



**YULIIA SIEKUNOVA**

## **Good-Neighbourhood in Interstate Relations and Realization of Educational Projects of Ukraine and Poland\***

PhD, associate professor of department of history and political science, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine

### **Abstract**

The author of the article discloses the formation of interstate relations between Ukraine and Poland since the early 90's of the 20th century, which positively affected the ties between these states. The article analyzes the close relations between the states due to the geopolitical situation, deep historical, cultural and economic ties. Poland actively supports Ukraine in joining the European Union and NATO, acts as an intermediary in this process, gaining additional authority and significance in the international arena.

**Keywords:** Ukraine, Poland, relations, foreign policy, cooperation, partnership

---

The formation of a new type of Ukrainian-Polish relations became possible due to radical changes in Europe at the end of the 20-th century. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of independent Ukraine, the abandonment of the existence of communist ideology in the Republic of Poland, the democratization of independent states, geopolitical location, territorial proximity, traditional economic ties and mutual interest have created favorable prefaces in order for the relations between Ukraine and Poland to become qualitatively new level. The dialogue of the Ukrainian and Polish oppositional elites, begun in the conditions of radical changes in the USSR, also positively affected the development of bilateral ties. With the official achievement of Ukraine's independence in the development of relations, as independent and democratic states, a new stage has come. On December 2, 1991, Poland recognized Ukraine's independence, established diplomatic relations, and announced the intention to establish diplomatic relations. Today Poland plays an extremely important role in the foreign policy of Ukraine. This is due not only to the geographical status of neighboring countries but also common history, close cultural and economic ties.

---

\* This paper is published in its original submitted version.

Since the 1990s, Poland has always supported Ukraine in gaining membership in leading European institutions. A significant base of Ukrainian-Polish cooperation during the past two and a half decades existence of the post-bipolar world and Europe contributes to Ukrainian-Polish cooperation, significantly enhancing the political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres of cooperation, in particular in the context of the implementation of the program of cooperation between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland for the years to come. The deepening of the Ukrainian-Polish relations, in the form of a strategic partnership to improve Ukraine's foreign policy, has great geopolitical significance.

The development of relations of strategic partnership with the Republic of Poland is a priority direction of Ukraine's foreign policy. The close relationship between our states is due to the geopolitical situation, deep historical, cultural and economic ties between Ukraine and Poland.

However, in realization of their own strategic goals, the partners achieved uneven success. Poland, proclaiming its priority objective integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, became a member of NATO in 1991, and in 2004 it was a member of the EU. At the same time, Ukraine, too general and rather blurred by declaring the main directions of foreign policy development, did not become a member of either NATO or the EU, is currently actively cooperating with the two organizations within the framework of various programs. Great hopes in this cooperation rely on Poland (Kirichenko, 2016, p. 55–56).

From our point of view, it is profitable for Poland to use its regional positions to gain mediator status in the NATO-Ukraine Dialogue and gain additional credibility and significance in the international arena. However, despite the active support of Ukraine, the Polish side is not involved either in the Minsk negotiations or in the Normandy format of negotiations, which makes it impossible to demonstrate the role of an Eastern European leader who has a significant influence in the diplomatic processes associated with the achievement of a security compromise in the territory of a neighboring state. In this regard with the removal of Poland in matters of regulation of hostilities in the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the deepening of relations between the states are subject to certain misunderstandings.

Another negative factor affecting the relations between Warsaw and Kiev and may hinder the further development of bilateral cooperation are diplomatic controversies due mainly to differences in the interpretation of historical events, as well as the lack of mutual understanding in reaching the only correct solution (*Polska-Ukraina...*, 2018).

Thus, regardless of the presence of some diplomatic differences and problem points, in general, Ukrainian-Polish relations have a good dynamics of development. During 26 years of diplomatic relations, Warsaw has a fundamentally important strategic partnership with Kiev and cooperation for security in the

strategic sphere. Therefore, strengthening the influence of Poland in the status of a regional leader and the realization of any large-scale geopolitical projects may be realized through relations with Ukraine. The full involvement of the Polish side in Ukrainian political processes can provide the country with additional preferences and authority within the framework of NATO and the EU (*How the Ukrainian-Polish...*, 2018).

In turn, Ukraine needs to attract as many influential foreign partners to their own support, as possible. Moreover, the desire of Ukrainian officials to reach a compromise on resolving the conflict on their own terms will be extremely difficult to implement in the Normandy format. In such circumstances, Kiev will not hurt to be attracted by the real support of other influential players, including the territorially neighboring Poland.

An important focus of the development of bilateral relations was the strengthening of the eastern vector of the European Neighborhood Policy (hereinafter referred to as the “ENP”) in 2008, which is one of the priorities of Polish foreign policy, which positioned itself as a leader in this direction. Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, representing the Foreign Policy Directions of the State 7 of May 2008 in the Sejm, declared this idea: “Poland should continue to specialize in developing a common foreign policy towards the East.” At the same time, Poland has sought and strives to strengthen its position in the EU, first of all, by strengthening its role in Eastern Europe. Jan Kalitsky, Director of the Center for Eastern European Studies at the University of Warsaw, in an interview with Polish Radio, confirmed this idea: “I want to emphasize that the strength of the Polish position in the European Union depends on the kind of support and strength we have in the East” (Kirichenko, 2016, p. 56–57).

Today in Ukraine there is a reform in the field of education, of course, changes in the education system in time, but Ukrainian mentality, peculiarities of the development of modern youth must be taken into account, and the main thing is that state-political processes do not always keep up with the rapid development of modern youth. In the field of education, we also actively cooperate with our colleagues from Poland, implementing many different educational projects between our states, and not only in words but also in the case. For example, there is an exchange of students studying in universities of the Polish Republic, and simultaneously obtain a double diploma, and in Ukraine as well. On such an active day, the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine gave a kind of guidance to students at Pomeranian Academy in Slupsk (Poland). At the present stage, international conferences are held on our historic-neighborly relations, for example, NULES of Ukraine held a high-level international scientific-practical conference “Ukraine-Poland: Strategic Partnership in the System of Geopolitical Coordinates” on March 16–17, 2017, together with Slupsk’s colleagues. Discussions on this conference took place on a variety of

issues such as: Ukraine-Poland relations in historical retrospect; Poland in the EU: experience for Ukraine; Ukrainian-Polish economic cooperation and others.

Consequently, the further character of the Ukrainian-Polish relations will be determined by the position of both states and by the evolution of geopolitical realities, especially in Europe, as well as the quality of Ukraine's progress towards a comprehensive progressive cooperation with the EU. Despite the many problem points, in the general Ukrainian-Polish relations there is a positive dynamics of development. Subject to a consistent foreign policy course by the two states, the strengthening of bilateral relations can help Ukraine consolidate its own position in the international arena, contribute to strengthening the economy and European integration.

## References

- How the Ukrainian-Polish Partnership Can Pass the Test of History* (2018). Retrived from: <http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/11/14/ukraine-poland-pis-russia-history-volyn/#arvlbdata> (15.05.2018).
- Kinakh, A. (2010). Let's Take Advantage of the Moment. New Approaches to Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation (A. Kinakh, P. Zalewski). Day, 7th September/159, 15.
- Kirichenko, B.S. (2016). Diplomatic Relations Between Ukraine and Poland. *A Scientific View of the Future*, 9 (2), 55–57.
- Melnikova, I.M. (2004). Declaration on Principles and Basic Directions of Development of Ukrainian-Polish Relations 1990. In: V.A. Smolij (ed.), *Encyclopedia of History of Ukraine* (p. 317). Kiev: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.
- Polska-Ukraina: 25 lat niezależności i partnerstwa* (2018). Retrived from: <http://www.polukr.net/blog/2016/08/polska-ukraina-25-lat-niezaleznosci-partnerstwa> (15.05.2018).