

THE UKRAINE-EUROPEAN UNION RELATIONS AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE EU EASTERN ENLARGEMENT IN FUTURE

1. The European Union and Ukraine relations before the Orange Revolution

Ukraine is quite a specific country. It is the second, as to its territory, country in Europe and the fifth, as to its population, nation on the Old Continent¹. It is a multi-ethnic country in which the native Ukrainians make 73% of the whole population. More interestingly, there are 11 millions of Russians who live in Ukraine².

Leonid Kuchma, former president of Ukraine, in his book focuses readers' attention on the geopolitical conditions of his homeland: "Ukraine is a part of the Carpathian and Black Sea Regions. It is a lawful part of Eastern Europe and faces Turkey across the sea. Geographically it belongs to the central part of Europe as well as to the Balkans and North-Caucasus regions. [...] And is 28 times smaller than Russia"³.

What makes Ukraine an important partner of the European Union are the following facts: its specific geopolitical conditions, its neighbourhood of Russia and its economic dependence upon this country. Beyond any doubt its strategic position differs much in many country-members of the European Union, but on the whole its position is clear.

Another very important fact should be taken into consideration here, i.e. the role of the Russian Federation that had a great influence on the Ukrainian attitude towards the European Union.

It is Leonid Kuchma who clearly assumes that: "For Ukraine the fact of being a part of the European Union is obvious. And this choice is organic. It is choice of the civilization made in the remote past. [...] Its aim is similar to the other countries, i.e. to enter the European Union whose members give one another a free possibility of the unlimited flow of ideas, people and money"⁴.

In the end of his book "Ukraine is not Russia", the former president personally admits that "Our way has not been that straight as we desired [...] I remember very well the time of my youth when I climbed a sandy cliff and suddenly saw a cross of the far-away Orthodox church. That cross lifted me up and helped much on my way. So far we have not seen such a clear landmark. Or we have already seen such a guiding point, I don't know. Or Europe is our signpost?"⁵.

In addition to that, in the 90s one of the Ukrainian politologists wrote the following: "the majority of the political Ukrainian class think that the main and dominant aim of the foreign Ukrainian politics is to engage into the Europe and worldwide processes of the political, economic and social integration and to try hard to become a respectable and important partner in the process of constructing the platform of stabilization and security in the international relations"⁶.

Next he emphasizes the fact how specific his country is located between West and Russia, therefore "On one hand the integration of Ukraine with the European Union (even if it refers to the future) is a historical necessity, on the other, Ukraine is the most important western neighbour of Russia and may consequently be used as an instrument to influence certain processes that take place in the Federation, provided Ukraine is a stabilized and democratic country, i.e. not likely to change more"⁷.

We can see Ukraine's pro-European aims in a series of real diplomatic "manoeuvres". In June of 1999 this country signed down the Agreement of Partnership and Cooperation with the European Union (PCA – Part. And Coop. Agree.) which came into force on the 1st of March 1998. The Council of the European Union also formulated a common attitude to defining aims and priorities of the cooperation with Ukraine which made the functioning of the Council of the EU possible⁸. The first conference of the Council members was held in June of 1998. The work plan and the curriculum of the Council for the years 1998 and 1999 was introduced.

¹ cf. Rudich Ph: W odnom geopolityczeskom prostranstwie, Politics and chaos, no 12, 1993, p.44

² cf. Wilson A.: Ukrainians, Warsaw 2002, p.219

³ Kuchma L.: Ukraine is not Russia, Cracow 2004, p.29-32

⁴ cf. Ibidem, p.436-437

⁵ cf. Ibidem. p.440

⁶ Koval I.: Ukrainian Concepts of the European Security In the 90s, In: Lominski B. (edit.) Security of the European countries. The concepts and the problems of the 90s, Katowice 1997, p.131

⁷ Ibidem, p.133

⁸ Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, Official Journal of the European Communities, multimedia presentation, <http://europa.eu.int>

The first meeting, the first European Union – Ukraine summit talks took place on the 16th of October 1998. On the 11th of December 1998 the leaders of the group of the fifteen members met and accepted a strategy as to Ukraine which in great measure made this country an important partner in the foreign affairs of the European Union. That strategy was based upon the European aspirations and the pro-European attitude of Ukraine. Its first part referred to the idea of the partnership with the European Union and how it could be fulfilled in reality. The strategy aims of the European Union were formulated similarly to those of the agreement with Russia; they were as follows: to support and help democracy and market economy and to cooperate for the benefit of stability and security in Europe and in the whole world.

