How does ‘going global’ come about?
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Introduction

Poland’s foreign policy has found itself at a crossroads.

On the one hand, having re-established a strong political and economic position inside Europe and having undergone a profound transition thanks to the integration with the EU, the country may now be able to pursue a more resolute and comprehensive policy towards other regions of the world. What is more, it is increasingly pushed to think globally by a part of the business and expert community who are warning against depleting resources for Poland’s further economic growth and its overall modernisation.

On the other hand, unstable geopolitical situation in Poland’s immediate neighbourhood, due to the 2014 conflict between Russia and Ukraine, is pulling the country back to strictly regional issues, hampering the long-awaited opening of its foreign policy.

In such a context, it is pertinent to ask how other European mid-sized countries coped with the challenge of finding a golden mean between their regional and global interests. Have they ever considered and used foreign policy as a tool of economic and political modernisation? Have they been tempted to free ride on the EU’s common foreign policy in order to concentrate on “tending their own garden”? Have they considered the EU as a possible multiplier of their global influence? Have they ever experienced a moment of disillusion with the EU – and did it lead to the globalisation of their foreign policy?

In this report we intend to answer these questions by comparing Poland’s experience with those of two other European mid-sized countries: Spain and Sweden. However, by analysing these three cases, we also aim at formulating general conclusions about the logic of foreign policy globalisation.
In particular, we argue that there is no automatic spillover dynamics between the processes of democratic and market-economic transition on the one hand, and the globalisation of foreign policy on the other hand [see Picture 1]. In times of economic crisis, democratic rules may actually appear as a potential barrier to foreign policy globalisation. As long as the society does not see a deeper sense in the country’s strategy of globalisation, it may be prone to judge its foreign service according to purely cost and immediate benefit criteria.

Still, if “modernisation” is not reduced to merely institutional change but is understood more broadly, as an enlargement of horizons and the corresponding identity change, then globalisation of foreign policy should surely constitute a part of this exercise. After all, the question comes down to what should happen for the global shift and narrative to come about.
How does ‘going global’ come about? Hypotheses put to the test

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Spain and Sweden have served as important points of reference for Poland’s post-communist modernisation. They are relatively similar to Poland in size and economic potential, as well as in their geographic location on the peripheries of the EU. All three countries passed through the accession to the EU, entering into this grouping in regular 9-year intervals: Spain in 1986, Sweden in 1995 and Poland in 2004. Before the 2008 economic crisis, Spain and Sweden were as optimistic about the EU and confident in its institutions, as Poland is nowadays – but they lost a large part of their optimism and confidence ever since [see Figures 1.2, 1.3 and and 1.4, at the end of this chapter].

Spain and Sweden may serve as models of exports diversification for Poland. Their exports are much less concentrated in Europe than in the Polish case and much more diversified geographically [Figure 1.1].

But Sweden and Spain are also reasonably different from Poland, as well as between each other [Table 1.1], thus procuring distinct general lessons for the issue of foreign policy globalisation which we analyse in this study. Unlike the other two,
Sweden has never been a net beneficiary of European funds. Its accession to the EU as well as its global opening were not driven by the process of political democratisation (in fact, Sweden had been an established democracy for over a century) but resulted mostly from the process of re-evaluation of the country’s national interest and identity. Spain, for historical reasons, has always been a mid-sized power active on a global scale – regardless of its economic and political situation of a given moment. All in all, driving forces of foreign policy globalisation in all three analysed countries may be different, just as the process in question may relate differently to their modernisation paths.
A rough comparison of the political and economic potential of Poland, Sweden and Spain is already very telling and significant. However, behind these numbers there are distinct national narratives of foreign policy globalisation. Their analysis enables us also to formulate general hypotheses about the relationship between foreign policy globalisation and the modernisation agenda – which is what we demonstrate in Chapter 1. Later, in Chapters 2 and 3, we analyse in more detail the process of Spain’s and Poland’s foreign policy globalisation, identifying its critical moments, distinct periods, key driving forces and the most important instruments.

### Global shift needs identity underpinning

As examples of Poland, Spain and Sweden show, the process of foreign policy globalisation is not only about interests but also – if not mostly – about identities. Of course, the relation-
ship between interests and identities is complex and we do not dare to solve here the eternal dilemma about the prevalence of the former or the latter. However, what we do intend to say is that for the process of foreign policy globalisation to start and be sustained over time, it needs to be based on a shared belief among the society and its elite about the reasonability of such an exercise. The global shift needs to provide at least part of the answer to ‘who we are’ as a nation and ‘what our role in the world is’.

Here, Sweden is a landmark example. Its rediscovery of the importance of the global inside the foreign policy mix took place already in the 1960s, mostly because of a “fundamental shift in the perception of long-term national interests” (Sikkink, 1993). This shift was initiated by the Swedish Foreign Minister, Torsten Nilsson. In 1965 he argued that growing interdependencies between nations and peoples created a situation in which Sweden could no more promote security only through military means. Since that moment it focused a large part of its foreign policy efforts on international cooperation, directed mostly towards the Third World. Obviously, this shift was facilitated by the global context: a détente in relations between the West and the Soviet block, as well as the wave of decolonisation in Africa and Asia. It was also encouraged by the fact that a Swedish diplomat, Dag Hammerskjöld, served as the UN Secretary General between 1953 and 1961. Still, the shift originated mostly from the need for Sweden to redefine its national self-perception in the world where neutrality was becoming an increasingly embarrassing stance. In many ways, Sweden’s engagement in international cooperation, international peacekeeping missions and international mediations partly enabled it to make up for the country’s neutrality during the Second World War.

Progressively, Sweden started to position itself – and became widely recognized – as a “moral superpower” (Nilsson, 1991). Arguably, this boosted the country’s international image, which in turn provided not only intangible benefits, in the sense of boosting the nation’s self-esteem (Lödén, 1999), but also tangible ones, such as improved international perception of Swedish
companies and their products abroad. In the same sense, there was also a positive spillover dynamics between Sweden’s positioning as “a moral superpower” and the rising international popularity of the country’s political and social model. Finally, it may be argued that values which impregnated the Sweden’s welfare state helped the country to project its model internationally in a credible and sustained manner.

Identities have also played a crucial role in Spain’s global engagement, although in several different ways. To start with, the existence of an Iberoamerican cultural community has always been deeply embedded in the Spanish identity and in the country’s thinking about its place and role in the world. In this sense, the re-invigoration of relations between Spain and Latin America after the end of the Franco regime was kind of natural. Unlike Sweden or Poland, Spain had been acting as a global player already for several centuries and therefore globalisation of foreign policy was not such a novel and challenging issue in its case.

The Spanish example draws attention to yet another aspect of the importance of identities for the globalisation of foreign policy. Over 38 years of its political and economic transition, Spain was focused most of all on the re-integration with Europe. Especially at the beginning of this period, its foreign policy largely corresponded to the famous saying of the writer and philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset: “Spain is the problem and Europe is the solution”. Having entered the EU in 1986 and having received large amounts of structural funds afterwards, Spain quickly became a model example of the European integration. The prosperity of the 2000s decade enabled the country to start positioning itself – again – as one of the world’s important powers.

However, Spain was hit hard by the global economic crisis of 2008 and by the ensuing Eurozone crisis. Suddenly, it started to be seen and portrayed as a representative of Europe’s indebted, unstable and irresponsible South. In the words of Antonio Muñoz Molina, Spanish novelist, „everything that seemed to be stable suddenly dissipated” (Molina, 2013). In some sense, there
occurred an urgent need to find a new anchor for the national pride and self-esteem. While Spain’s current mobilization in its political and economic activities beyond Europe may easily be explained by interests (as the country is re-strengthening historical relations with its two priority areas, Latin America and the Mediterranean, in order to cope with immediate economic difficulties), it is hard not to consider this phenomenon also as a result of an effort – conscious or subconscious – to re-establish the country’s international identity on new and durable grounds after Europe ceased to be seen as a satisfactory solution to Spain’s problems (Financial Times, 2013). The new Spanish foreign policy strategy, which was published in October 2014 but is not yet official, clearly reflects this search for a new ‘organising principle’ of the country’s international activity.

All of this provokes several questions regarding Poland’s potential shift towards a more globalised foreign policy.

- What should happen for the Polish society and its elite to start considering global aspects as an important subject of their foreign policy?

- Should the country first become sufficiently rich in order to feel more powerful and able to afford to go global, as was the case of Spain in the 2000s?

- Should its barriers to economic growth become blatantly obvious in order to encourage it to a bolder search for new markets, as in Spain after 2008?

- Or should we wait until the government re-evaluates the country’s national security interests, as Sweden did in the 1960s, coming to grips with the idea that without a greater global activity it would become significantly less secure, also in its immediate region?

Neither of these scenarios would be welcome. Poland may actually find it very difficult to become ‘rich’ as long as it does not became engaged in global trade and investment on satis-
factory terms, which in turn would demand from it to develop comprehensive economic relations with different parts of the world right now. Poland will not enhance its security if it limits its engagement to the closest region.

Still, building an argument around Poland’s global shift is an extremely difficult challenge. There is no natural external anchor for such a process, comparable with Spain’s feeling of cultural kinship with Latin America. There is no internal anchor, such as in the case of Sweden’s welfare state model and its related values which the country sought to promote internationally. In a way, it was relatively easy to construct a meaningful argument around Poland’s reintegration with Europe and the West after 1990. Ironically, the power of this argument, which became deeply internalised by the Polish society and its elites, makes it all the more difficult to shift the balance towards the global in thinking about foreign policy priorities. The biggest risk is that it will remain so until a sudden shock of an economic or political nature occurs which will eventually force Poland to redefine its international identity and foreign policy interests. Just as in the parable of Muhammad, if you do not come to globalisation, then (sooner rather than later) globalisation will come to you.

The centrality of a narrative

This leads us to the issue of an overarching narrative behind a global shift. Such a narrative seems to play a crucial role if global engagement of any country is to become effective and sustained over time.

In the case of Sweden, this narrative was constructed around the country’s mission to promote moral aspects in the world politics. The fact that Sweden was an open, inclusive and tolerant, while at the same time socially sensitive society, provided external credibility and internal support for such a narrative, enabling its generalization across the society and in the world.

Also in the case of Spain we may notice certain moments when the government needed to construct a new narrative around
the country’s global engagement. After 1976 Europe was seen and presented as solution to Spain’s problems. This narrative was significantly changed after the terrorist attacks of 2001. Regardless of the reluctance of several other EU countries and of the Spanish public opinion, the government of José María Aznar joined the US-led “coalition of the willing” against the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq, also because it considered it as an opportunity to boost Spain’s global standing.

