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**"Relations of Poland with the East and its place
in the European Union"**

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Let me start by reaching out to our history. I believe that in his most courageous dreams Prince Adam Czartoryski would not have been able to imagine that 150 years later in the same room Poles and French and a Russian Professor will discuss Poland's role as a Presidency of a united Europe and the room will bear the name of the Polish Pope. Unthinkable has happened in Europe. It is a miracle and we must care for it nurture it.

Let me also say that I feel really privileged to sit here in the company of Prof. Anatoly Torkunov and my friend, Minister Adam Rotfeld, top experts on Polish - Russian relations, instrumental in laying new foundations for their future. They have been very modest in describing their role but their opus magnum, the fruit of the work of the Group on Difficult Affairs, is something that I am sure will influence not only the relations between our two countries. Their hard work is important beyond the context of Polish-Russian relations. I see certain similarities between the nature of issue they cope with and the history of the European integration. European project emerged from the ashes of the Second World War, it was a reconciliation between nations project and the rationale for its evolution has been fuelled by the divisions in Europe. We have understood very well that Europe could not afford internal divisions. Today , taking into account the European and global context as well as the Russian modernization challenge, I can say that we cannot avoid division between European Union and Poland on the one hand and Russia on the other. That takes me directly to the context within which the issue we want to assess should be discussed. This is both the global and the European context.

First, the global context. It clearly influences EU fundamental objectives, its core interests and its strategic priorities. There is today a lot of uncertainty out there in the global world. I would even risk saying that the global world is becoming sort of messy. The emerging new order might be very different from what the West would see as a comfortable, business as usual one.

The experience of the informal world order, like G20, shows that the new emerging powers do not show readiness to co-share responsibility for common global interests. I am saying this because I believe that while the EU and also Russia must do a lot to get out of short term problems, they must not abandon long term strategic thinking and cope with both perspectives simultaneously.

Second, the European context. We live in tough and interesting times. Normally such times are fertile for brave ideas. The EU is going through unprecedented reforms bringing more Europe. One can say also that the crisis and reforms bring for citizens a sort of deep existential experience. The risk of inward looking Europe, as well as radicalisation in political and societal terms with all its consequences is not at all excluded.

In these difficult, tough and challenging times, Poland has assumed its duty as the Presidency of the European Union. Not being a member of the euro-zone, Poland has a limited influence on the decision-making concerning the future of the euro. Nevertheless the government took a courageous step of joining the Euro-Plus Pact as a means of showing that we also feel ourselves to be a fully fledged stakeholder in the European project, especially now when its construction is under an enormous stress. The most important reform package, the so-called economic governance 'six-pack' legislation was shepherded through the European Parliament and the Council under the Polish Presidency. It showed that Poland is taking very seriously its share of responsibility for crucial changes and reforms of the Union. The process itself has shown that Poland can be a good facilitator of good decisions, even if it is

not, at the moment at least, a primary agent of change when it comes to eurozone macroeconomic governance.

Our engagement is motivated by our understanding of and commitment to the general interest of the Union, which is, most immediately, securing the function of the common currency, and putting our economy on the path of sustained and sustainable growth.

We are determined to do everything in our power to prevent the emergence of the „two speed” Europe. In this context, Poland is a strong proponent of the idea that all the 27 countries-members of the EU should be allies in defending common currency , independently of their membership in the euro-zone or a lack of thereof.

The „two-speed” Europe concerns not only possible friction between the euro and non-euro countries, but also the dangerous re-invention of the old, and harmful, idea, of cultural difference between the Northern and the Southern Europe. The old stereotype of the Northern Europeans as industrious and hard-working people, careful with their money and the Southerners as not necessarily workaholic and free-spending their own, and other people's money, is already circulating in the context of the Greek crisis. This has nothing to do with rationality and it does huge, long lasting damage to our efforts at keeping Europe together. In order to end the crisis and to reconstitute Europe on a sound economic and institutional foundation we need to be together, supporting each other through this difficult time.

I think that Poland, as a relatively new member of the Union, feels the responsibility for the EU as a common enterprise in a very special way. The idea of the Union as the largest space of security and freedom in the world is very important for us. We also want it to continue as an open space for increasing diversity and hospitable place for reconciliation process among nations. We thus think that enlargement of the Union is and should be a continuous project in our neighbourhood that would obviously bring an added

value to Europe as a competitive actor on the global scene. We've been rather critical about the way neighbourhood policy has been designed since its inception as a ring of friends. That led to the focus on cooperation mostly with regimes. This is changing now, with the new proposal of the European Commission. People to people relations, business to business relations - this is clearly beginning to play a more decisive role.

In the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the EU does not offer the membership perspective, while it is softer on reforms conditionality. In fact, it should be the other way around. The EU should be open to long-term accession perspective and exercise strong conditionality with regard to the reforms.

We must bear in mind that in Eastern Europe, far more than in the Arab world, the EU is a guiding star for millions of people who feel European and who are very frustrated by ineffective governments and a persistent lack of development prospects.

In those countries, ordinary citizens are often more pro-European than leaders. So in this context, lifting visa restrictions, making travel easier for students and professionals could pay large dividends in the future. We should, therefore, be ready to propose a vision of a bigger, freer Europe. Of course, meetings like partnership summits are needed, but what is needed more is developing a deep and thick layers of contacts between societies and businesses. Long term EU Eastern partnership is also in the interest of Russia, who thanks to the EU could more effectively stabilise its own neighbourhood. Russia cannot envisage solving all the conflicts in the post-Soviet area all by itself. Like the EU, Russia is also discovering that it is only a part of the world. To secure its role it must take seriously the challenge of modernisation, also in technical and political terms.

Any strategic partnership between the EU and Russia cannot be based on interests only. A minimum of shared values is needed. It is clear that stability

in the Union comes largely from values. In Russia, values are not accepted as a base for our relationship. Norms and standards could replace them, but this is exactly what is still lacking.

We still feel in any negotiation between the EU and the Russian Federation a lack of confidence, a lack of transparency, a lack of acceptance of norms and standards. We have not established yet an effective formula for cooperative frameworks. In our relations, the focus is mostly on solving conflicts, not on common interests, both bilateral and global.

Now, let me go back to Poland's role in the European Union. The Presidency that we will still hold for more than 2 months is an example of exercising the power in the Union in a restrained, modest but at the same time constructive way. We handed over the EU accession documents to Croatia, which was not an administrative gesture but a political one. We want to finish the negotiations of the free trade agreement with Ukraine, which, as you know, has now become more difficult, and push for the same with Moldova and Georgia. We have also initiated preparations for the conference about the complex reforms in the southern neighbourhood.

To conclude, I hope that the legacy of the Polish Presidency will be the wide acceptance in Europe of the policy of openness and mutual attraction. Sometimes, there is a temptation in the air to treat crisis as an alibi for political narrowing of the European project, for slowing down the idea of enlargement. If such a pessimistic and defeatist option were accepted as an option for the Union, it would be a grave strategic error.

Poland has never accepted that there was a dilemma between enlarging and deepening of the Union. I venture to say that the Polish Presidency is also operating on the same understanding.

We deepen the Union by implementing its new model of the economic coordination. We also do it by the new energy policy, turned on one hand

toward conservation policy and toward seeking new sources, on the other. The energy policy extends the reach of the Union through attracting countries like Azerbaijan or Turkmenistan as crucial links in the European energy infrastructure.

The point is that the new challenges show the artificiality of the enlargement vs. deepening dilemma. The crisis is a catalyst, I hope, of a new way of looking at things, of a sort of „perestroika” in the Union, if I may use this word in the presence of my Russian colleague. We have to find innovative institutional arrangements, perhaps even re-write the Lisbon treaty if the need be, to meet those challenges.

In this new, demanding setting in the EU, Poland is a confident actor, an active stake-holder of the European project, a country that is ready to influence the events and to facilitate the needed changes. We are a predictable partner, although we can sometimes have differing views, like for example in the NordStream case. In other words, Poland has quickly come of age in the few years of its presence in the EU. And this is only to the good of all.

Thank you for your attention.