The new tasks appeared; they were to narrow and in a way limit the economic, political and cultural cooperation as well as the cooperation as to the administration of justice and home affairs.

The second part of the document clearly introduced and defined the main targets of the partnership and all the actions that should follow, i.e. to support the cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union as to the broaden the European Union and to cooperate in the field of the preservation of environment, energy and nuclear security. The strategy was planned to be over in four years or so⁹.

The above actions could not be left without any comments on the side of Russia that wanted much to keep its present position in the relations with Ukraine unchanged. The beginning of 2003 gave birth to the new initiative of the Kremlin according to which the new possibility of creating a kind of “The Union of the East” appeared. The “Union” was just a Common Economic Territory of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. It is proper to add that Russia would reserve a right to make all the decisions itself¹⁰.

Jean-Christophe Filori, a spokesman of the European Union commissioner, of Gunther Verheugen, immediately reacted on the Russian initiative in the following words: “It is Kiev that should be careful about its relations with the neighbours from the East. The relations between Ukraine and its Eastern neighbours should not be incompatible with its European aspirations and the commitments Kiev promised to meet in the European Union”¹¹.

The President Kuchma made a clear statement that “the space (the Common Economic Space) is indeed the main and strategic direction of the Ukrainian development but at the same time no one will push Kiev aside on the way to Europe”.

The Ukrainian President also added, according to Russia, the following: “I am not afraid about the fact that Brussels will take us in 50 years. More than that, I will be happy and glad to hear that. It would be much worse if Brussels did not say anything about us. It is pity the European Union treats us as a straggler”¹².

In the same radical way of speaking, Kuchma gave his speech during the European Economic Summit Conference, in Warsaw, in April 2004. It is as follows: “The European Union treats us as a toreador and we run after a red cloth as bulls. Thus we have to think over our own way and the tempo of the integration”¹³.

The above words were simply the reaction on the slow aspirations of the European Union after getting closer to Ukraine, in Kiev’s opinion. As a consequence of the too slow a process Alexander Tchali, vice president of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs resigned from his post. He assumed that “Brussels is not ready to give us a chance for the partnership in the European Union even in the distant future”¹⁴.

On the 12th of May 2004 the European Union introduced the specific framework of the cooperation. It brought out the European Policy of Neighbourhood, in which one could find and learn about the fact that the Union was not going to make the countries introduced in the document members of the European Union¹⁵.

Somewhat earlier Romano Prodi, the president of the European Commission decidedly excluded a possibility for Belarus and Ukraine to become a partner of the European Union. He only presented these two countries with an opportunity to become a member of the Brussels’ Friends Club.

The next European Union and Ukraine summit conference was held on the 8th of July 2004 in Hague. Unfortunately, it was not the time for the change in the relations between the Union and Ukraine. It was the European Union that pointed at the aims of the European Policy of Neighbourhood, i.e. economic help, cooperation in research and technology instead of observance of human rights and fight against terrorism¹⁶.

⁹ Zieba R.: The foreign politics of the EU towards Middle Europe and Eastern Europe, *International Relations*, no 3-4, 2000, p.13-15

¹⁰ Podebski R.: Putin’s Ukrainian front, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9th -10th October 2004, p.15

¹¹ Radziwinowicz W.: Jalta no 2, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19th September 2004, p.9

¹² cf. Sochar O.: A course for Moscow, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20th May 2004, p.9

¹³ Wojciechowski M.: Tempting Ukraine, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17th May 2004, p.1

¹⁴ cf. Sochar O.: A course for Moscow, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20th May 2004, p.9

¹⁵ European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy Paper, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 12th May 2004, multimedia presentation, <http://europa.eu.int>

On the 15th of July president Kuchma, as a reaction to this state of affairs, crossed out a record about the integration with NATO and European Union from the defence doctrine¹⁷. It was on the 26th of July in 2004 when president Kuchma made this fact officially known during the Russia-Ukraine economic summit conference in Jalta¹⁸.

It was on the 17th of June, just before the NATO summit in Istanbul, when the fundamental aim of Ukraine to belong to the NATO and the European Union was officially formulated in the doctrine. Kuchma expected to be invited to the partnership in the Pact. He was only criticized for quashing the freedom of speech instead. The West forced him to make the autumn presidential elections in an honest and proper way. Some changes in the military doctrine as well as other friendly gestures towards Russia were received as a part of the electoral campaign and a possibility for Victor Janukovitch, a Government's candidate, to get Putin's support in the elections¹⁹.