All of this provides important lessons for Poland. It demonstrates that any transition towards a more global foreign policy must be based not only on more or less evident economic or security arguments but also on a meaningful narrative concerning the country’s guiding idea for its involvement in a wider world. Such a narrative should define what kind of added value the country could provide on a global level, and how this would relate to its internal situation. The construction and framing of such a narrative should mainly be the task of the country’s political leaders and its experts.

While there may be multiple candidates for Poland’s potential spécialité de la maison, we would like to point out two ideas which we consider the most promising.

**First**, the Polish government may present the country (to the world and to its own citizens) as an inspiring success-story of political and economic transition. In such a narrative, the globalisation of foreign policy could be – justifiably – presented as the necessary next step on the path of a successful long-term modernization. At the same time, this narrative could be perceived as attractive and credible by several nations which find themselves at an initial phase of their democratisation and/or market-oriented transition. Poland’s capacity to understand the realities of countries such as China, Cuba, Vietnam or Arab states is certainly one of the major unexploited assets of its diplomacy. Still, in order to be able to promote institutional know-how in the world, Poland needs to order and analyse methodically its experiences – which has not been the case yet, as evidenced by its problems in promoting institutional change in the countries of the Arab Spring or even in Ukraine.
Secondly, as a country that demonstrated dedication in its attempts to join the Western community after decades of communism, Poland could serve as a promoter of a ‘wider West’; a community which would encompass also Turkey, Eastern Europe and/or at least part of Latin America. In all the aforementioned cases, Poland has some unique assets (the Polish diaspora; local elite educated in Poland; etc.) necessary for the rapprochement with these regions. In this sense, Poland’s global activity could be a continuation of its road towards independence and even be considered as a reflection of the country’s historical mission. Still, in order to be credible in promoting such a narrative, Poland would first have to gain a stronger position inside Western institutions – such as the EU, NATO or the currently negotiated Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – in order to be able to lead to their practical re-opening to other candidate countries. Otherwise its narrative, while being attractive on the face of it, would be vain in practical terms.

For the moment, Poland’s global activities do not seem to be supported by the society’s shared, generalized and internalized belief in a deeper sense of such an exercise, which may explain their erratic nature. We come back to this issue in Chapter 3.

Against the delusion of a virtuous circle

According to popular intuition, there exists a virtuous circle between the processes of democratic consolidation, market transition and foreign policy globalisation. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) demonstrated the existence of spillover dynamics between the former two, and the addition of foreign policy globalisation as the third element of the circle may seem to be an uncontroversial issue. Market reforms, as long as they lead to economic development, should push the country to rediscover new markets. Foreign policy should also go global under the democratic pressure, in order to reflect the diversity of opinions about the country’s foreign policy priorities or given that citizens may feel that their country, having successfully passed through the transformation stage, should become more responsible for the promotion of political and economic liberty in the world.
In practice however, the relationship between the three processes is not necessarily as positive and straightforward as may seem at first sight. Most of all, in the context of fiscal restraints, foreign policy of a democratic state may become easily subordinated to immediate economic criteria. Without a convincing narrative about the need to go global, the electorate may constrain the government’s overseas activity or at least subordinate it to rudimentary cost and benefit criteria. Therefore, the construction of such a narrative should be considered as a fundamental and priority task for the country’s leaders and elites.

In this sense, the 2008 economic crisis contradicted the popular perception that there exists a virtuous circle between the three. In Spain significant cuts were introduced in the public administration, including the foreign service.

Poland’s winding road towards foreign policy globalisation throughout the last 25 years may also serve as evidence that the dynamics between the three processes is in fact very complex. The democratization of its political system enabled the country to largely catch up economically with its Western neighbours. When growth perspectives weakened after 2008, the country started to become more interested in establishing closer links with overseas markets, mostly on economic grounds. But already at that time democratic rules appeared as a potential barrier to foreign policy globalisation.

As long as the society does not see a deeper sense in the country’s strategy of globalisation, it may be prone to judge its foreign service according to purely cost and immediate benefit criteria. This would encourage the government to reduce rather than develop its network of foreign representations, as effectively happened with Polish embassies and general consulates between 2008 and 2010. If the current geopolitical context leads to a return of Poland to strictly European and security issues, it may be interpreted as a proof that the country’s nascent ‘global agenda’ was in fact weak, superficial and adaptive rather than pro-active.

Meanwhile, a fiscal-oriented reasoning, while being justified in the short-term, may go in contra to a country’s long-term interests. In order to pass from short-term to long-term thinking,
a shared belief in the importance of such a shift is necessary. This brings us back to the issue of a narrative and its role in the reflection, creation or consolidation of a nation’s global identity.

On a more general [or meta] level, the question of the relationship between political and economic transition and foreign policy globalisation is also the one about the boundaries of modernisation. Should the latter be considered as a strictly political and economic phenomenon, which could therefore be measured by the country’s electoral turnout, circulation of its political elites, and the level of GDP per capita? Or is it rather about the horizons of its citizens and their identity change? In this sense, shouldn’t we consider foreign policy globalisation as an essential element of modernisation dynamics of a country? [as we demonstrate on Picture 1 in the Introduction].

On the importance of going global

Still, even if the relationship between political and economic transition on the one hand and foreign policy globalisation on the other turns out to be a complex one, and regardless of whether we consider the latter process as an integral part of the phenomenon of modernisation or not; all of this should not let us forget about a crucial role that foreign policy plays in the process of democratic consolidation and economic liberalisation – especially in the current context of unprecedented economic, technological, political and social interdependencies on a global scale (demosEUROPA and SIIA, 2013).

Foreign service was a key actor in Poland’s transition right after 1990. It was largely thanks to the efforts of Polish diplomats that the country’s foreign debt was forgiven by other countries of the West. The perspective of Poland’s accession into the major Western institutions, such as NATO, the EU or the OECD, served as an anchor for the country’s difficult political and economic reforms of the 1990s. In the same token, the success of Spain’s democratic transition after the end of the Franco regime can be explained by the fact that the European Community became an obvious destination – and consequently a reference point – for the new democracy.
Spain’s quick reintegration with Europe was an unquestionable success of the country’s diplomacy. **Sweden** is clearly a different case from the other two as it did not have to pass through a difficult period of radical political or economic reforms. Still, we may risk the hypothesis that the opening of its foreign policy horizons in the 1960s led to the consolidation of internal support over the country’s socio-political model and fostered its economic development thanks to an improved image of the country abroad. In this sense, global opening preceded the process of economic expansion.

These examples provoke a long list of **further questions.**

- Is foreign policy an important policy tool *only* at the initial stage of political and economic transition, when anchors for the country’s long-term modernisation need to be clearly identified and secured? Or may it play an equally important role also at the following stages of the country’s modernisation?

- Is there a moment when a given country needs to shift the balance from regional towards global issues inside its foreign policy mix? If so, when does such a moment occur and how can it be identified?

- Is there necessarily a trade-off between the regional and the global activity of a given state? Or should we rather search for bridges to be built between the global needs of a given country and the possibility to pursue them with the help of regional institutions?

- Is there necessarily a sequence when passing from the regional to the global?

- And finally, to what extent the success of political and economic transition of a given country depends on its own, *endogenous* efforts, and to what extent on external, *exogenous* pull-factors, such as the perspective to enter certain international groupings?

Response to any of these questions is by no means easy or straightforward. Their key value resides in the mere fact that they
have been formulated and asked, while we should not expect that they would ever be answered definitely. Still, experiences of Poland, Spain and Sweden provide at least a part of the answer.

First, the need for a given country to shift its foreign policy attention more towards the global seems to depend both on its stage of economic development and on the international political context. Poland’s recent dilemmas clearly demonstrate this complex relationship. After the 2008 economic crisis, the Polish government increased its diplomatic activity outside of Europe, which was motivated mainly by a perceived need to diversify economically in order to avoid the so-called middle-income trap. Arguably, these harbingers of a global shift were made possible by a favourable international context, whereby geo-economics prevailed over geopolitics during the first 24 years after the end of the Cold War. However, Russian occupation of Crimea in 2014 and the ensuing conflict between Russia and Ukraine have brought geopolitics back in, with an inevitable impact on international priorities of any country and on its room for manoeuvre [Zerka, 2014b]. Still, the re-emergence of geopolitics takes place in exceptional circumstances of increased economic interdependencies in the world, and therefore a retreat from earlier moves to go global would not be a strategically wise decision.

Secondly, in practice there exists indeed a kind of sequencing in the process of foreign policy globalisation – although this does not mean at all that the global shift will become a natural next step after a given country reaches a certain level of economic development or establishes its position within the region. For the global shift to happen, an inventive leadership is needed, one which would formulate a meaningful argument and a narrative around this effort. Sweden’s redefinition of national interests and national identity, initiated in the 1960s, serves as an inspiring model here. Still, it should be underlined that going global is neither an end in itself nor a reflexion of inflated national self-esteem. It is rather that a need for a global policy of a given country may emerge when it cannot meet its strategic objectives anymore (such as security or economic stability) either by acting on its own within the region or by being present globally only through regional institutions.
Thirdly, the practical existence of sequencing does not mean that a given country should become interested in other regions and global affairs only after it reaches a certain level of development. Probably it is rather that the business community, which is usually the first to hit the glass ceiling of being focused solely on the region, is at the same time sufficiently powerful to succeed in pressuring the government for a greater foreign policy overseas engagement. In the case of Spain, its multinational companies have been playing a leading role in the process of the country’s globalisation already since the 1990s.

Still, regardless of economic aspects, there are periods in the history of international relations where global activity is necessary also for the security of a given country. The current geopolitical context seems to be one of such situations, which is exactly why Poland’s foreign policy has found itself at a crossroads. While the conflict between Russia and Ukraine may create a natural impulse for the Polish government to focus on the country’s immediate region, this may actually be detrimental not only to Poland’s economic perspectives but also to its long-term security. In order to feel safe in its own neighbourhood, Poland should globally promote its own perspective on what is happening in Europe – for example, to prevent countries like Argentina and Brazil from tolerating Russia’s transgressions of another country’s sovereignty [Zerka, 2014c]. Poland should not outsource its extra-European foreign policy to the EU alone because, for the moment, the common foreign policy is still dominated by interests and interpretations of a narrow group of European powers whose perspectives on geopolitical dynamics are often at odds with those of Poland – to say the least.

