

**Krzysztof Szumski**

**Remarks on Polish Policy towards East Asia**

*III Międzynarodowa Konferencja Naukowa  
Asia - Europe. Partnership or Rivalry?*

*22 listopada 2010 r.*

*Wrocław*

1. For a considerable period of time we have been witnessing the economic and political growth of Asia of unparalleled character in human history. This process was not stopped even by the financial crisis of the second part of the 90's, which affected this region more than others. Although it is too early to assess to what extent the present global economic crisis may influence the situation in East Asia, the strong majority of analysts nevertheless agrees that in years to come the importance of the region will continue to grow. However, it is certain that the world has not yet fully appreciated the significance of this process nor attributed to Asia a role that would fully correspond to its true potential. For example having surpassed Japan as the second largest economy China is no longer an emerging power . It is in position to challenge the US supremacy in the world.
2. We observe most attentively the continuous growth of East Asia in different aspects of international relations including the area of economy, politics and broadly defined security - also energy security. We notice that today Polish presence in Asia, including East Asia and the Pacific as well as our cooperation with leading regional states, including Japan, India and China, does not reflect the significance and strength of the region in the modern world, neither potential of Poland, an important member of the European Union. It is therefore our long-term aim to deepen and intensify our cooperation with Asian partners in many fields.
3. In the period of the last 20 years Poland didn't focus its political activity on Asia. After the year 1989 successive governments, along with the reality of free market economy and a new political situation, determined the priorities of our state policy. Asia was not among them. Our diplomatic efforts and means were almost entirely devoted to pursuing the European and Transatlantic rapprochement, at the expense of engagement in other spheres and directions. New circumstances demanded designation of key priorities, and these, for obvious reasons,

oscillated around the European Union, the North Atlantic Alliance and countries located at our eastern borders.

4. However matters of international security, Asia region included , are of great importance to our country. Due to its long-term engagement on the Korean Peninsula and constant participation in the activities of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC), Poland is very much involved and interested in continuing initiatives that would assure maintaining peace and durable stability in North East Asia. As a consequence, we fully appreciate the six-party talks which could play an important role in guarantying stability and balance of power in the region. We continue to urge the DPRK to comply with all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and to do what is necessary for an early resumption of the six- party talks.
5. We already can say that the world economic crisis practically didn't harm the economic cooperation between Poland and the East Asian states. Incoming economic data and statistics sheds positive light on the perspectives of our development, proving that economic fundamentals of Poland remain firm despite the global downturn. We are a stable partner of Asia in Europe. We want to sustain a flow of investments and technology from East Asia and we believe there are great opportunities for developing fruitful commercial, tourist and scientific cooperation. Participation of Poland in The World EXPO 2010 in Shanghai proves the importance that we attach to promoting our country not only in China, but also in the entire region. We consider our presence in Expo with over 8 millions of visitors in polish pavilion as a great success.

At the same time we have to remember that Poland face a deep trade imbalance with East Asia and Pacific and our deficit with the region correspond to more than 85% of our entire deficit in foreign trade.

6. It is in the similar spirit that we wanted to use a cultural even of utmost importance – the Chopin Year, which celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of birth of the famous Polish composer and pianist Fryderyk Chopin. Our intention was to use this opportunity to share Polish cultural heritage and traditions with people from East Asia. Considering the great esteem Fryderyk Chopin and his music enjoy among Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Vietnamese, we hoped that the events related to the anniversary in all East Asia were of a particularly splendid character and the reality largely confirmed our expectations.

7. Poland will continue to explore new opportunities for enhancing bilateral relations between the European Union and East Asian states while remaining as an active participant of the process of elaborating the EU policies towards its partners, with accordance to our own bilateral relations and interests. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has opened a new era in EU – Asia relations. At present EU will meet more and more a self- confident leaderships of Asian countries, fully aware of Asian’ strengthened position in international community. At the same time , we observe a deteriorating relationship between major Asian powers , especially the relations China – Japan and China – India. The 13<sup>th</sup> EU – China Summit in Brussels 6 October 2010 strongly stressed growing China assertiveness and European side had conclude that Europe must rapidly improve its game in dealing with all of its global partners , but especially with China and other Asian powers.
8. Our membership in EU opened indubitably a new chapter in our relations with Asia and Pacific, we became a more attractive partner for countries of the region. Poland will gain new opportunities of strengthening its engagement in East Asia while preparing for and then assuming duties of the EU rotating Presidency in 2011. We intend to use this period of time to intensify relations between the European and Asian communities on many layers. We are deeply convinced that this involvement will contribute to a considerable strengthening of the image of Poland as an important member of the EU, responsible for carrying out the Common Foreign and Security Policy.