In July 2004 a project of the European Union political declaration towards Ukraine was presented. According to this declaration Ukraine was to be treated by the European Union as one of the most important neighbours and partners. The European Union put great emphasis on the fact that Ukraine would make use of all the "tools" and "instruments" given by the European Policy of Neighbourhood. At the same time Ukraine was found to neglect the observance of the human rights. The present condition of reforms was also pointed out to be a serious obstacle in the process of the Ukrainian integration to the European Union. It was the second time when the European Union appealed to carry out the democratic presidential elections. We could learn from the document that the European Union wanted to make a dialogue with Ukraine more frequent and a conversation more open, and to make use of any help the European Union gives. Ukraine was also assured to get more money in the future, i.e. in 2007 on²⁰.

As for Russia, aspiring the regional power, was slowing accepting Ukraine and its pro-European vision, but was still very cautious about that. President Putin asked about Ukraine by a Swiss newspaper "le Temps" declared that "Russia will not oppose the integration of Ukraine to the European Union, but is opposed to accept Kiev as a member of the North Atlantic Pact"²¹.

On the 11th of October 2004 Poland and Germany acknowledged Ukraine as an important neighbour. The conference of the Cabinet of the European Union Foreign Affairs took place in Luxemburg, where the two countries introduced the declaration "confirming the European aspirations of Ukraine and an important role it plays in the worldwide safety"²².

It was Poland and Germany where you could see the first numerous ideas and attempts to present to European Union politics towards Ukraine, due to the fact that these two countries were much interested in establishing the fundamentals of democracy in Ukraine. As an example we could have a project of Mateusz Falkowski, a sociologist in the Institute of Public Affairs and of Kai-Olaf Lang's, an expert in the German Institute of the International Politics and Security, i.e. "The Science and Politics Foundation" in Berlin called into being on the basis of the report "The common task. Poland, Germany, Ukraine in Europe of transfer nations", within which Poland, referring to the new European Union instrumentarium, i.e. the European Policy of Neighbourhood, was successfully realizing its Eastern politics. Ukraine was suggested not to be discussed about as to its future partnership with the European Union. The status of a country associated with the European Union would have been an encouragement to make all the reforms actual and feasible. Germany and Poland would have engaged actively into prompting and stimulating Ukrainian aspirations to the partnership with the World Trade Organization. The intensive cooperation between the Polish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian chambers was taken into consideration. The cooperation between Polish and German investors in Ukraine was also considered to be necessary to create a secure and transparent business environment in this country. In the field of justice and home affairs what was suggested was the aspiration to sign a contract about the readmission to the countries of the Schengen group as well as the help to extend the member of refugees' camps and sharing

¹⁶ cf. Słojewska A.: No promises for Kiev, *Rzeczpospolita*, 9th July 2004, p.5

¹⁷ cf. Radziwinowicz W.: Kuchma – a revolving president, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31st August – 1st September 2004, p.15

¹⁸ cf. Wojciechowski M.: Jalta In 2004, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27th July 2004, p.1

¹⁹ cf. Gorska A.: Elections In Ukraine, Centre for Eastern Studies, multimedia presentation, <http://www.osw.waw.pl>

²⁰ The EU political declaration about Ukraine – a Project, *Rzeczpospolita*, 13th July 2004, p.6

²¹ Russia. We let Ukraine go to Europe, a dispatch, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9th September 2004, p.10

²² Słojewska A: A hand given to Ukraine, *Rzeczpospolita*, 12th October 2004, p.7

any experience from the modernization of the Polish border in the East. In the field of The Security Policy the suggestion to make use of any possibilities within the NATO – Ukraine Activity Plan and to make a careful study of any opportunities to include Ukraine in the European Policy of Security and Defence and to use the potential Ukraine has in the field of air transportation. As to forming a society of citizens this project was focusing on the cooperation between the beyond-government Ukraine organizations and Polish and German ones and pointed out an idea to found a Polish-Ukraine university with the support of Germany in a form of a separate and individual department or any scholarship university program.

A new form of the international dialogue would have been a cooperation among Polish, Ukrainian and German forums²³.

All these above suggestions were the evidence of the fact that some European Union countries were very much aware of the role Ukraine plays in keeping the European security and order. But of course, the level of that awareness represented by the European Union differed countries much.