If anything, the current geopolitical situation should lead countries to re-discover the importance of an ambitious foreign policy. It should not be seen anymore as a luxury that only the richest countries can afford or as an element of the policy mix which is necessary only at certain moments, such as at the beginning of the political and economic transition. In the context of increased global economic and technological interconnections, where new horizontal threats and challenges emerge – such as digital crime or climate change – while at the same time the system of global governance bears clearly "oli-
garchic” characteristics in the form of G8, G20 and other closed clubs (Badie, 2013), any mid-sized country that aims to attain a reasonable level of autonomy in pursuing its policies of security and development must become active on the international arena, and not only in its closest region. If it needs other countries’ support for its objectives or propositions, it may also need to engage in subjects and areas of policy-making which go beyond its own immediate interests. It also needs to take care of its global reputation by demonstrating a responsible engagement in key global initiatives.

This leads us to the fourth comment according to which exogenous pull factors play a crucial role in the process of modernisation and foreign policy globalisation. In the cases of Spain and Poland, the EU has clearly provided an anchor and a necessary direction for their political and economic transitions. However, especially in the case of Poland, integration with the EU has also contributed to their excessive concentration on European issues, to the detriment of their global agenda. To some extent, this had to do with an already discussed issue of national identity quest. Still, this mechanism may seem paradoxical given that we could just as well imagine that the EU should serve as an ‘enabling factor’ for the development of global activities of its Member States. If it has not always happened this way, it may be either because individual countries have not become aware of the leverage effect that the EU may provide to their global endeavours (e.g. by boosting their international reputation or by enabling the downsizing of their foreign representations) or because the EU has not demonstrated yet its capacity and reliability to provide this kind of ‘public good’ to the Member States.

Fifthly, it is difficult to expect that other countries – such as Ukraine or countries of the Arab Spring – will follow the Western or European model of political and economic transition as long as we do not open to them at least some perspectives of their participation in our institutions. Identity quest is a powerful engine in such cases but it can only be started if a credible objective is constructed and supported by the society and local elites. In turn, the credibility of Poland, Spain, Sweden or the EU in general in promoting an endogenous transition in countries outside the EU may always be limited
if we are seen as external agents promoting their extraordinary experiences of a modernisation which would not be successful without the centripetal dynamics of European integration.

And finally, the EU’s power of attraction may have an expiration date. Spain had its moment of certain disillusion with the EU after 2001, when it discovered the need (and the opportunity) to pursue a more active policy beyond Europe; although it must be noted that this disillusion did not lead to an emergence of Eurosceptic parties and that the Spanish citizens voted in favour of the European Constitutional Treaty in the 2005 referendum. Poland seemed to approach a similar moment after 2008, when it discovered that “there is life beyond Europe” and that becoming active on the international arena may be necessary for the country’s long-term economic growth. To be sure, there is neither EU disillusion nor European fatigue in Poland. Its society belongs to the most pro-European in the continent. Out of the three analysed countries, Poles are currently the most optimistic about the EU’s future and they trust most the EU as well as the European Parliament [see Figures 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4]. We can expect this tendency to continue over the next decade, as the Polish economy will continue to receive the greatest share of the EU’s structural funds until 2020. Besides, Europe may become even more present in the country’s public debate after Donald Tusk takes over the control of the EU Council in December 2014. Still, there is clearly a certain paradox in that the EU membership, while being favourable for political and economic modernisation of the country, at the same time seems to hamper its move to go global – at least so far.

There are two important explanations for this phenomenon. On the one hand, it is tempting for any EU member to free ride on Europe’s common foreign policy, even if the latter has not yet become as common as would be expected. On the other hand, Europe itself is such a dominant theme in the foreign policy of most of its members that it would demand a real economic or political shock for a given country to succeed in constructing a meaningful argument and narrative around the project of a global shift.

While Spain had already been interested in other regions before 2001 (‘Plan Asia’), it became even more so due to a double
Figure 1.2; 1.3; 1.4 Trust in the EU, trust in the European Parliament and optimism regarding the EU’s future in Poland, Spain and Sweden

Figure 1.2 Trust in the EU

Figure 1.3 Trust in the European Parliament

Figure 1.4 Optimism regarding the EU’s future

Source: Own calculations based on Standard Eurobarometers 70 - 81.
shock of 2001 and 2008 which altogether translated into the country’s certain “disillusion” with the EU – as evidenced by its declining trust in the EU and in the European Parliament. Swedes – as one of the country’s diplomats aptly put it – could never become disillusioned with the EU because they have never given up to any illusion. In turn, while Poland’s foreign policy remains focused on the EU and the country is still far from becoming “disillusioned” with the effects of European integration, there is also the other side of the coin in that for this very reason the long-awaited globalisation of its foreign policy may remain a distant perspective. In this context, instead of seeing the country’s regional and global focus as two opposing options, we should rather be searching for ways in which the EU membership could help Poland to push forward its modernisation agenda by enriching it with a long-awaited and much-needed global dimension.
Spain’s foreign policy 1976-2014: from ‘going European’ to ‘going global’

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Globalisation of Spanish foreign policy responds to a spillover dynamic between economic modernisation, political transformation and foreign globalisation. In particular, economic and political transformations have gone hand in hand, creating new demands and expectations in relation to the country’s inclusion in key international frameworks as well as its political and economic presence on the regional and global stage. Overall, with the exception of the 2002 – 2004 period, general lines of the Spanish foreign policy have not changed over the last four decades. Continuity despite challenges and changes on the world stage has been the main characteristic of Spanish foreign policy since the country’s transition to democracy.

The political economy of Spain’s foreign policy globalisation

Over the past 38 years, Spain has experienced four different foreign policy periods. The first one, between 1976 and 1988,
coincided with the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. The second one, between 1988 and 2002, consisted in normalisation and active foreign policy. The third one, between 2002 and 2008, included a significant U-turn (2002-2004) and subsequent reversal to the country’s traditional tenets in foreign policy (2004-2008). Finally, the fourth period, from 2008 onwards, has been characterized by the subordination of foreign policy to economic policies and budgetary cuts.

**Transition to democracy and transition in foreign policy**

In 1976 Spain emerged from almost 40 years of dictatorship by entering on the path of transition towards democracy. Main concerns of its first President, Adolfo Suárez [of the Union of Democratic Centre] were clearly internal rather than external. Suárez was focused on internal stability rather than on the country’s external image.

During the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) Spain was relatively isolated on the international stage. Directly afterwards, between 1976 and 1988, foundations for a genuine Spanish foreign policy were established. In the words of the late Francisco Fernández Ordóñez [of the Socialist Party, PSOE], Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1985 to 1992, “this was the period in which Spain was put on the map”. The new government’s objective was to seek international recognition and promote the new democracy of Spain.

Interestingly, roughly at the same time, Latin America was also experiencing its own wave of democratisation. Therefore, it is not surprising that countries of that region perceived Spain as a model to follow. This significantly influenced the subsequent development of relations between Spain and Latin America.

The ‘national project’ was the main factor that eventually led to the internationalisation of Spain’s foreign policy. This project, shared by politicians, the military and members of the Catholic Church, aimed at making Spain a part of the European Community (EC). There was a clear and general will to ‘Europeanise’ the country. Joining the EC became the primary objective of Spanish foreign policy. One of the first steps consisted in Spain’s endorsement of
international treaties such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in September 1976. At that moment, the business community played a rather minor role as a potential factor favouring the country’s global opening.

Apart from Europe, Spanish foreign policy had two additional priority areas of interest: Latin America and the Mediterranean. The latter included Maghreb and Middle East. Spain has had deep historical and cultural ties with both regions and it enjoys geographical proximity with the Mediterranean.

1986 was another key year for Spain’s foreign policy. Under the leadership of President Felipe González (PSOE), whose government was in power between 1982 and 1996, Spain joined the European Community (EC). The politics of ‘going European’ was based on the idea that Spanish interests could only be safe-
guarded if the country was integrated into the EC, which would also reinforce its foreign reputation.

The entry of Spain into the Council of Europe (1977) and into the NATO (1982) are other relevant achievements in Spain’s insertion on the global stage. This first period was also characterised by Spain’s recognition of Israel in 1986, bilateral defence agreements with the United States in 1988, Spain’s incorporation into the Western European Union (WEU) in 1988, and – last but not least – the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 1989.

In the economic sphere, European countries became the main destination of Spanish foreign direct investments (FDI) as a result of Spain’s accession to the EC. According to data from Spain’s Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, 70% of Spanish FDI was concentrated in Portugal, France and the United Kingdom.

**Normalisation and active foreign policy**

In 1988, Spain was already a well-established ‘middle power’, in position to develop an active foreign policy. Between 1988 and 2002, Europe remained the priority for Spain’s foreign policy, which was therefore increasingly marked by the EU’s foreign policy. Latin America and the Mediterranean continued to constitute Spain’s geographic priorities beyond Europe. However, as part of the EC, Spain had to alter its focus on Latin America given Europe’s privileged (political, economic and social) relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP).

Consecutive socialist governments saw the engagement in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East and North Africa as a key pillar of Spain’s commitment to peace and international security. Indeed, Spain’s entry into the EC can be understood as a platform for Spain’s Mediterranean policy, as Madrid sought to position itself in the character of an interlocutor between the EC and the region. Examples of this include the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference aimed at reviving the Israeli–Palestinian
peace process, as well as Spain’s key role played in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (or the so-called Barcelona process) which aimed at fostering stability and prosperity throughout the Mediterranean region. All of these initiatives contributed to the strengthening of relations between Spain and the two regions and allowed Madrid to become an important interlocutor for Latin America and the Mediterranean.

From an economic point of view, the 1990s in Latin America were characterised by a wave of privatisations and the Brady Plan. This prompted Spanish firms, in particular from the services sector, to invest in that region – which led to the first cycle of FDI flows by Spanish multinationals. This cycle took place in Latin America, the so-called “continent of opportunity”. The region attracted nearly 97% of Spanish FDI of that time, directed mainly to Brazil (38%), Argentina (32%), Chile (9%), Mexico (8%), Colombia (4%), Peru (4%) and Venezuela (1.3%). Spanish
investments focused on telecommunications and transport, financial intermediation, insurance and pension funds, petroleum and derivatives, and electricity, gas and water. The success of Spanish companies in Latin America was due to both their own initiative and the Spanish government’s support. Indeed, various of its ministers have embraced the defence of Spanish companies’ interests as one of the leitmotifs and key objectives of Spanish foreign policy. Business activities fostered the visibility and image of the country abroad. Spanish investments in the European Union remained constant until spiking from 1998 onwards.

In 1996, after 14 years in office, the Socialist government of Felipe González lost the general elections. José María Aznar (from the Popular Party, in office between 1996 and 2004) became the fourth president of the Spanish democracy. Between 1996 and 2002, Europe and particularly the EU continued to be the priority of Spanish foreign policy. The Aznar government’s main priorities vis-à-vis Europe included compliance with the convergence criteria, with a view to adopting the euro; negotiations on European structural and cohesion funds; and the reform of the Treaty on the European Union at the summits of Amsterdam and Nice. José María Aznar played a key role in Spanish foreign policy, reflecting a more general trend - observed also in other European countries - whereby heads of state or government were strengthened on their positions at the forefront of international affairs.

**From exception to reversal**


The year 2002 marked a crucial change in Spanish foreign policy. After the 9/11 attacks in the US, Aznar saw a new window of opportunity for Spain to increase its international weight. Spain decisively aligned with the US and supported its 2003 invasion in Iraq. Spanish foreign policy shifted from its traditional focus on Europe and multilateralism towards unilateralism and
Atlanticism. This translated into a clear breakdown of internal political consensus surrounding Spanish foreign policy.

As a result of this re-alignment, relations with the EU were adjusted and Latin America was relegated to a second plane. Arguably, Spain lost the margins of autonomy with Latin America. Madrid assumed a much more assertive tone towards Latin America than before. Change was particularly evident with regard to Cuba and Venezuela. However, while the political relationship faltered, economic ties were strengthened, given the sustained investment of Spanish companies in Latin America mentioned above.

In 2004 Spain underwent a yet another U-turn in its foreign policy, due to a power takeover by the new Socialist government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. The war in Iraq, opposition of Spanish public opinion to Spain’s alignment with the Bush administration and the impact of the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 on the public opinion led to the electoral victory of the Socialist Party. Interestingly, it was the first time in the modern history of Spain that foreign and security policies proved to be a key factor of success in general elections.

Major foreign policy changes introduced by the Zapatero government included, most of all, efforts to build consensus among political forces regarding foreign policy objectives, as well as a return to the principles and priorities of Spanish foreign policy defined during the transition period, with renewed focus on Europe and multilateralism. The EU became once again the backbone of Spanish foreign policy, with a strong commitment to the European integration process as a platform to strengthen Spain’s international position. In this context, Spain re-launched its relationship with France and Germany and its citizens voted in favour of the European Constitutional Treaty in the 2005 referendum. Relations with Washington deteriorated following President Zapatero’s order to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq in the aftermath of his 2004 electoral success. In turn, the government put emphasis on boosting development cooperation, promoting respect for international law and on various other
“soft power” tools, including cultural foreign action carried out through the Cervantes Institute and the Carolina Foundation.

From an economic standpoint, there was a second wave of expansion of Spanish multinationals in 2000-2008, this time with special focus on the EU-15 (61.6%), followed by Latin America (13.7%), the United States and Canada (11.5%), and the rest of the EU (7.2%). The largest share of Spanish FDI in the EU-15 were located in the United Kingdom (45.5%), the Netherlands (21.6%), and France (10.5%). Spanish FDI in then candidate and as of 2004 EU member countries in Central and Eastern Europe focused almost entirely on Hungary (68%), while some investments were also made in the Czech Republic (18%), Poland (7.4%) and Romania (2.7%). Throughout this period, the number of internationalised Spanish companies increased to around 2000, placing the Spanish economy as one of the most globalised in the world.

Foreign policy under crisis

The fourth distinctive period in the Spanish foreign policy began in 2008 and lasts until the present day. The financial and economic crisis is the key factor setting the stage for a ‘fire-fighting foreign policy’ which seeks to cope with the damage.

In 2008, Fernando Rodríguez Zapatero was re-elected to a second term. Spain’s main foreign policy objective under his rule was to gain weight in international fora, for example by way of participation at G20 summits (as a permanent observer) and through the EU Presidency in 2010. Spanish government played a leading role as a promoter of the Alliance of Civilisations initiative and of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. However, during the last years of the Socialist government, Spain’s capacity to project influence and to have a say in world affairs, including in its priority regions (such as Europe and Latin America) experienced a clear decline as a result of the economic crisis.

The crisis greatly affected Spain’s image and credibility both at the global level and in the European region. In November 2011,
Mariano Rajoy from the Popular Party won the general elections and became the sixth president of Spanish democracy. Rajoy has since followed a crisis-driven foreign policy. Europe reappeared as the priority region of the Spanish foreign affairs agenda. The Foreign Service was re-organized (which meant modernisation and cuts in resources). In March 2014 the State Foreign Action and Service Law were adopted. The government focused on an effort to provide a new impulse to the Spanish economy by using ‘Spain Brand’ (Marca España) as its main instrument. At the same time, it introduced significant cuts in Spain’s development cooperation and military budgets.

According to data from the Spanish investment registry of the Trade State Secretariat, in 2013 Spain was the second-largest investor in Latin America after the US. Total gross investments abroad amounted to 21.897 million euros (2013), a 13% increase compared to the previous year, and a net investment of 15.780 million of euros. While the crisis and its resulting austerity measures did affect investment patterns, Spanish investments continued to spearhead Spanish foreign policy. Spanish companies began to explore new markets such as the Gulf States, Asia and the Pacific.

The working of Spain’s foreign policy globalisation

The globalisation of Spanish foreign policy over the last four decades has gone hand in hand with institutional adjustments at the domestic level. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation has been the backbone of Spain’s international and diplomatic activity. The Spanish MFA has also been affected by various austerity measures designed to cope with the 2008 crisis. The first part of this section outlines the normalisation of Spain’s diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. Part two reviews the reform of the foreign affairs ministry. The section then revises the priority areas of Spanish external action. And finally, it offers a brief overview of different and changing forms of Spain’s representation abroad.
Diplomatic relations

In 1976 Spain began to normalise its diplomatic relations with the rest of the world after four decades of the Franco dictatorship. At the end of the 1970s, it already enjoyed diplomatic relations with almost every country in the world, with the only exceptions of Albania and Israel, relations with whom were established in the 1980s. Diplomatic relations with the former Socialist countries in Eastern Europe were established as follows: on 27 January 1977 with Romania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria (Boletín Oficial del Estado, BOE, 22-02-1977); on 30 January 1977 with Poland (BOE, 22-02-1977); on 8 February 1977 with Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union (BOE, 23-02-1977); and at the end with the former German Democratic Republic (BOE, 05-04-1977). In 1976 and 1977 Spain also opened several embassies in Africa.

Nowadays, Spain maintains diplomatic relations with all countries that form part of the United Nations and are internationally recognised. The last countries with which it established diplomatic relations are Bhutan (October 2010), South Sudan (July 2011), Kiribati (September 2011) and Myanmar.

Spain’s representation abroad is composed of 118 embassies and 183 consulates. The diplomatic network is complemented by ten permanent representatives before international organisations. The Economy and Trade Sections of respective embassies play a key role both in promoting trade and in providing assistance to Spanish business activities abroad. In turn, Spanish culture is promoted abroad by cultural attachés in embassies and by way of 77 Cervantes Institutes situated in 44 countries.

Structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

After Spain’s emergence from the dictatorship, there was an urgent need to re-structure the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The then foreign affairs minister, Fernando Morán (PSOE, in office from 1982 to 1985) tried to modernise the Foreign Ser-
vice. The MFA commissioned a committee of experts to create a white paper on Foreign Administration, which was dedicated to the issue of how to maintain unity in external action and how to reinforce the role of the Ambassador as the head of mission abroad. The Spanish MFA underwent particularly important structural changes in 1986, the year of the country’s accession to the EC. Three Secretariats of State were established at that time: for Foreign Affairs, for European Affairs and for International Cooperation and Latin America. This reflected Europe’s and Latin America’s position as priority regions for Spain. At the same time, the creation of these secretariats reflected the fact that Spain, having become an industrialised country, passed from being an aid recipient to an aid donor.

In 1996, with the arrival to power of the Popular Party, Secretariats of State for Foreign Affairs and for European Affairs merged into the Secretariat for Foreign Policy and the European Union, as a consequence of budgetary cuts. However, in 2000 the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Josep Piqué, separated the two Secretariats again. More recently, Royal Decree 1823/2011 (21 December 2011) introduced a yet another restructuring, in line with the government’s reform and austerity policies designed to maximise the effectiveness of the Foreign Service. In the 2014 General State Budget, the overall allocation for foreign policy fell by 8.8% when compared to the previous year: from 1.1 billion EUR in 2013 to 996 million EUR in 2014.

Coordination between the Spanish MFA and other ministries is sometimes difficult, which complicates Spain’s overseas activities and may also be detrimental to Spain’s image abroad. Frictions have occurred particularly between the MFA and Ministries of Finance and of Economy (on technical and commercial issues versus diplomatic concerns), with the Ministry of Defence (concerning operations in Kosovo and in Afghanistan) and with the Ministry of Education (concerning the Cervantes Institute and the Carolina Foundation). In addition, the Prime Minister, whose authority extends across all ministries, has been taking a stronger role in foreign policy over the last decade.
Priority regions of the Spanish foreign policy

Successive Spanish governments have maintained their focus on the Americas. In fact, Latin America may be seen as one of the key coordinates defining Spain’s foreign policy in the world. After the return to democracy, the then King Juan Carlos I of Spain carried out his first official foreign trip to Latin America, visiting the Dominican Republic in May 1976. Spain’s Latin American policy is seen as a State Policy, which means that it is guided by the principles of interdependence, credibility, continuity, non-discrimination and community.

Relations between Spain and Latin America were significantly influenced by the democratisation processes that took place simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic. That said, Spain’s political influence in Latin America has not been able to match its huge economic weight in the region.

After joining the EC, and with a view to adjusting to the EC’s political priorities of that time, Spain shifted the focus of its foreign policy from Latin America to ACP countries. In order to minimise this shift’s negatives effects on trade and cooperation between Spain and Latin America, Madrid sought to strengthen ties between Latin America and the EC as a whole. As a result, two declarations were signed on 12 July 1985 as annexes to the Treaty and the Act of Accession. First of all, the Common Declaration of Intentions between the EU and Latin America, which aimed at strengthening economic, commercial, development and political ties between the two regions. Secondly, the Declaration by the Kingdom of Spain on Latin America, which reinforced Spain’s special relations with Latin America. At the political level, Spain has quickly become a pivotal actor in relations between the EC and Latin America. The first official document published by Spain’s Council of Ministers, entitled New Orientations of the European Community for Relations with Latin America (22 June 1987), represented a landmark for future relations between the two regions.

Finally, the celebration of the Iberoamerican Summits of Heads of State and Government since 1991 is an important aspect of
Spanish-Latin American relations. By hosting the summits, Spain has achieved the main diplomatic objective of its Latin American policy, that is the recognition of the existence of an Iberoamerican Community of Nations as such.

The Mediterranean has always constituted another of the two focal regions for the Spanish diplomacy. In this region Spain has tried to both strengthen its position as a regional power and defend its security interests. According to the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, there are three reasons why the Mediterranean policy is so relevant for Spain. It represents a culture shared by all the peoples around its shores; it presents common challenges to be addressed cooperatively; and it is an ideal space for dialogue with Arab societies. Spain is a key player in several initiatives such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the 5+5 Group.

Regarding the Maghreb and the Middle East more specifically, Spain has had a long tradition as an important partner and interlocutor. Factors such as geographical proximity, historical ties, the human dimension, and economic and cultural exchanges, among others, have favoured and promoted relations with Spain’s southern neighbours. Spain has maintained an active foreign policy towards the region, focused on stabilisation, conflict resolution and democratic transition.

Interestingly, the first official trip abroad of all Spanish Prime Ministers since Felipe González has always been to Morocco. This demonstrates the importance of these ties for Spain and the region’s relevance for its foreign policy.

Spain’s relations with the Middle East are characterised by cooperation and neighbourliness. The economic crisis has further augmented Spain’s economic interests in the Arab world, leading to new agreements and deals for the export of Spanish products and technologies. In the Gulf, deals have been signed to develop new infrastructure in the region – including the construction of Mecca-Medina high speed railway.
Other instruments of foreign representation

Since the end of the 1980s, all Spanish governments have tried to expand the country’s presence abroad by using a vast array of instruments, including ‘master plans’, public and economic diplomacy, cultural projection, development cooperation, and the Spanish brand (Marca España), among others.

The so-called ‘master plans’ aimed at increasing Spanish presence overseas through economic, political and cultural agreements. In 2000, President Aznar (PP) launched the Asia Plan. Later on, President Zapatero (PSOE) launched the Africa Plan (2009-2012). Currently, the incumbent President, Mariano Rajoy (PP), has focused largely on the region of Asia-Pacific, including the Pacific Alliance where Spain is one of the observers.

Public diplomacy has become a relevant tool to expand international engagement beyond official links. As such, the government uses a wide range of institutes including several casas (‘houses’) such as Casa de América (America House), Casa Árabe (Arab House), Casa África (Africa House), and Casa Mediterráneo (Mediterranean House). Various ‘Council Foundations’ have also been established in order to deal with relations with specific countries, such as Australia, China, India, United States, Japan, Mexico and Russia. Other relevant bodies include the Spanish Academy in Rome; the Euro-Arab Foundation and the Euro-Arab Institute Foundation.

Recently, economic diplomacy has turned into a political priority for the country’s economic reactivation and has become one of the principal dimensions of Spain’s foreign policy. Economic diplomacy seeks to foster the internationalisation of the business community, to attract foreign investment, and to improve Spain’s image abroad.

Cultural policy also plays a vital role in Spain’s foreign policy. Spain’s rich cultural and artistic heritage and the fact that Spanish is the world’s second most-spoken language further enhance this strategy. International promotion of
Spanish culture is the principle pursuit of cultural sections in Spanish Embassies and of the entire network of the Cervantes Institute.

Another relevant instrument of Spanish foreign policy consists in the development cooperation. After the transition to democracy, it was incorporated into Spain’s foreign policy as an important tool to promote abroad the image of a country which is attentive to the needs of the developing world. In 1985, by Royal Decree 1485/1985, Spain established the Secretariat for International Cooperation and Latin America (SECIPI) with the purpose of achieving “effective cooperation with all peoples of the Earth”, according to the Spanish Constitution. Before that, Spain had no official organisation for its international development cooperation. In 1988, a new Royal Decree (RD 1527/1988) reformed the SECIPI and created the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), now the main management body for the Spanish foreign cooperation, attached to the MFA through the SECIPI.

However, Spanish development cooperation varies according to the political party in power and in relation to economic cycles. The first and second legislatures of Felipe González promoted development cooperation, as did José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero during his first term when the volume of development cooperation experienced a spectacular increase – doubling in volume in just four years. However, during Zapatero’s second term, development cooperation expenditure was significantly reduced due to cuts in the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The current government made radical budgetary cuts across the board, thus also drastically reducing Spain’s development cooperation. In 2013, funds allocated to official development aid amounted to €1940,84 million, that is only 0.19% of Spain’s Gross National Income (GNI). Spending continued to be concentrated in Latin America and North Africa. The country’s presence abroad as a donor was restricted from 50 countries to 38 at present time.
Spain’s global strengths and challenges

Spain has various assets that could and should be used to enhance its role as a mid-sized power and to boost its weight at the international arena.

The country has a **solid projection in the business field.** Spain is the second largest investor in Latin America after the United States. Spanish companies are world leaders in the key business sectors such as renewable energies, infrastructure management, high-speed rail, biotechnology, naval technology, environmental technologies, along with air and space technologies, among others. In addition, the largest textile company in the world - Inditex - is Spanish. The best bank in the world, according to Euromoney, is also Spanish – Banco Santander. Other leading companies overseas include Repsol and Telefónica.

**The Spanish language** is the second most-used for international communication, the second most studied in the world and the third most used on the Internet. In the business world, language and culture facilitate international investments. It is estimated that 15% of Spain’s GDP is linked to language (Marca España, 2013).

Spain has an **attractive historical legacy and geographical position.** It is well integrated into the EU and the Atlantic area, which gives it multiple opportunities to contribute to deepening European integration while expanding its links not only with the Americas but also with Africa, with a special focus on the Mediterranean.

When it comes to the **security agenda,** Spain is a trustworthy ally in both the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In 2013, it adopted a new National Security Strategy. Spain plays an important, international role in security issues. This includes its collaboration with
different countries and organisations in the fight against piracy, natural disasters, drug trafficking, and both domestic (ETA) and international terrorism. Spain contributes to 28 UN peacekeeping missions. Spanish armed forces are also participating in peacekeeping operations led by NATO (e.g. ISAF in Afghanistan) and by the EU (e.g. EUNAVFOR Atalanta, EUTM-Somalia and EUFOR ALTHEA). Spain sends observers and monitors to other United Nations and European Union missions. More recently, Spain has succeeded in bidding for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2015-2016. In September 2014, foreign affairs minister García-Margallo carried out a tour around Asia and Oceania, in part to raise support for Spain’s candidature. Having an active presence in the works of the UN Security Council is currently one of Madrid’s main foreign policy goals.

Spain is not a member of the G20 but it has participated in the group’s all extraordinary summits after 2008 and in various ordinary meetings, and is therefore considered a G20’s permanent guest. Meanwhile, in the EU, Spain has assisted in its construction by promoting social policies, the ‘Europe of citizens’, a common immigration policy, and in relations with the southern Mediterranean and Latin America.

Economically, Spanish multinationals and banks have ranked high in international financial rankings. According to the World Investment Report 2012 (WIP 2012), three Spanish companies figure among the top 100 non-financial companies in terms of assets abroad. Eight Spanish companies figure in the Fortune Global 500 list of the 500 largest companies in the world. Twenty-eight Spanish companies are among the top 2000 according to the 2012 Global 2000 Forbes Index. Two Spanish companies, Inditex and Banco Santander, are among the world’s 100 most highly valued companies.

Spanish political representatives have held top posts in international organisations. These include Enrique Barón Crespo, José María Gil-Robles and Josep Borrel as presidents of the European Parliament; Manuel Marín, Abel Ma-
tutes, Marcelino Oreja, Loyola de Palacio, Pedro Solbes and Joaquín Almunia as European Commissioners; and Carlos Rodríguez Iglesias in the EU’s Court of Justice. Ana Palacio was the senior vice-president of the World Bank (2006-2008), and Miguel Angel Moratinos, before becoming Spain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, served as the EU’s Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process (1996-2003). Javier Solana occupied several of the top posts: as Secretary General of NATO (1995 - 1999), EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary General of the Council of the European Union and Secretary-General of the Western European Union (1999 - 2009). Additionally, in 2011 the EU High Representative appointed Bernardino León as European Union Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean. More recently, he was appointed UN Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya. In October 2010, Joan Clos became the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT with the rank of Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations.

From 2008, the Spanish economy has had to cope with financial instability caused by the sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone. Alongside Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Greece, Spain was among Europe’s countries which were hit hardest by the crisis. All of them suffered from the volatility of financial flows and high risk premiums, and consequently have faced difficulties with credit access. This has largely tainted Spain’s image abroad, including within the EU.

The crisis has also forced Spain to restructure its economy and to strengthen its public finances. Economic diplomacy became an instrument of particular importance. ‘Spain Brand’ was developed as a comprehensive and long-term project for the rest of the decade. The aim is to consolidate Spain’s image as one of the world’s leading economic and political powers, and to highlight Spain’s strengths in culture, language, tourism and solidarity. The assumption is that a ‘good-country’ image will attract more investment, provide more access to financial markets and help Spanish companies to become more internation-
alised. Finally, such an image should help the country to play a more active role at several decision-making bodies and at other international fora.

Still, the Spanish foreign policy faces several challenges. Most of all, there is a need to redefine Spain’s priorities or at least to update them. There are currently scarce resources at the disposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and in the Foreign Service, in particular since further cuts were implemented in 2014. It is necessary to improve the oversight and effectiveness of Spanish development cooperation. There seems to be inadequate coordination between foreign and security policies. And finally, the distribution of embassies and consulates requires adjustments to new political and notably economic priorities. There are countries such as France where several Spanish consulates are situated while they may be more needed in emerging regions beyond Europe, for example in Asia. Furthermore, Spain is a country divided into autonomous regions which have increased their international activities with respective ‘embassies’, delegations and offices overseas, causing duplication and coordination problems.

In October 2014, recognizing the need for Spain to re-orient its foreign policy and adapt it to the post-crisis context, the Spanish MFA published a new foreign policy strategy (Spanish MFA, 2014). This document is not yet official, but its content and structure already testify to the fact that the government in Madrid has recognized the importance of the challenge in question.

The Strategy starts with a new interpretation of the narrative about Spain’s place in the world. It then establishes priorities for Spain’s foreign policy and enumerates its objectives and instruments. It dedicates specific sections to each of the regions of the world. And finally, it clarifies that the aim of its publication is to search not only for an idea but also for a national consensus regarding Spain’s role in the international community. Because – as its authors argue – “a narrative is needed, a clear ‘why, ‘what for’ and ‘how’”. 


Felipe González was the third Prime Minister of the young democracy and, according to a generalized opinion, a de facto architect of Spain’s modern foreign policy.

A market-oriented solution that served as an incentive for growth in emerging markets.

A Latin American trade bloc seeking free trade and economic integration among its members - Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru - all of which border the Pacific Ocean.
Only over the last few years has Poland begun to rediscover the need to increase its global presence. Yet, in order to be successful on this front, it needs to determine first on what grounds it should globalise and with the use of which specific instruments. In this sense, it is pertinent to analyse how Poland’s response to the globalisation challenge changed over the last 25 years and whether it correlated in any way with the country’s modernisation agenda.

The chronology of Poland’s foreign policy globalisation

Once Poland regained independence in 1918, its government moved on actively to establish diplomatic relations with other countries, including overseas regions. However, the latter did not start to play an important role in its foreign policy until the
1960s and the 1970s, under the communist rule. The end of the Cold War fostered Poland’s reorientation towards Europe and the trans-Atlantic, which happened largely to the detriment of its global activity. Only after 2011, once Poland re-established its position within the West and inside Europe, did it start to manifest a renewed interest in pursuing relations with other regions. Still, its initiatives in this respect, while raising expectations among part of the business and the expert community, have been limited and erratic so far.

**Background: Poland’s global activity before 1989**

Poland is certainly not a ‘newcomer’ to global affairs. In the 18th and 19th century, deprived of their own state, Poles were politically and culturally active in other, often very exotic or unexplored parts of the world. Hundreds of Polish soldiers fought for the independence of other regions against colonial rule: in the United States or in Simon Bolivar’s Latin American troops. Polish émigré artists and scientist of the time (such as the composer Frédéric Chopin or the geologist Ignacy Domeyko), or simply Poles living and working abroad (such as the chemist Marie Curie-Sklodowska, the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski or the writer Joseph Conrad), are now considered key figures in the world’s common cultural heritage. Some, like Ignacy Domeyko in Chile or Marie Curie-Sklodowska in France, made a huge contribution to the development of their “second homelands”. Hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens emigrated from Poland in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, establishing vibrant communities in different parts of the world (currently 10 million in the United States, 1.8 million in Brazil, 900,000 in Canada, 450,000 in Argentina, 200,000 in Australia) and having an important impact on their economic and cultural success.

The necessity to develop a global dimension in foreign policy was recognized by Poland’s leaders between the two world wars (1918-1939), when the country regained independence after 123 years of foreign occupation. In the 1920s and 1930s, it established diplomatic relations with several countries beyond
Europe, including Brazil (1920), Argentina (1922) and Mexico (1924). Aspiring to become an important European player, Poland manifested even some limited colonial aspirations, although to no avail.

After the Second World War, Poland became part of the Moscow-dominated communist bloc. After 1956, it regained a limited autonomy in pursuing its foreign policy. It became particularly active in developing relations with countries outside Europe. This had largely to do with the process of de-colonization and the communists’ belief that the newly created Asian and African countries, as well as the increasingly self-confident states of Latin America, would become their natural allies against the so-called ‘Western imperialism’. Poland’s comprehensive political, economic, educational and military relations with such countries as Cuba, North Korea, Palestine or Vietnam constituted an important part of its foreign policy of the time (Kuźniar, 2012).

Following the Six-Day War in 1967, Poland intensified its relations with the Arab world, based on ideological proximity (socialism and anti-imperialism), negative attitudes towards Israel, and a geopolitical rivalry between the Western and the Communist bloc in the Middle East. As a consequence, Poland developed extensive economic relations with several Arab countries, especially Iraq and Libya, based on trade, credits and construction contracts. At that time, Polish Airlines provided flights from Warsaw to Alger, Beirut, Bagdad, Benghazi, Damascus, Dubai, Cairo, Kuwait, Tripoli and Tunis. This constituted an outstanding network of connections when compared to all other European carriers (Balcer and Wóycicki, 2014). Apart from that, large numbers of Arab students visited Polish universities (e.g. 1,200 in 1987/1988, mainly from Iraq and Syria).

In the 1960’s and the 1970’s, Poland intensified its economic relations with Latin American countries, encouraged by a wave of primary resource nationalisations in many of them (Materski and Michowicz, 2010) and guided by the need to find new markets for Polish ships and vessels.
The recognition of the importance of the global dimension in foreign policy was visible in Poland’s network of diplomatic representations abroad. In 1973, Poland maintained embassies in nine Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) as well as in sixteen countries in Africa (Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Egypt, Kenya, Congo, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia). By the end of the communist rule, this already impressive network became even more extensive. While some embassies were closed (Chile in Latin America; Mali, Uganda and Zambia in Africa), others were inaugurated in their place (Ecuador and Nicaragua in Latin America; Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Senegal and Zimbabwe in Africa).

Poland’s relatively strong diplomatic presence outside Europe of that time may be seen as paradoxical. On the one hand, the country’s foreign policy sovereignty was very limited, especially in Eastern Europe and relations with the US. On the other hand, the farther from the Soviet area of influence, the more Poland felt free to pursue its autonomous foreign policy.

The fall of communism in 1989, while constituting a victory of democracy over an authoritarian and externally imposed communist rule, also created a sudden break in Poland’s global activity. The network of the country’s foreign representations as well as the staff of the Foreign Service was re-organized. At the same time, new political and economic priorities of the moment forced the democratic government to concentrate its foreign policy efforts on Europe and the Trans-Atlantic alliance with the United States. Some observers argued that this constituted a waste of the potential that Poland had been developing over decades, while others considered it as a restoration of realistic proportions in Poland’s foreign policy mix.

**Poland re-discovers the (wider) world**

Over the last 25 years, Poland has experienced three distinct periods as far as the global dimension of its foreign policy is concerned, and it may now be entering the fourth period.
First, directly after the 1989 democratic transition, Poland radically re-oriented its foreign policy from the East to the West. It concentrated on Europe and the Trans-Atlantic in order to re-establish its position within the ‘Western community’ (Stemplowski, 2006). Thanks to diplomatic efforts, it successfully joined the Council of Europe in 1991, the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996, the North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1999 and the European Union (EU) in 2004. Polish diplomats played a very important role in leading to the success of this initial phase of modernisation, e.g. by negotiating the forgiveness of Poland’s foreign debt. At the same time, this was arguably the heyday of Polish foreign policy, as it was widely seen as a crucial element of the national policy with a practical and important impact on the personal situation of its citizens.

Poland’s marginal interest in global affairs did not prevent it from pursuing some limited initiatives beyond Europe. South Africa, coming from apartheid under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, became for some time an ideologically close partner of Poland in Africa. Apart from that, starting from 1999, Polish president and Prime Ministers paid several visits to Asian countries, including Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, India, Vietnam and Thailand. However, these visits did not manage to reverse unfavourable trends in bilateral trade with Asian countries. Following Poland’s participation in the military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, Warsaw rediscovered Central Asia, as evidenced by high-level visits in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. It maintained limited political and economic relations with Africa, despite a vast network of still existing representations in the region. Finally, in the case of Latin America, relatively vivid political and cultural relations contrasted with surprisingly low volumes and values of trade exchange (Kuźniar, 2012).

The second period began after Poland’s accession to the EU in 2004. Following that event, Poland sought to strengthen its position within Europe, soon becoming one of the fiercest advocates
of a wider and deeper integration. At the same time, as a consequence of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the US and given the ensuing military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq (Polish troops were engaged in both of these missions), it opened up to some global issues, although these were generally limited to international security. In January 2005, during his annual exposé in the Polish parliament, Minister of Foreign Affairs Adam Daniel Rotfeld argued: “Poland’s accession to the EU creates the need to re-evaluate our relationship with countries beyond Europe and to redefine our position in the global system”. He quoted a famous phrase from Stanisław Wyspiański’s 1901 drama, The Wedding (Wesele): “Let there be war the whole world over / As long as the Polish countryside is quiet / As long as the Polish countryside is calm”. And he concluded that “this can no longer serve as a motto for the Polish [foreign] policy. Security became such an indivisible phenomenon that threats to national security may originate from exotic regions, no matter how distant they are from our country. Therefore, an imperative for Poland’s foreign policy is to seek national security within the boundaries of international security, by way of cooperation with other countries” (Rotfeld, 2006). Nevertheless, Poland’s participation in Afghanistan and Iraq missions, due to their controversies and general disappointment regarding their effects, may also have discouraged a large part of the society to any kind of engagement in global affairs.

Interestingly, the sheer fact of having entered the EU forced Poland to develop a more comprehensive policy towards other regions of the world, just as it boosted the country’s image abroad. In order to comply with European requirements, in 2003 the Polish government adopted The strategy of Polish foreign aid, promising to increase the level of foreign aid to 0,17% of GDP by 2010; however, in 2010 the country’s foreign aid was still below 0,10%. In 2004, Poland adopted The Polish strategy towards extra-European developing countries, in recognition of new foreign policy challenges stemming from its EU membership (Kuźniar, 2012). Apart from that, Poland became engaged in the EU foreign policy and after a couple of years its constructive activity on that front was recognized (ECFR, 2014).
The outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008 signified the beginning of an end of the second period that was dominated by European affairs. Poland’s heavy reliance on European perspectives and affairs became clear. This concerned not only the politics but also, to a large degree, its economy: in 2012 a staggering 88% of Polish exports went to European countries, with Germany alone being the recipient of 27% (even though this was largely composed of inputs to German further exports). In order to counterbalance this virtually exclusive political and economic concentration on Europe, Poland was timidly diving into a third phase in its post-1989 foreign policy, adopting more globalized and economics-focused approach. Political leaders signalled that, alongside its engagement with the EU, the country needed to rediscover the wider world and embrace the forces of globalisation more doggedly in order to secure further economic growth for the national economy and to establish greater political significance on international scene.

However, the second period did not really end until the country’s Presidency in the EU Council in the second half of 2011 was over. There were two important reasons behind this lag. First of all, Poland was the only country in the EU to pass through the crisis with a positive GDP growth. If Poles became conscious of structural risks related to excessive economic reliance on Europe, this revelation was not based on an actual experience of a slump but rather originated from a rising consciousness about long-term threats of the Eurozone crisis. Such a reflection was boosted by a rising popularity of a concept of the ‘middle income trap’, which increasingly appealed to the imagination of Polish leaders and experts. Secondly, since 2008 Poland’s MFA focused a large part of its efforts on an adequate preparation for the 2011 Presidency in the EU Council. This event was considered by the government both as a culmination of the country’s endeavours to establish a strong position inside the EU, and as a symbolic re-introduction of Poland to the global arena. When the Presidency was over, Minister Radosław Sikorski argued in his annual exposé: “Thanks to the Presidency our national brand became better recognized in the world. We benefit from it when
pursuing our interests beyond Europe, especially in Asia and Latin America” (MFA of Poland, 2012).

Only since that moment did Poland move on to rediscover the wider world more actively. The business community started to experiment with markets beyond the EU, aiming for diversification. A number of foreign ventures have ensued, mainly in Eastern Europe, the US and China, but in some cases also in other regions, including Latin America (Zerka, 2014a). Notably, in 2012, the copper-mining enterprise KGHM, Europe’s largest by output, made the biggest overseas investment by a Polish company in over 20 years: its acquisition of Canada’s Quadra FNX Mining made it the majority stakeholder in Chile’s Sierra Gorda mines. At the same time, the government, alerted to the problem of the ‘middle-income trap’, made several adjustments in its economic and foreign policy. Poland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs reinforced its efforts in the domain of economic diplomacy, seeking business opportunities in geographically distant regions. In 2012 alone, Minister Radosław Sikorski and his team visited Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, as well as several countries of the Persian Gulf. On most of those occasions the Ministry officials were accompanied by representatives of the business community, which in the case of Poland constituted a relative novelty on this type of missions. The underlying rationale was a growing need to find new markets – given, on the one hand, Poland’s already high level of economic development and, on the other, its limited growth potential if it continued to depend solely on Europe.

However, the MFA’s activity was often out of tune with that of the Ministry of Economy. The latter focused its attention first on China, through the “Go China” program, since 2011; then on seven prospective markets of Algeria, Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Mexico and United Arab Emirates, since 2012; and subsequently on Angola, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa, as part of the “Go Africa” program, since 2013. The criteria behind the choice of those and not other partners did not always seem very clear.
Moreover, it is still not obvious whether Poland’s global opening was really a bottom-up phenomenon, supported and welcomed by a critical mass of Polish companies, or rather a ‘wishful thinking’ invention of a narrow group of experts and decision-makers, out of tune with the real economy. Compared to all MFA’s efforts and its mobilization, the development of new business ventures beyond Europe has been rather limited so far, as evidenced e.g. by Poland’s low exports outside Europe [Figure 3.1].

It must also be noted that the re-discovery of the global dimension by Poland’s leadership was sluggish and fragmentary. In his annual exposés in 2010 and 2011, Minister Sikorski dedicated only one paragraph to Africa and Latin America. In 2009 he did not even mention them [MFA of Poland, 2009, 2010, 2011]. In such a context, instead of speaking about globalisation of Poland’s foreign policy, we should probably limit ourselves to recognizing its preliminary but still rather timid attempts at a long-awaited opening.

Figure 3.1. Breakdown of Poland’s export between the world’s regions in the first half of 2014

Source: Own calculations based on Poland’s Central Statistical Office, 2014.
Some tangible changes concerned, first and foremost, Poland’s relations with the People’s Republic of China: after Poland’s successful participation in the 2010 Expo in Shanghai, President Bronisław Komorowski’s official visit in China at the end of 2011, as well as the summit between China and Central and Eastern Europe organized in Poland in April 2012. Secondly, Poland’s global opening consisted in its enthusiastic – although initially ambivalent – reaction to the Arab Spring, at the turn of 2010 and 2011 (Balcer and Wójcicki, 2014). Finally, Poland’s foreign policy became more ‘globalized’ thanks to the re-discovery by the government of the benefits of economic diplomacy. A search for new trade and investment partners constituted the most important motive behind the re-invigoration of Poland’s relations with several countries of Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America. However, at the same time, Poland’s activity in international organization, such as the United Nations, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) or the Council of Europe was deeply neglected. This tendency was reflected in the scarcity of references to those institutions in the Minister’s annual exposés (Kuźniar, 2012).

While the on-going conflict between Russia and Ukraine may become a new ‘turning point’, taking Poland to the fourth period in its post-1989 foreign policy, it is still unclear what the direction of this process would be.

On the one hand, instability and new threats in Poland’s immediate neighbourhood may force the country to focus on strictly European issues and mostly those security-related, to the detriment of its nascent global agenda. A presage of this transition could be found in the last exposé of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, given in May 2014. It was expected to become a long-awaited description of the country’s strategy towards a wider world. However, the outbreak of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine apparently forced the Minister to dedicate almost the entire speech to Russia and to the EU’s Eastern neighbourhood. As a consequence, most of the areas beyond Europe were, once again, relegated to the second plane, if not further (MFA of Poland, 2014a).
On the other hand, there are many good reasons to consider the new geopolitical situation as a reminder that Poland may actually need to become more engaged globally (Zerka, 2014b). This has been acknowledged by Poland’s current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Grzegorz Schetyna, who stated in his exposé in November 2014: “We realise that a single orientation is risky and that Europe is no longer an absolute world power. Hence, we will place more emphasis on the global, non-European dimension of our foreign policy, particularly in the sphere of the economy”. He also declared: “We want

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Source: Own analysis.
a stronger Polish presence in the world, especially outside Europe” (MFA of Poland, 2014b).

Table 3.1 summarizes changes in the development of the global dimension inside the foreign policy mix of Poland over the span of the last 25 years.

The working of Poland’s global foreign policy

If Poland developed relationships with countries beyond Europe over the last 25 years, it usually happened in a bilateral format and with the use of traditional tools, such as the country’s embassies or general consulates. However, since mid-2000s, Poland has been reducing the network of its overseas representations. Only to a moderate extent was this phenomenon counterbalanced by the development of novel forms of foreign representation.

As regards the multilateral dimension of its global presence, Poland clearly underperformed. The only exceptions to this rule concerned its engagement in the UN, NATO and EU military and peacekeeping missions, as well as its involvement in the creation of the Community of Democracies, an intergovernmental organisation.

While Poland’s economic interests nowadays constitute a leading rationale for the development of diplomatic ties with overseas countries and regions, its major weaknesses consist in a lack of a coherent system of trade and investment promotion as well as an erratic behaviour as regards the selection of geographic priorities.

Bilateral dimension

Over the last 25 years, Polish diplomacy outside Europe operated mainly through bilateral relations. Consequently, the country’s representations abroad served as the main foreign policy instrument. In this context, it is pertinent to observe two opposing tendencies:
a tangible reduction in the number of Polish embassies abroad and a tentative development of new forms of foreign representation.

Since 2006, the network of Polish embassies in the world has become progressively reduced. While there were 97 of them in 2005, they dropped to 89 by 2014, with further possible reductions being examined by the MFA. This process was initiated in 2006 and related to the exigencies of the public finance law. Subsequently, in 2008, the Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a directive on the rationalization and the re-structuring of Poland’s representations abroad. Between 2008 and 2010, Poland recalled and closed 11 embassies altogether (in Yemen, Cambodia, Congo, Costa Rica, Laos, Mongolia, Panama, Senegal, Tanzania, Uruguay and Zimbabwe) as well as 9 general consulates (in Karachi, Leipzig, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, Casablanca, Ho Chi Minh, Varna, Strasbourg and Catania) [Szczepanik, 2012]. Figure 3.2 demonstrates changes in the number of Polish embassies and general consulates between 1973 and 2014.

Figure 3.2 Number of Polish Embassies and General Consulates in the world in selected years

![Bar chart showing number of Polish embassies and general consulates from 1973 to 2014](image)

Source: own calculations based on Szczepanik [2012]
In 2013, the Minister of Foreign Affairs suggested that costs Polish embassies operation should not exceed 1% of Poland’s exports to a hosting country (Potocki, 2013). In case of a strict employment of this rule, further 23 embassies should be suspended, most of them in the Middle East, Central Asia, Latin America and Africa. In particular, half of Poland’s remaining 10 embassies in Africa would cease to exist, as well as 4 out of 8 embassies in Latin America. Evidently, the MFA did not intend to reduce its diplomatic network that much. The idea was rather to further motivate Polish diplomats who work outside Europe towards more dedicated efforts in the area of trade and investment promotion. Still, the above discussion reflected a lack of clear guidelines on the part of the Polish MFA regarding the rationale behind its diplomatic representation beyond Europe. If trade exchange served as the main criterion, then Poland should limit its diplomatic network almost entirely to Europe and only to a couple of countries outside the continent. Meanwhile, we will argue that Poland, thanks to the EU membership, may finally be able to concentrate more on the deepening of relations with countries beyond Europe; especially if it drew practical conclusions from an observed rise in global interdependences.

The sheer scale of those interdependences means that a mid-sized country like Poland can no longer permit itself to ignore the task of going global. If it continues to see long-term security and prosperity as its raisons d’État, it must find ways to position itself smartly within a thickening global network of economy, politics and knowledge (demosEUROPA and SIIA, 2013). Foreign embassies are certainly one of the necessary ingredients in such a strategy of global presence. In this respect, Poland does not have to emulate France (163 embassies), Great Britain (153) or Germany (150), but should craft its global presence to its overall potential and aspirations. These undoubtedly should exceed a strictly continental horizon.

Still, it needs to be acknowledged that recent reorganization of Poland’s diplomatic corps consisted not only in the reduction of its overseas missions but also in a tentative development of some new forms of foreign representation. Since 2011, the MFA
has been extending its network of Institutes of Polish Culture beyond Europe. In 2011, it opened an institute in New Delhi, which became its first institution of this type in Asia. In 2013, it inaugurated a similar institution in Tokyo. Further two Institutes are expected in Turkey and in Brazil over the next few years. Although an overwhelming majority of 25 Institutes of the Polish Culture are situated inside the EU, a shift towards globalisation of Poland’s public diplomacy should be recognized.

Furthermore, Poland has been experimenting with other forms of overseas representation, such as operating joint consulates with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia (the first and so far the only one has been functioning in Cape Town, South Africa, since 2010) or extending the network of honorary consuls. The MFA has also analysed the option of appointing ‘visiting ambassadors’ who would reside in Warsaw and would visit a given country only once or several times a year. However, so far these developments have failed to counterbalance losses caused by the reduction in the number of diplomatic missions.

**Multilateral dimension**

Compared to other European countries – not only its leading players, like France, the UK and Germany, but also relatively less powerful states, like Portugal or Belgium – Poland has clearly underperformed in its presence and activity at international or multilateral fora.

Since 1989, the country has served only once as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council, in 1996-1997. There are countries that were elected to the Council more often despite having a comparable GDP: Argentina has already done it four times, while Belgium and Austria have done it twice. Moreover, there are countries that are poorer than Poland and yet they have been elected to the Security Council more often: three times (Colombia, Pakistan) or twice (South Africa, Malaysia, Nigeria, Chile, Portugal, Algeria, Romania, Morocco, Costa Rica, Gabon, Rwanda). It was only in 2012 that Poland rediscovered the strategic importance of membership in the Security
Council, officially bidding for the 2018–2019 term (demosEUROPA and SIIA, 2013). Poland’s earlier absence in the UN may be seen as a reflection of its political elite’s distrust towards multilateral institutions after 1989, especially since these were seen as being easily used by Russia and as reflecting the Cold War power order.

Despite being the richest country in Central and Eastern Europe and one of the twenty richest in the world (20th place when measured by GDP in PPP; IMF, 2013), Poland did not succeed to enter the G20 even as a guest. Worse still, it does not seem to have a clear agenda on global economic issues, which translates into its passive participation in the EU’s discussions regarding the region’s position for G20 meetings.

In 2008, Poland hosted COP14, the global climate change conference. Nevertheless, its role in this case was rather technical than political. As a defender of coal energy and an impediment to the EU climate policy, Poland is not in a position to lead negotiations on a new global climate agreement (Kuźniar, 2012).

In this context, it is not surprising that the list of successful Poland’s multilateral actions or global initiatives is relatively short. Most of all, Poland participated actively in military and peacekeeping missions which – beginning from 2001 – included inter alia US-led interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the NATO mission in Afghanistan, as well as the UN and the EU missions in Chad.

Apart from that, Poland was one of the founding members of the Community of Democracies, an intergovernmental organization created in 2000 which started operation in 2009 and whose headquarters are situated in Warsaw.

**Economic diplomacy**

While the Polish exports experienced its highest rates of growth between 2000 and 2008 [Figure 3.3], the country’s government re-acknowledged the benefits of economic diplomacy only after
2011, mostly as a way to further boost the country’s trade beyond Europe. It was around that time that Poland overtook Sweden in the value of its annual exports, although this was still only about two thirds of the value of Spain’s exports [Figure 3.4].

Figure 3.3 Annual value growth rates of merchandise exports of Poland, Spain and Sweden

Source: UNCTAD digital database.

Poland  Sweden  Spain

Figure 3.4 Annual values of merchandise exports of Poland, Spain and Sweden (in mln USD)

Source: UNCTAD digital database.

Poland  Sweden  Spain
After 2011, promotion of trade and investment became one of the explicit tasks of Polish ambassadors whose periodic evaluation now officially depends on progress in this area. Representatives of the business community started to be invited by the MFA and the Chancellery of the President of Poland to take part in official delegations to Asia, Middle East, Latin America or Africa. Last but not least, explicitly economic missions to those regions were organised, headed by the Ministers’ deputy. All of these initiatives were clearly in keeping with a generalized global trend consisting in the ’economization’ of international politics.

Nevertheless, Poland is still a long way from turning diplomacy into an efficient instrument of trade and investment promotion.

First of all, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economy have not yet designed a workable coordination mechanism for their individual globalisation efforts. Secondly, coordination problems often lead to a certain amount of confusion as regards the country’s regional priorities.

Finally, while a comprehensive and consistent system of economic diplomacy is clearly lacking, the Polish business community does not seem to be sufficiently interested in going global yet. There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon. It may be interpreted as an embodiment of a typical ’chicken-and-egg dilemma’, whereby the government would wait for entrepreneurs to become interested in public services whereas the latter would be reluctant to explore new markets as long as there is no efficient system of public support. However, this situation may also be seen as a reflection of low international competitiveness of Polish businesses (and hence their limited interest in going global); as a consequence of underdevelopment of Poland’s transport infrastructure, especially harbours and waterways, and consequently high transactional costs of extra-regional economic activity; or as a proof of low level of trust between the public and the private sector in Poland.

Either way, whether it is mostly the fault of businesses or of the government, the country’s first attempts at economic diplo-
macy do not yet seem to deliver the expected results. As a matter of proof, Poland’s FDI outflows are not rising fast; in fact, they have even been falling recently. What is more, over the last decade Poland’s FDI flows have been rarely directed outside the EU, while financial flows to Luxembourg have constituted their important share [see Figure 3.5].

Figure 3.5 Poland’s FDI flows in 2001-2012 (bln USD)

Source: Own calculations based on UNCTAD digital database.

Geographic focus

Setting geographic priorities right in a country’s global policy, especially as regards the economic diplomacy, is not a trivial matter. The government must take a strategic decision and choose a limited group of countries or regions on which it would focus its attention and in which it would support the develop-
ment of economic ties. Such a selection is an obvious necessity in the case of a mid-sized country like Poland as it does not have sufficient resources to be active everywhere. When embarking on a globalisation strategy, it must be careful not to overdo it and spread itself too thin [demosEUROPA and SIIA, 2013].

In a demosEUROPA study in 2013, we suggested that Poland should prioritize the development of links with four regional markets: North America, Far East and ASEAN, Middle East, and Latin America [demosEUROPA, 2013]. This recommendation was based on an analysis of six criteria: the existing or possible long-term development potential of particular regions; their geopolitical significance; the seriousness of destabilization risks in those regions; Poland’s already existing links to those regions; their geographic proximity; as well as cultural, linguistic and institutional kinship. Nevertheless, it should be noted that different regions might be selected if other criteria were employed. Moreover, the selection of priority destinations might need to be disaggregated to the level of individual countries, given that most of the aforementioned regions are highly heterogeneous.

As a matter of comparison, Balcer and Wóycicki suggest that – out of the countries outside Europe – Poland should focus its attention on building economic relations with the US, Canada and Turkey, plus Kazakhstan and selected countries of the Middle East. It should develop links with the Far East, especially with China and the so-called ‘Asian Tigers’. In Africa and Latin America, they single out only two countries – Mexico and South Africa (Balcer and Wóycicki, 2014).

The Polish government could, of course, choose yet another set of priority destinations. However, the problem is that so far it has been pursuing erratic initiatives, shifting attention from Latin America to Far East to Middle East to Africa. It would be difficult to detect traces of strategic planning behind these operations. Worse still, by having too many irons in the fire, Poland reduces its chances to be effective on at least some of these fronts. Last but not least, it is worrying that Poland continues to neglect its old-time network of contacts and relationships in
Africa and the Arab world (coming from the communist times) as well as the potential of the Polish diaspora in Latin America. In most of these cases, the possibility to exploit the existing assets may soon evaporate.

**Changing rationale for Poland’s global foreign policy**

Throughout the last 25 years, we observed large variations in Poland’s reasons to become engaged in global affairs and to develop relations with countries outside Europe. After 2001 international security and the fight against terrorism constituted a leitmotiv in the country’s foreign policy. Since 2004, Poland’s membership in the EU added a new layer to its approach to global activity. It brought Poland into discussions regarding countries and regions that earlier had not appeared on its radar. It enabled Poland to shift some load of its diplomatic efforts from Europe to other regions. It boosted Poland’s image and its recognisability abroad. It also forced the country to put a greater emphasis on previously neglected aspects of foreign policy, such as international aid.

A turning point occurred in 2008 with the outbreak of the global financial crisis. From that moment on, economic issues started to ‘crowd out’ other, mostly security-related issues from foreign policies of most European countries. In the case of Poland, this effect was delayed because of the country’s focus on the Presidency in the EU Council and as a result of its apparent immunity to the economic crisis. Only after 2011 did economic diplomacy start to play an increasingly important role in Poland’s foreign policy. The development of economic links with countries and regions beyond Europe slowly began to be seen – by the government and a rising number of entrepreneurs – as a necessary condition for stable perspectives of long-term growth of the country and for its economy to become competitive internationally. Encouraged by its strengthened political position inside the EU, which stemmed from promising results of the economy and
the country’s internal political stability, the government started to position Poland as a European ‘mid-size power’. It also began to recognize the ensuing need to base the country’s position on solid connections with the world, not only with Europe.

Several factors were quoted as Poland’s assets in its strategy of ‘going global’. To start with, the country has never been a colonial power, which should give it a clean slate in relations with the rest of the world. It has neither historical liabilities nor burdensome legacies of the past in today’s emerging regions: Asia, Africa or Latin America. On the contrary, Poland itself was subjected to, and at times a victim of great power politics. Besides, Poland could benefit from an extensive network of links and connections with other regions, such as: the Arab World (economic, political, military as well as scientific cooperation and exchange during the communist era), Central Asia (similar 20th century history plus a large Polish diaspora in Kazakhstan), or Latin America (where some of the largest Polish minorities reside). However, part of these potential assets may actually turn out to be handicaps. The lack of colonial history translates into a limited recognition of Poland and its culture outside Europe. It also makes it difficult for Poland to establish a clear hierarchy among geographic destinations on which it would like to focus its attention.

While issues of security and economic growth topped the government’s list of reasons why Poland should ‘go global’, the discussion so far clearly underestimated two important aspects of such a shift.

Firstly, Poland’s attitude towards the wider world remained rather receptive, as opposed to a more pro-active approach that could be envisaged. Indeed, a mid-sized country such as Poland should arguably develop two kinds of global strategies, which we may describe as ‘G minor’ and ‘G major’ (demosEUROPA and SIIA, 2013). The former would consist in adapting to and making the best out of the global context. This is the understanding of global issues that Poland started to manifest over the last years. Meanwhile, the latter would consist in seeking to shape the global scenery according to the country’s long-term
needs and priorities. Unfortunately, in this case Poland is still ‘punching below its weight’, as evidenced by its weak engagement in multilateral institutions, lack of clear priorities for the G20 or its demonstrated lack of conviction regarding the need to develop a wide network of foreign representations.

Secondly, the more general question of modernisation stopped playing an important role in Polish discussions about the global strategy (Świeboda, 2013). Poland needs to perceive its engagement in the world as a two-way street. By sharing its experience with countries that are currently seeking political and technical advice, Poland may be able to reflect back on its own history and gain a better understanding of and insight into the nature of its transformation and modernization. These may prove to be helpful in creating the critical mass needed domestically in Poland: a population that would support its greater opening to the world and sustain further modernization. Once this is achieved, the creation of stronger interconnections between Poland and other countries around the world will be critical to add a strong external dimension to its waning modernization agenda. Meanwhile, while Poland’s image abroad has largely improved over the last years, there is paradoxically a greater need to convince Polish citizens themselves that they should stand behind a more pro-active international role for their country, and that this is where their own interests lie.

Although impacts of the 2014 military conflict between Russia and Ukraine on Poland’s global strategy remain still an open question, there is a serious risk that this event may prevent the country from pursuing a greater global opening. Its leaders may once again conclude that an engagement in global affairs as well as the development of relations with countries beyond Europe constitutes an excess or a luxury that their country cannot afford. Poland may return to a foreign policy focused on Europe and security issues, to the detriment of its nascent global agenda as well as its long-term growth and modernisation perspectives. Hopefully, a different narrative will prevail according to which the comeback of geopolitics in times of global interdependencies makes the globalisation of foreign policy not less but even more essential task.
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