

9 – Poland's Membership in the EU

Polish Politics in a European Context

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Slides are available on: www.v4ce.net

First experiences

Fear that EU enlargement will paralyse the EU decision making process

- Weak and changing governments in new democracies
- Larger representation of Eurosceptic parties
- Countries lacking a consensus culture

There was the fear that parties in the new member states will abuse EU topics in internal politics

Poland gave a first taste of this ...

...2003 it voted against the draft Constitution

Leaders of the opposition pressured the Prime Minister in the „Nice or Death“ campaign

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Poland in the institutions: Council

In the European Council (meeting of EU Presidents/Prime Ministers):

- no Old against New members occurred, but flexible alliances
 - Spain, Portugal + Baltic Countries
 - France, Italy, Greece + Malta and Cyprus
 - Germany + Czech Republic, Poland
- but no new leadership alliance has appeared
- Problem of who represents Poland in the Council President or Prime Minister
- Czech Republic dissolved government during Council presidency

A good time to have a professional full time President of the Council

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Poland in the institutions: CoM

In the Council of Ministers ...

- Poland co-operated constructively in the debates but in many cases members were insufficiently prepared
- Populist politicians abused Council of Minister meetings for publicity at home
 - Minister of Education R. Giertych made homophobic statements
 - Minister of Justice Ziobro rejected the establishment of a *European Day against Death Penalty* but Minister of Agriculture A. Lepper made only news in Brussels that he was friendly, prepared and cooperative
- Poland negotiated fiercely for more money in the EU budget

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Poland in the institutions: CoM

Poland took a strong role in EU Foreign and Security Policy

- Poland as spokesman for Ukraine's possible membership
- Stricter policy on Belarus
- Supporting EU military mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo

Poland generally takes pro-US position in security issues, but not in economic or environmental aspects

- Poland was responsible for the failure of the EU patent on software directive

Only in the **Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with Russia** did Poland insist on a veto

- Russia banned Polish imports of food stuff
problem resolved when Tusk was elected Prime Minister



Polish lobbying in Brussels

Lobbying of regions

- All Polish regions have offices in Brussels and one city
Generally limited personal and financial equipment

Lobbying of NGO

- Financially and personally weakly equipped – lobbying mainly through European Associations
- Many Polish NGOs are split according political orientation – e.g. 5 farming associations, one has an office in Brussels

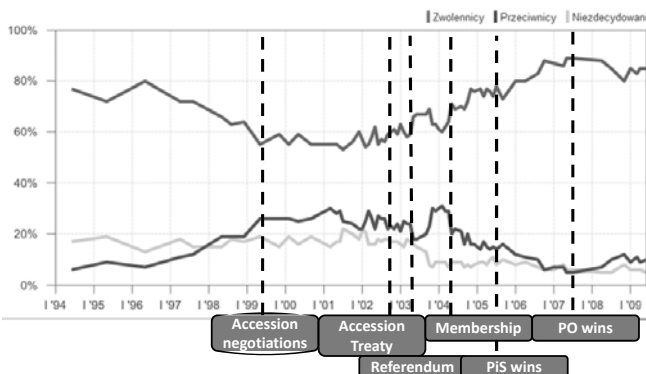
Polish business lobbying

- Lobbying mainly through Warsaw and not directly in Brussels
- Limited participation in conferences, meetings, ...
- Difference in the culture of lobbying
Polish “hobbying” vs. EU expert lobbying



Public Opinion on the EU in Poland

STOSUNEK OGÓLNU BADANYCH DO CZŁONKOSTWA W UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ



Public opinion on the EU

- Polish population was in most recent years always among the most pro-EU countries (presently second after Bulgaria)
- Poland is one of the country being the most in favour of deeper integration (48%; 21% mean that integration goes too far)
- The country most in favour of further enlargement (59%, against 9%)
Polish favour of future enlargement is mainly related to Ukraine's future possible membership, but it is also most pro-Turkish membership
- But Poland is a country with little European self-identification (52% think they are only Polish, 45% first Polish then European)



Who is in favour?

Most in favour		Least in favour	
> Young (<24)	77%	> Older (>65)	49%
> City	81%	> Village	57%
> Higher education	83%	> Primary education	49%
> Higher income	88%	> Low income	50%
> Leadership position	87%	> Farmers	39%
		(but only 21% are against)	



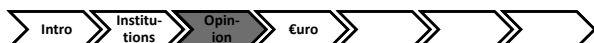
Trust to EU and national government

- > Poles think that democracy functions in the EU (59% to 22%) better than the national democracy (54% to 39%)
- > Poles trust the European Parliament and Commission more than the national parliament
- > Generally Poles trust their MEP more than members of Sejm and Senate
Jerzy Buzek (present President of the PE) and Danuta Hübner (former Commissioner) were among to most trusted politicians
51% consider EU elections important 41% unimportant
but turnout in the elections 2009 was only 24.5%



EU is good / not good for Polish

Environment	66%	to	8%
Administration	59%	to	18%
Education	56%	to	6%
Roads	56%	to	16%
Law enforcement	37%	to	16%
Patriotism	24%	to	15%
Family cohesion	17%	to	34%
Religiosity	5%	to	28%



What about the Euro?

- > The government planned to join the EMU in 2012
 - > Therefore a membership in the European Monetary System (ERM2) is necessary for 2010
this was postponed for later due to the financial crisis
- Public opinion on the Euro**
- | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Yes | 2002: 64% | 2008: 44% | 2009: 53% |
| No: | 2002: 22% | 2008: 46% | 2009: 38% |
- The financial crisis has convinced more people in favour of the common currency and also for a quick adaptation of the common currency