During the conference in Luxemburg on the 14th of October 2004, the Ministers of the Foreign Affairs of the European Union introduced the foundations of the new Eastern politics the European Union under the name “Wider Europe”.

The idea of declaration was a proposal for Ukraine to attain economic advantages in exchange for progress in upholding human rights and freedom of speech, cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the mafia and illegal immigration, and Ukraine’s drawing closer to the legislature of the Union²⁴. The next steps should have been the beginning of negotiations on free trade, facilitation of visas, the acceleration of participation in a united market and the beginning of a free trade zone, as well as signing a treaty on a strategy partnership²⁵.

Then the Orange Revolution began. Various people engaged in the spirit of the Round Table, among them Poland’s president Alexander Kwasniewski, also Valdas Adamkus the president of Lithuania, Javier Solana the foreign policy coordinator of the European Union, Boris Gryslow head of the Russian Duma, and other foreign participants. To help Ukraine, this time as Independence Square, former Polish president Lech Walesa²⁶ also took part.

This Ukrainian crisis deeply affected Russia also. From the beginning the Federation openly supported one of the more influential candidates Viktor Yanukovich. Russia started to pay close attention to events in Ukraine and to keep its fingers on the pulse. It seemed that Russia and Ukraine were for each other an *idée fixe*. Every serious attempt at closer connection with Europe to the west, or Eurasia to the south, required from Ukraine symmetrical steps dictated by the need maintain normal bilateral links with Russia. Up to the time of the orange revolution the Ukrainian rulers took these steps. In October 2004 the situation in Ukraine reached such a turmoil that an unequivocal declaration about Ukrainian foreign policy and possible alliances had to be spelt out.

2. The European Union’s reaction to the Orange Revolution.

From the very beginning the Orange Revolution in Ukraine found favour with the democratic world. Likewise the European Union followed events in Independence Square with lively interest, however this interest didn’t imply the active united engagement of all European Union member states in the process of democratization of Ukraine.

The leader of the Orange Revolution and opposition candidate for President, Viktor Yushenko, consistently declared from the beginning a pro-European direction to his policies: “We will strive to make Ukraine known for prosperous stable development and openness to the world [...] We will remain optimistic; we will not be put off by every obstacle and “cold shower” on the way to possible membership of Ukraine in the European Union. Yes, Ukraine has a chance to become a member of the European Union. Of course for this we need the goodwill of the Union, but we must take the first steps ourselves. No-one else is going to correct the structure of the nation or the society. Integration with the Union is not for us an end itself. No-one in the West wants to absorb us or impose their value system on us. Above all the integration of Ukraine itself is necessary as a guarantee of people’s prosperity, peace and safety”²⁷.

That type of declaration was accepted gladly, but also with a diplomatic distance. The reason for this state of affairs was the Union’s desire to show balance in relation to Russia.

23 Falkowski M., Lang K.-O.: Common tasks, Rzeczpospolita, 30th Oct – 1st Nov 2004, p.6

24 cf. Sołtyk R.: A carrot for the East, Gazeta Wyborcza, 14th Oct 2004, p.8

25 cf. Rubinowicz-Grundler A.: Poland and Germany for the Ukraine, Gazeta Wyborcza, 14th Oct 2004, p.1

26 cf. Wojciechowsky M.: The Table gives a chance, Gazeta Wyborcza, 27th - 28th Nov 2004, p.6

27 Yushenko V.: The Bandits will not rule us, an interview with the presidential candidate, Gazeta Wyborcza, 30th Oct – 1st Nov 2004, p.11

“La Repubblica” wrote unequivocally about this: “Europe [...], behind the mask of apparent unanimity, must navigate between two strategies. On the one hand there are countries in the traditional core of the Union who want to take care of the democratic evolution of their inconvenient Ukrainian neighbour. They are however aware that it is in the interest of the European Union to maintain good relations with Russia and they want at all costs to avoid worsening the situation and in particular a possible split of Ukraine in two, a western pro-European part and an eastern pro-Russian part. On the other hand there are some capitals of the new Europe who decisively supported the democratic candidate Yushchenko, and who look favorably on every crisis which may further limit the influence of Russia in their neighbouring countries. Nonetheless Europe should not allow Warsaw and Vilnius to drive their diplomatic strategy. She should not let their political and economic difficulties be an excuse for them to realize their plan to destabilize the region”²⁸.

The publishers of “The Guardian” saw the problem somewhat differently, and put it rather more radically: “Viewed from the Kremlin, Ukraine may still look like Russia’s near abroad, but with Poland and Lithuania now in the expanded European Union of 25 member states, it is a lot closer to Europe than it was when it won its independence in the cold war’s dying days 13 years ago. [...] European Union- Russian relations are often prickly, but this is a moment for Europe to overcome its caution, often seen over Russian policy in Chechnya, and stand up for its fundamental values. Talk of a replay of cold war-era conflicts and spheres of influence is misplaced. The context is different now”²⁹.

And further: “The European Union [...] should give Ukraine the option of future membership rather than the feeble “action plan” of cooperation currently on offer. This would set Ukraine on a surer path to irreversible reform than anything that either Yushchenko or Yanukovich may promise. [...] The European Union must also make a public statement that it sees no value in NATO membership for Ukraine, and those European Union members who belong to NATO will not support it. At a stroke this would calm Russia’s legitimate fears and send a signal to Washington not to go on inflaming a purely European issue”³⁰.

After the press had their say came the time for formulating official positions. A more decisive reaction from the European Union came after the blatantly rigged second round of the presidential elections on 21st November 2004. For example, the German foreign secretary Joschka Fischer said that it was “very hard to call this a free election”³¹.

The argument over the Ukrainian election results also dominated the European Union-Russia summit which took place at the Hague on 25th of November 2004. The subject of the Ukraine was present in the conversation to such a degree that they could not agree on the previously announced plan for strategic cooperation between Brussels and Moscow³².

Moscow didn’t want to accept the West’s version of events in Ukraine. Valeri Fiodorov, head of the Russian government’s Centre for Surveying Public Opinion, put it this way: “The main spokesman for Yushchenko in Europe is Poland, supported by other central European members of the European Union. For Russia this is very difficult emotionally – former allies, members of the Warsaw Pact, coming out against her interests in Ukraine. Also anti-Russianism is for these countries a way of emancipation within the European Union. Thanks to Ukraine they can become important players on the world stage. Every day they remind Moscow’s politicians that the network of former allies has disappeared into Europe. It’s painful”³³.

Despite numerous statements from individual member states they were still waiting a clear position from the whole Union. This finally appeared after two days of silence on 24th of November. In an official communiqué the Union condemned the falsified election results and called for a recount. Jose Barroso, chairman of the European Commission, even stated: “If the false election results are confirmed it could affect European Union-Ukrainian relations and European Regional Policies”³⁴.

At this time in Ukraine the power struggle was still going on. The outgoing president Leonid Kuchma reacted quite obsessively to the initiative of the MEPs, who on 2nd December brought to Kiev a resolution of the European Parliament stating that the Union did not recognize the results of the second round of the presidential election on 21st November and condemned the call from some politicians for succession of the Eastern region of Ukraine. “I had hoped that you would bring help to resolve the conflict, and not stir up emotions” said the outraged Kuchma³⁵.

²⁸ Bonanni A.: Europe’s Strategy, La Repubblica, reprinted in Gazeta Wyborcza, 27th -28th Nov 2004, p.8

²⁹ Is the future orange?, The Guardian, editorial, reprinted in Gazeta Wyborcza, 27th - 28th Nov 2004, p.8

³⁰ Ukraine’s postmodern coup d’etat, editorial, reprinted in Gazeta Wyborcza, 27th - 28th Nov 2004, p.8

³¹ Radziwinowicz W., Wojciechowski M.: This means revolution, Gazeta Wyborcza, 24th Nov 2004, p.1

³² cf. Bielecki J.: Ukraine spoils the summit, Rzeczpospolita, 24th Nov 2004, p.5

³³ Bielecki T.: How the West and Russia are fighting over Ukraine, Gazeta Wyborcza, 29th Nov 2004, p.10

³⁴ Słojewska A.: A recount is needed, Rzeczpospolita, 25th Nov 2004, p.9

³⁵ cf. Wojciechowski M.: Kuchma goes crazy, Gazeta Wyborcza, 3rd Dec 2004, p.10

Polish MEPs reacted very vigorously to the developments in Ukraine. Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, vice-chairman of the European Parliament, in one of its sessions even called out in Ukrainian: "The European Parliament welcomes democracy in Ukraine!"³⁶.

At the same time European Union diplomats tried to show their characteristic impartiality. After Ukraine's decision to repeat the second round of the elections, Christina Gallah, spokeswoman of the European Union's top foreign affairs representative Javier Solana, indicate that "the European Union has no preferences in the new second round of the Ukrainian presidential election, and will do everything in her power to ensure the credibility of the voting"³⁷.

On the other hand Joseph Borrell, chairman of the European Parliament, clearly underlined that "only Europe is capable of guiding Ukraine on the road to democracy"³⁸.

On 13th December 2004 in a session of the European Union Council of Ministers, a declaration was passed regarding Ukraine, including assurances of intention to cooperate along the lines of the formerly accepted European Union action plan³⁹.

On 26th December 2004 Viktor Yuschenko won the repeated second round of the Ukrainian presidential election. The European Union's reaction was unequivocal. In the European Parliament's resolution announced on 13th of January 2005 appeared the statement that "Ukraine has clearly confirmed the importance she attaches to European elections and her will for integration with the European Union"⁴⁰.

Javier Solana declared the Union's intention to cooperate with the new leader. "We believe that many new possibilities exist for strengthening the bonds between the European Union and Ukraine" he said⁴¹.

Viktor Yuschenko on 23rd January 2005, after being sworn-in as a president of Ukraine, responded with the declaration "My goal is Ukraine in the European Union"⁴².

Despite the undoubted emotion which the Orange Revolution inspired in Europe, it needs to be said that the question of Ukrainian foreign policy, her "pro-Russian-ness" or "pro-Europe-ness" had only a marginal importance for this outburst of freedom. The roots of the Orange Revolution were above all internal⁴³.

It is also worth noting that as events developed the attitude of the international community became for Ukraine that much more important, and its influence on developments became that much more significant.

3. Ukraine and the Eastern Policies of the European Union

The politics of the European Union towards Ukraine should be considered in a wider context, meaning it as a part of the whole European Union politics of the East, with regard to its relations to the Russian Federation. The most significant documents are about Eastern Europe, but there are also some which are about Ukraine.

On the 11th of March 2003, the European Commission made an announcement to the European Council and Parliament about "Wide Europe: Neighbourhood – the new framework of the relations with our eastern and southern neighbours"⁴⁴. The work on the idea was being done several months. While some other countries were aspiring to integrate into the European Union, Ukraine made a quick decision about the limits of its integration.

This conception was directed to the following regions: the Mediterranean countries, i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Autonomy, Syria and Tunisia and the post-Soviet European countries, i.e. Belarus, Moldavia, Russia and Ukraine.

It aimed at intensifying the economic cooperation and the actions in the field of fighting against all kinds of crossing-the-border threats. The idea was to create a new political and economic stability based on the common values and aims. It would have referred to the European Union and its closest neighbourhood. From the document we could also learn about a possibility to make a visa discipline more flexible by means of cancelling visas for diplomats and making the border much easier to cross. The European Union was emphasized to introduce a possibility for neighbouring countries to cross the borders without a visa.

On the whole, these initiatives were of a general character and took for granted the fact, that Brussels would have to make its actions in some specific fields more intense. Therefore a suggestion in the document to

³⁶ cf. Sołtyk R.: Brussels in orange, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2nd Dec 2004, p.9

³⁷ "The Union has no candidate, telegram, *Rzeczpospolita*, 6th Dec 2004, p.6

³⁸ Borrell J.: Europe for Ukraine", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18th - 19th Dec 2004, p.18

³⁹ cf. Słojewska A.: Give more to Ukraine, *Rzeczpospolita*, 13th Dec 2004, p.8

⁴⁰ Sołtyk R.: Opening the door to the Union", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 12th Jan 2005, p.10

⁴¹ cf. Solana J.: A promising future, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24th Jan 2005, p.12

⁴² Wojciechowski M.: Yuschenko the European, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24th Jan 2005, p.1

⁴³ cf. Konieczna J.: "The orange revolution in Ukraine: an attempt to understand the causes, Centre for Eastern Studies, multimedia presentation, <http://www.csw.waw.pl>

⁴⁴ Pelczynska-Nalecz K.: Wider Europe – the idea of the European Union policy towards the neighbours, Centre for Eastern Studies, multimedia presentation, <http://www.osw.waw.pl>

set up “the tool for the New Neighbourhood” attracted everyone’s attention. This “tool” would have to promote cross-in-the-border cooperation within the PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG programs.

Beyond any doubt it was the first document introducing in a general and cohesive way the foundations of the European Union politics towards those countries of no chance at all to become a European Union member.

It was the first time the democratic and free market reforms and transportations were stated basic to cooperate with the European Union. What was also indispensable for this cooperation to develop was to accept the legal system of the European Union. The new cooperation mechanism between the European Union and its neighbours were introduced for the first time. One of these innovations was to design a schedule of the changes to be made and further verified altogether.

In the document we could also find a formal declaration on the side of the European Union to support the reforms in the neighbouring countries by means of setting up programs of the European Union help towards those countries. It is Brussels that is particularly fond of the above idea⁴⁵.

On the 9th of December 2004 the European Committee introduced the Strategy Plan for Ukraine. It was a list of actions according to the program of the European-Policy-of-Neighbourhood. In that Plan we can observe that the European Union offers Ukraine economic profits on the condition Ukraine follows democratic standards. There was nothing about its membership in the European Union in the document. It was Brussels that suggested the governments of the member-countries introducing and ratifying the Strategy Plan should have depend the decision, on the presidential elections repeated⁴⁶.

Ukraine was not considered to get a great financial help in that plan. It was suggested to get 100 millions Euro in 2005 in comparison to 2004 when it got 70 millions Euro [Poland gets 40 times more a year – from the author]. We could also learn from the document about the law harmonization, repealing any barriers in trade, the development in the field of scientific cooperation and cultural exchange⁴⁷.

Already in December 2004 the ministers of Foreign Affairs of Germany and Poland, having made attempts to create the European Union politics towards Ukraine, presented the European Union Council with the strategy plan of developing the relations with Ukraine which was not included in the standard version of the Strategy Plan. The point was to introduce the new cooperation and the European Union partnership program adjusted to the needs of Ukraine. That could have been replaced with the Partnership and cooperation Agreement [the so-called PCA – from the author]⁴⁸.

In spite of these initiatives the European Union opinion of the possibility for Ukraine to be a member of the Union became unchanged – Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Union’ Foreign Affairs Commissioner definitely stated that “Ukraine would not be given a chance for the European Union partnership by Brussels. [...] That matter is not being considered at the moment”⁴⁹.

Vladimir Putin, being aware of the fact that the European Union is cautious about making political declarations about Ukraine, but also putting his foreign politics in a state of balance between East and West made his opinion about the pro-European aspirations of Ukraine as follows: “We have a very specific attitude towards Ukraine, having close economic relations and cooperation in production to be being continued. Therefore, in my mind to make this part of our economics a part of the European structure would have positive influence upon Russia”⁵⁰.

The European Union decided on the trans-border cooperation being aware of the fact that the new European Union boundary with the Eastern-European countries – Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine is about 3000 km. The aims of this cooperation being performed within the CBC (i.e. cross-border-cooperation – from the author) are mainly to minimize the negative consequences in the international relations coming from the border that is tight and gives protection and furthermore to stimulate and develop relations between the communities living by the border, and also to solve the problems as to the lack of the economic balance of the regions and a different level of the technical and communicative infrastructure development.

This cooperation is based upon the work of the Euro-regions, the direct bilateral cooperation of the local authorities, relations on the level of the central Government, the activity of non-governmental organizations and the economic cooperation. Here is a list of the fields of the European Union cooperation with the Eastern European countries, that is: self-governments, ecology, cultural exchange, health, infrastructure and communication development, business relations, trainings, information and technology transfer, getting and

⁴⁵ cf. Wider Europe-Neighbourhood : A New Framework for Relations with Eastern and Southern Neighbours, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 11th Mar 2003, multimedia presentation, <http://europa.eu.int>

⁴⁶ cf. Slojewska A.: Moscow makes the tone milder, Rzeczpospolita, 10th Dec 2004, p.6

⁴⁷ Proposed European Union/Ukraine Action Plan, multimedia presentation, <http://europa.eu.int>

⁴⁸ cf. Bielecki J.: A far place in the queue to the European Union, Rzeczpospolita, 10th Dec 2004, p.6

⁴⁹ Bielecki J.: There is no place for Kiev, Rzeczpospolita, 3rd Dec 2004, p.3

⁵⁰ Jendroszczyk P.: Yuschenko is certain about victory, Rzeczpospolita, 11th - 12th Dec 2004, p.4

making use of any help from the outside, stamping out natural calamity, coordinated development of town and country, planning natural relations between people and tourism.

Among any obstacles for this kind of cooperation to develop incommensurability of the subjects of this cooperation seems to be of great importance. So far the self-governments of Ukraine have been at liberty to do what one finds fit as compared to their union equivalents which have made the cooperation more difficult. More than that, they also had different preferences, insufficient functioning of the mechanisms responsible for financing the cooperation on the side of the Eastern partners, insufficient number of the qualified people, little support from the local regional and central authorities and also not any appropriate international contracts regulating the above.

In spite of these obstacles the trans border cooperation and its importance was strongly emphasized particularly in the Cooperation and Partnership Agreements (PCA) between Russia and Ukraine in the common Strategies of the European Union towards Russia and Ukraine⁵¹.

Although Ukraine shows its willingness and is ready for the cooperation, the European Union remains cautious in declaring the future relation with Ukraine. Different opinions of the high-ranking state officials of the Union matter much. As an example of such a situation we can quote after Margot Hallstroem, a vice-president of the European Commission on the 24th of January 2005 [*nota bene* it was the day when Julia Tymoshenko was appointed the Prime minister of Ukraine – from the author] that “it appears real for Ukraine to become a member of the European Union”⁵².

One of the reactions to her statement was the declaration of Olek Rybatchuk, a Ukrainian vice-Prime minister responsible for Euro integration. In the interview to “Izwiestia”, a Russian newspaper he announced that if necessary Ukraine was ready to annul all those economic contracts with Russia which could become an obstacle in the integration with the European Union⁵³, taking into consideration the one about the Common Economic Territory Space with Russia, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan, signed in September 2003.

Nevertheless, apart from some positive attitudes of the European Union politicians, the official standpoint towards Ukraine was left unchanged.

4. The future of Ukraine-European Union relations

It must be emphasized that the appearance of an independent Ukraine constitutes is one of the most important events in the postwar history of Europe.

The European Union, while conscious of the importance of cooperation with Ukraine, at the same time cannot neglect the no less important relationship with the Russian Federation, which strictly speaking takes first place.

On the other hand the Union as much as Ukraine is aware of the enormous task facing the democratic rulers of Ukraine before one can speak of closer cooperation.

Jose Manuel Barosso, head of the European Commission, left no doubt on this question “We fully support a democratic Ukraine. Her future is in Europe, but today we cannot speak membership of the Union. [...] First we have to do a great deal of work to stabilize democracy in Ukraine. This the right way to support the new democratic power in Kiev”⁵⁴.

Even President Yuschenko, conscious of the need to bring about many essential reforms, cautiously declared his association with the European Union⁵⁵.

On the other hand the Ukrainian president left no doubt about the expectations and aspirations of his country. While in Strasbourg he spoke out unequivocally on this subject: “The future of Europe is not possible without Ukraine. Our road to the Union will be hard but not necessarily long. [...] Our strategic goal is European Union membership. There will not be policies from Byzantium in any directions, only in one: Europe. [...] I see my country in the Union in the next 15 years, and I would like to begin talks on joining the European Union after 2007”⁵⁶.

The European Union Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Benito Ferrero-Waldner, the most opposed to Ukrainian integration into the European Union, replied that the Union is not presently in a position to offer Ukraine any kind of membership of the European Union, though they want to get closer by degrees.

⁵¹ cf. Sadowski R.: Transborder cooperation At the new East order of the European Union”, Centre for Eastern Studies, multimedia presentation, <http://www.osw.waw.pl>, p.26-31

⁵² Bitter Julia for Putin, Gazeta Wyborcza, 25th Jan 2005, p.1

⁵³ cf. Radziwinowicz W.: We will be partners, Gazeta Wyborcza, 10th Feb 2005, p.12

⁵⁴ Soltyk R.: Ukraine to the West, Gazeta Wyborcza, 10th Feb 2005, p.1

⁵⁵ cf. Podebski R.: A visit at the competitor, Gazeta Wyborcza, 24th Jan 2005, p.17

⁵⁶ Soltyk R.: Yuschenko in Europe, Gazeta Wyborcza, 26th Jan 2005, p.11

During the presidency of Leonid Kuchma [1995-2005 – author's note] it was said that “universal agreement on the unconditional need to strengthen bonds with Europe was held [...] only at the level of Ukraine's ruling elite. The leftwing political opposition is against it, and public opinion on the question is divided”⁵⁷.

From the time President Viktor Yushenko took the reins of power, Ukrainian public opinion has definitely turned toward the Union. