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THE MIGRATION ISSUE IN POLISH FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN EUROPE

Keywords: foreign policy, migration, migration crisis, the Visegrad Group

ABSTRACT: The aim of this article is to analyze Polish foreign policy, its nature and instruments of implementation under the migration crisis. The migration issue is in this case the determinant of foreign policy, which verified and actuated Polish external policies in the bilateral relations, as well as in the framework of multilateral cooperation. The migration issue has also become a determinant of European policy of Poland prejudging the extent and mechanisms of Polish involvement in the solution of the migration crisis in European institutions. It should be noted that a different approach to EU policies and its activities to prevent and mitigate the effects of the influx of people on its territory is reflected in the relations between Member States, as exemplified by the Polish-German relations. The migration issue is also reflected in the activities of the Visegrad Group. Fear of the consequences of mass migration into the EU and, above all, opposition to the obligation to accept refugees based on the quota system proposed by the European Commission intensified cooperation within the Visegrad Group. From the Polish foreign policy perspective, the Visegrad Group is seen as an important entity influencing its effects.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy understood through the prism of action is subordinated to the achievement of the goal assumed by the state in order to form a specific reaction or its lack of another country, region or international

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organization. Evidence of these actions, their nature and the dynamics are the result of conscious and defined needs and interests of the state, determined by the conditions forming a derivative of an internal and external environment of the state (Zięba, 2007, p. 387). Diverse and multidimensional foreign policy reflects the vital interests of the state, which are located at many levels and involve many spheres of the State and society functioning. An important element of foreign policy in certain conditions can become a migration issue understood as a complex process of movement of people (individuals or larger communities) depending on its character within the state – the internal dimension, or between different states – the external dimension (foreign or international migration) (Kaczmarczyk, 2005, pp. 17–22). The degree of migration issue reflected in the foreign policy is conditioned by many factors, where the important role is played by the nature of the state (emigration, immigration, emigration-immigration), as well as adherence to specific international groupings of political organizations and processes (Polish Migration Policy, p. 129). Being reflected in the priorities and objectives of foreign policy pursued both at the level of bilateral relations, as well as in the form of multilateral cooperation; in certain circumstances it absorbs the activity of the state. At this point it should be emphasized that migration situation and its challenges imply the development of an active policy in this regard and the use of available instruments of foreign policy aimed at modeling and controlling migration. It is also worth noting that the migration issue can become a tool to achieve own expectations and interests in relation to other states or organizations, often at the expense of its actors. The migration crisis faced by the European Union as a consequence of the so-called Arab Spring strengthened in connection with the conflict in Syria caused the situation in which some countries used it for their own purposes in the international arena. Turkish policy towards the European Union or Russian to Finnish is an example of using the migration issue for these states' own purposes.

The mobility of people is a common situation and affects every state, regardless of its capacity, resources, social and economic potential, immigration or emigration nature. However, the highlighted evidence can decide on the scale, directions, character, and above all the consequences

of this phenomenon for the development and operation of a particular state and society. Taking into account the complexity of the migration, the multiplicity of factors that determine it and the consequences associated with the inflow or outflow of the people, foreign policy is a tool to assist the implementation of objectives and directions of the state policy in the field of migration management.

Due to its implications for both the functioning of the European Union, as well as for bilateral relations and regional cooperation, migration crisis is reflected in the foreign policy of the Member States. The influx of people from third countries within the EU is one of the main factors that determines the foreign policy of the Member States and decides on the level and nature of cooperation, both between Member States and between EU and the third countries. European countries are concentrated in varying degrees on the search for ways to solve the migration crisis, and the size of their interest is derived from the scale of immigration in their territory and the consequences that it brings. It is difficult to build unity and solidarity between Member States in the face of challenges experienced by the community. Individual states represent different attitudes to this issue due to their own defined interests, assumptions of immigration policy, and most importantly, different levels of immigrants that come to their territories. Recent years have shown that the EU is not capable of a uniform response to emerging security threats, an example of which is the lack of ability to solve the biggest problem that EU has been struggling since its foundation, namely the migration crisis. As noted by Agnieszka Weinar, in the face of a humanitarian crisis values on which the EU is built proved to be incompatible with the values of other Member States, including the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (2016, p. 2). In contrast, in the opinion of Anna Potyrała, discussion on the shape, character and directions of European migration policy showed that European unity and solidarity is a myth verified by the migration crisis in the face of challenges and threats (2015, p. 35).

The aim of this article is to analyze the assumptions of Polish foreign policy towards migration crisis. In the article, it is assumed that the migration issue is a variable of foreign policy, which verified and actuated Polish external policies in the bilateral relations, as well as in the framework of

multilateral cooperation. The migration issue has also become a determinant of European policy of Poland prejudging the extent and mechanisms of Polish involvement in solving the migration crisis.

Based on the exploration of sources and its political analysis the article formulates and subjects to verification the following hypotheses:

1. The migration issue is reflected in implemented foreign policy, its priorities and objectives;
2. The migration issue is a factor determining Polish-German relations;
3. The migration issue is a factor integrating the Visegrad Group states;

MIGRATION CRISIS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS OF POLAND. CASE STUDY

The migration crisis has become a challenge for the EU Member States on many levels – social, political, economic, cultural. It showed the inability of the Union's decision-making in crisis situations, the lack of a common response to the migration crisis, and importantly the lack of a common vision of solving the problem of uncontrolled immigration. Member States and their particularly defined interests proved unable to react quickly to emerging threats to European security. Consequently, this situation outlined the division of the states into those that are in favor of accepting refugees and proposals of the EU institutions regarding the need to relocate them between all Member States and into those that opposed the imposition of obligation to accept refugees without taking into account the specifics, experiences and capabilities of individual countries. At the same time it should be noted that the polarization of positions on the migration crisis is not a consequence of the reluctance of countries, which opposed the instruments to provide support and assistance to refugees proposed by the EU, but only a rejection of the EU's policy in

this regard. Member States are interested in the elaboration of mechanisms for joint action with regard to the capabilities, resources and experiences of the states without automatism and imposing solutions, in particular on the forced system of refugee relocation.

Emphasizing national interests and presenting different attitudes towards ways of preventing the consequences of uncontrolled influx of immigrants (both economic migrants and refugees) in the EU is reflected in the bilateral relations between Member States and third countries. At this point, there should be indicated Polish-German relations determined by the intensity of the fact that both countries present a different view of the migration crisis in Europe and ways to respond to the massive influx of immigrants.

As noted by Krzysztof Malinowski, Polish-German relations are relations of two states, which, although being closely linked by historical experiences, at the same time are constantly confronted with new challenges (Malinowski, 2015, p. 48). Today, the challenge is the migration crisis to which both countries hold different attitudes. Despite the diverse effects on the socio-political and economic situation in each of them, they vary the merits applied by the EU institutions mechanisms of management of migration flows. Regardless of disparities in the inflow of immigrants in the territory of both states, and most importantly, the consequences implied by the migration crisis, this issue has become contentious in Polish-German relations. However, the migration issue is only one factor that affects the level and intensity of Polish-German cooperation. At this point, there should be indicated the issue of the Nord Stream 2 perceived by both states differently – Germany in business terms and Poland in the context of energy security and European unity (Grupa Wyszehradzka kluczowa...). An equally important factor in the relationship is a matter of respect for the rule of law in Poland and the procedure for monitoring the situation in Poland, initiated by the European Commission (Nikt nie może wyręczyć...). Critical evaluation formulated about Polish decision makers are taken reluctantly mostly by right-wing parties that use harsh rhetoric to strengthen anti-German image. Above all, however, both states present a different view on the EU

response to the migration crisis and mechanisms to limit and control immigration. From the Polish perspective, decision of the German government to open the border, causing a massive influx of immigrants (both refugees and economic migrants), was the independent decision of the government of Angela Merkel the consequences of which are borne by the other Member States, including Poland. The Republic of Poland does not accept German policy in the context of the migration crisis, as well as ways to respond to the migration crisis postulated by the EU institutions. Due to Poland's opposition to the refugee relocation system proposed by the European Commission, migration has become a key issue in both the Polish European policy, as well as the Polish-German dialogue.

It should be noted, however, that the Polish position in this respect has evolved – from categorical opposition to the need for the reception of refugees “under duress” to the consent to participation in relocating refugees in the name of “unity” and “solidarity” of the EU. Split of views on migration crisis highlighted with the winning of the Law and Justice (PiS) party in parliamentary elections in Poland in autumn 2015. (Niemcy wobec fali uchodźców...). PiS consistently negated system of compulsory relocation of refugees criticizing the Ewa Kopacz government's decision, who despite previously expressed disapproval finally agreed on accepting 7 thousand refugees during the extraordinary summit of the European Council on the immigration crisis held on 23 September 2015. It is worth mentioning that already during the election campaign – as never before – the migration issue was part of the electoral programs becoming one of the essential elements of the political debate. Politicians used simplifications, often also stereotypes, and accentuated the risks of immigration, with special attention to immigration of people from countries of different culture and religion. For the purposes of the election campaign the problem of influx of immigrants to Poland was analyzed both in humanitarian and solidarity categories. Moreover, politicians stressed the dangers and risks that are associated with the potential influx. On the one hand, they used arguments to encourage the involvement of Poland into European action, but on the other, pointed to the need to pursue the national interest that required maintaining opposition to the system of forced relocation of refugees. After the electoral victory of PiS opinions opposing solutions

postulated by the EU institutions strengthened and, above all, resistance mechanism against the relocation of refugees intensified. Politicians pointed to the need to cope with the influx of immigrants from Ukraine, emphasized the existence of cultural and religious differences, and also accentuated the potential threat to the internal security of the state, including the threat of terrorism. At the same time it should be emphasized that the above argument reinforced the reluctance of society to accept refugees.

The ongoing discussion and the manner of its conduct in the country and in international fora caused the negative perception of Poland as being unfavorable to migrants (Łodziński, Szonert, 2016, p. 31). Poland and other countries contesting the EU proposals were called upon to act in solidarity in the face of the crisis, which was seen as a challenge for the entire EU, not only the countries directly burdened with the influx of refugees. State reluctant to accept refugees were seen by others as those who evade the fulfillment of international obligations, avoiding the responsibility for solving the problems faced by the international community, or not identifying with the countries that took the burden of responding to the migration crisis (Potyrała, 2016, pp. 44–45). Such arguments often guided on bilateral relations. This can be reflected by Polish-German relations which, by virtue of presenting different attitudes on migration issues, as well as the argument that accompanied explaining the Polish opposition, were at an impasse. The situation was worsened by the opinions contesting the action of Germany in the context of the migration crisis, which were formulated both in the ongoing election campaign in Poland before the autumn parliamentary elections, and after the victory of PiS and the constitution of Beata Szydło government. The opinions expressed among others by Jarosław Kaczyński indicating that the refugees is the problem of Germans, who have contributed themselves to the escalation of the phenomenon of creating a “social magnet” attracting economic migrants (Sprawozdanie, 2015, p. 14), only reinforce the belief of anti-German rhetoric in Polish public discourse, which has already become apparent in the presidential campaign. Similarly, allegations of blackmailing European Union, pressure or “putting our states against the wall” formulated against Germany did not serve the Polish-German relations. Resistance to accepting immigrants made firm belief in Germany

that Poland is a country generally little friendly towards foreigners (Niemiecka prasa...). The attitude of Poland and other states of the Central and Eastern Europe were described as non-Christian and “heartless” (“Die Welt” krytykuje Polskę...). In the case of Poland, formulated criticism was related to the years 2005–2007, when the governing PiS was using extremely sharp rhetoric with regard to Germany, in consequence, as noted by Roman Kuźniar, questioning the meaning of “Polish-German community of interests” (Kuźniar, 2012, p. 304). As a result of modifications to the assumptions of Polish foreign policy in autumn 2015, and most of all articulation of differences of opinion in the assessment of the causes and ways of responding to the migration crisis in the EU, the level of Polish-German dialogue has worsened. Moreover, Polish-German relations show no mutual trust characteristic of the previous years. However, the current state of Polish and German relations is influenced both by the Polish position on the immigration crisis, as well as other factors. These include expressed views on the role of Germany in Europe, accusations formulated by right-wing politicians of German domination in the EU, as well as the perception of the political situation in Poland by German politicians, including their relation to actions of PiS regarding the Constitutional Court (Wolf-Powęska, 2016). At the same time it should be emphasized that the critical politicians of the two countries assess this relationship as positive, friendly and being important for the interests of both countries. In the view of both parties the policy of “open doors” led towards immigrants by the German government, as well as contestation of EU migration policy mechanisms by PiS government could not determine the mutual relations.

However, language of diplomacy is guided by specific requirements. The reality deviates slightly from this optimistic picture. German commentators compare the Polish-German relations to several recent years and define them as “difficult and sluggish” with “no mutual trust characteristic particularly for the government of Donald Tusk” (Rok rządów PiS z niemieckiej perspektywy...). While pragmatism requires cooperation between the neighboring countries, which for years have common interests both in bilateral and multilateral dimension, however, the migration crisis forced mutual prejudices. Consequently, it differs from what it could

and should be. The attention to the intensification of the relationship, regardless of the existing differences, is justified – as recalled by Anna Wolf-Powęska – by not always conscious “common problems” (W Polsce, czyli nigdzie ...). Regardless of the genesis of the problem, migration have become a permanent feature of the European landscape that demands a response and undertaking such activities, which promote wise use of “immigrant capital”. Not forgetting the potential dangers of uncontrolled influx of immigrants, they may be a factor in strengthening the social, cultural and economic development of Europe.

POLISH COOPERATION WITHIN THE VISEGRAD GROUP AND THE MIGRATION ISSUE

Migration crisis has created a difficult challenge for European solidarity and system of functioning of the European Union as an organization. The impact of the migration crisis on functioning of the EU as a community of interests can be proved by its split into two factions. The first is a coalition of states advocating the EU proposals, the other is called “reluctant coalition”, which is constituted mainly by the Visegrad Group countries. Migration crisis has become a denominator activity of the Visegrad Group on the international arena, and most of all a factor determining its community of interest expressed in the European Union. Apart from motives that are forming the convergence of positions of the Visegrad countries, today, migration problems encountered by the EU, and in particular the strategy to prevent and mitigate the effects of the mass influx of people to its territory, decide on cooperation of the Visegrad countries. Regardless of the discrepancies occurring periodically regarding this issue (e.g. the withdrawal by the government of Ewa Kopacz from the common position of the Group and consent to the relocation of migrants in September 2015), now these countries present a common approach on this issue (Gniazdowski, 2015). Without distancing from the cooperation in crisis conditions, relying on the ideas of solidarity and shared responsibility, the Visegrad countries postulate to modify the EU approach. They declare willingness to fulfill the obligations provided for

in the EU *acquis* and to increase the involvement in joint activities. However, they also indicate a need to consider their proposals (*Wspólne oświadczenie...*). For months, the point of contention remains a system of mandatory numbers of refugee relocation advocated by the European Commission and some EU member states. Advocating for voluntarism in this area the Visegrad Group countries contests this obligation to accept refugees without taking into account the capabilities, potential and experience of individual states. The Visegrad Group approach to migration policy postulated since the autumn 2016 is the concept of “flexible solidarity” conferring the right to individual states to decide on the ways and extent of participation in the migration policy of the EU and solving the refugee crisis. This concept assumes that the capability to accept refugees and immigrants should be tailored to the specifics of the country, its features and experiences (*Joint Statement of the Heads of Governments of the V4 Countries ...*). They note that the actions taken by the EU should aim in the first place to limit the flow of migrants, both now and in the future, e.g. by: more effective protection of the EU external borders, combating illegal migration, removing the causes of migration, and also supporting third countries lying on the migration routes. They propose the creation of Migration Crisis Mechanism, the task of which would be to support refugees outside the EU, as well as the exchange of information and joint search for new solutions (*Migracyjny mechanizm kryzysowy...*).

A common approach to migration crisis – or perhaps more appropriately – approach connecting the Visegrad countries critical of the EU’s migration policy is not, however, the result of the convergence of global interests and regional solidarity, but is dictated by the particular interests of each of the countries. Guided by individual premises these states oppose proposals made by the EU institutions to solve the migration crisis, which in their opinion may cause an increase in the influx of immigrants into the EU. They deny EU solutions pointing to the consequences of the influx of immigrants, such as increased security threats, as well as social and economic dimension of migration. Regardless of the fact that the effects of the migration crisis concerns individual Visegrad Group states in varying degrees, they present the same critical attitude to the activities of EU institutions by lobbying for the protection of the external borders of

EU and consistent enforcement of EU migration policy guidelines. Stressing the need for humanitarian assistance for refugees they contest primarily the imposed mandatory mechanism of accepting immigrants mainly for economic and socio-cultural reasons. They justify their position by top-down nature of the imposed solutions, which do not take into account the will and most importantly the specificity of each country and the nature of the problems they face, but also the immediacy of postulated solutions (Niekontrolowane migracje...). The opposition of the Visegrad countries to the EU's solutions is also determined by internal conditions arising e.g. from the limited resources of these countries. As noted by Dariusz Kalan, in comparison with Western Europe the reluctance of Visegrad countries to accept immigrants is determined by their wealth, weakness of the administration and deficiencies in infrastructure, as well as no history with Islamic culture and generally negative experiences with minorities (2015, p. 1).

In the light of the above, it should be emphasized that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are not the destination for refugees and economic migrants. They are primarily a transit route for migrants not seen as the attractive place to settle. At the same time, the scale and dynamics of this transit through the territories of individual countries varies and depends on migration routes. So far, among the Visegrad countries this was Hungary that has disproportionately borne the consequences of the influx of immigrants. Because of its geographical location it is seen as the transit country and – of all the Visegrad countries – bore the cost of refugee crisis. The other Visegrad Group states were and are much less affected by the influx of illegal immigrants. At the same time, however, it should be noted that the elimination of some transit routes make refugees and illegal immigrants search for alternative routes ones. Countries included in the Visegrad Group were seen for years as a kind of entrance to the EU and also often used only as a transit route on the way to the richer countries of the “old EU” that guarantee, above all, a higher level of life and what is important higher social support and protection. Despite the systematic improvement of the economic situation, these states are still seen as countries with a lower potential and fewer opportunities of development, resulting in significantly lower inflow of migrants into their territories in

comparison with countries with higher economic and social parameters. Geographical location, economic potential, available resources, labor market conditions and the nature of migration policy are some of the factors that determine the scale and intensity of migration processes in individual countries. An important role is played by formal and legal conditions regulating migration processes, as well as the approach of the societies accepting immigrants, their openness and the degree of acceptance. As a result, each of these states is characterized by a different migration situation and diverse problems that generate both the process of immigration and emigration. Regardless of diverse migration situation of the Visegrad states, migration has become a factor integrating their cooperation. Without analyzing the motives of the Visegrad countries, the intensity of their cooperation is now determined by migration crisis. Solidary position presented by the Member States on this issue integrates the Visegrad Group to unprecedented level. However, when confronting the current state with the past experience of cooperation within the Visegrad Group, this does not translate into solidary action of the group in other areas. Member States presented and continue to present different views on many issues. Moreover – in the past not all equally perceived the Group as an important instrument for supporting the implementation of foreign policy priorities. It should be emphasized that only from the perspective of Poland, the Visegrad Group consistently over the years has been seen as an important mechanism of cooperation. This is confirmed by emphasizing the role of the Visegrad Group in the foreign policy of Beata Szydło government, both in the context of cooperation within Central and Eastern Europe, as well as issues on the European agenda, including defense, energy security, cohesion policy and infrastructure (Informacja ministra...). In the perception of the other Member States, cooperation within the Visegrad Group is an important initiative, but not the priority as in the case of Poland. Development of situation in Europe in connection with the migration crisis caused intensified cooperation within the Visegrad Group. However, as shown in the history, it may be temporary and ad hoc. Past experience shows that Member States have different interests and often hold different attitudes towards the European policy. Agreement between the Member States of the Visegrad Group on

migration, and also on the construction of the Nord Stream 2, does not mean conformity of views on all issues troubling the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Not all countries agree even on the assessment of the ways and directions of reforming the European Union presenting in this regard own projects and own expectations. The attitude of Poland and Hungary in this field is not accepted by the other countries which distance themselves from the rhetoric and ideas presented by them. Moreover, not always Poland and Hungary presented identical positions on issues of importance to the region and Europe. The example is the withdrawal of Hungary from the joint declarations of the Visegrad Group condemning Russian aggression in Ukraine. In conclusion, particularism and assessment of reality from the perspective of own interest determines the agreement or disagreement on positions of Member States of the Group. Nowadays, the migration crisis is the cement of the Visegrad Group, and the migration issue was promoted to the group of major problems that the Visegrad dialogue focuses on.

CONCLUSION

Given the polarization of the EU Member States opinions to the migration crisis, and more specifically to the ways of its solution, the biggest dispute concerns the instruments of effective influence on the scale of immigration in the EU and the need to adopt effective mechanisms to verify the nature of immigrants and the management of reasons for migration flows. While support for refugees is seen in terms of humanitarian aid, the attitude to economic migrants determines the policies of the Member States and their approach towards the proposals of the EU institutions. Currently, Member States' reaction to this phenomenon is directly proportional to the number of immigrants, which flows to them. States interested in the issue are these which, because of their geographical location, have become transit countries for migrants or the country of destination, for those who manage to enter the EU. A different approach to EU policies and its activities to prevent and mitigate the effects of the influx of people on its territory is reflected in the relations between Member

States, as exemplified by the Polish-German relations. At this point it is worth noting the Polish position against the EU's proposals for relocation of migrants reflected in its foreign policy. Polish plane of activity has become the Visegrad Group, the Member States of which share the Polish point of view and jointly (for now) present their ideas for the migration crisis and ways to solve it.

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