faction of the Liberals and Democrats said that „Tusk’s policy during the Presidency was truly European”, and Bas Eickhout from the faction of the Greens thanked Donald Tusk for the efforts which were taken during the struggle against the financial crisis. Prime Minister Donald Tusk has praised Polish office workers working in the structures of the EU during the Presidency for the professionalism.

It is obvious that a lot of matters have not been taken care of: the lack of the EU consent to extend the Schengen zone in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, the lack of assent of the Great Britain to change in the EU treaty in the way enabling the strengthening the budgetary discipline. Also, the discussion on the budget has not been carried out in the desirable for Poland way. Because of the crisis the project of the budget says about

increasing it only by the inflation rate, the option favoured by the EU old member states as the biggest payers¹⁹. This general outline does not include all the problems troubling the EU which the Polish Presidency had to stand up to. The most important task was exercising the Presidency in the way enabling Poland obtaining the image of a responsible member state of the EU, which in the first place accomplishes the common interests (the essence of the presidency) and able to weave in and carry out its own national interests. Generally speaking while holding the Presidency Poland became the coordinator of hundreds of meetings and stood up to the current EU policy on a scale experienced never before. It was a tremendous logistical task even with the cut down prerogatives of the Presidency.

At the same time blatant promotion of the Presidency in Polish mass media resulted in the exaggerated image of our role in the EU. The truth is that the Polish strategic interests could have only been weaved in a system of the effective organization of meetings of the government representatives of the member states, chairing discussions and seeking compromises. The Presidency as such had to be exercised impartially and without forcing through the national interests. The effects of Polish Presidency will become more evident in the future because, despite being the co-organizer of the political life of the EU and knowing the union realities, discussions initiated in chosen areas need a lot of time and negotiations in a long perspective. It applies for example to the projects of the union orders concerning the facilitating of e-trade, European law of contracts, the discussion on the elimination of inequality in the area of health care of the inhabitants of individual EU member states, and amending common framework in the scope of the electronic signatures. There are a lot of such matters but the action taken will take time to produce an effect. There is no doubt though that over these 6 months of a special activity numerous Polish office workers and politicians have gained considerable experience concerning the work in the union structures.

¹⁹ W Strasburgu podsumowano polskie przewodnictwo. Europa wysoko ocenia prezydencję, <http://www.tvp.pl/publicystyka/polityka/polska-prezydencja-w-radzie-unii-europejskiej/aktualnosci/europa-wysoko-ocenia-prezydencje/5905201> (updated: 17.12.2012.)

It seems that the favourable opinion, expressed during the conference on the role of the Central and Eastern Europe in the transatlantic relations which was held on the 14th of October 2011 in the Washington Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), makes an interesting contribution to the analysis of the Polish Presidency. Expert of the Washington Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), Robert Kron, recapitulating the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union stated that it could “be characterized by “three C”: confidence, competence and comfort within the EU”. He has also emphasized that the Presidency was facilitated by relatively good economic situation and a stable government: „It is a well-prepared presidency with proper aims. Ambitious but not excessively”²⁰.

Generally speaking, it seems that that with the new formula of the institutional balance in the European Union the role of the presidency is still dependent on the position of the country in the EU, and will fluctuate in the wide range from the role of the organizer to that of the leader depending on the circumstances and the international situation. The developing of the political position of the Presidency after coming into effect of the Lisbon Treaty definitely requires longer political practice.

Abstract

President performs his tasks mainly through the specific and politically strong body of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. The Author devoted her treatise to the issues of Polish Presidency in the European Union. The Author pointed out the variety of factors that need to be taken into account when estimating effectiveness of this institution. Indicating the problems troubling the EU Author pointed out how Polish Presidency became coordinator of many meetings what was tremendous logistical tasks. The final element of the treatise was the analysis of opinions formulated inside Poland – their character was predictably determined by political bias.

²⁰ USA: pozytywna ocena polskiej prezydencji, RC/PAP from 14.10.2011, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/raporty/polskie-przewodnictwo-w-ue/usa-pozytywna-ocena-polskiej-prezydencji,1,4881378,wiadomosc.html> (updated:18.10.2011).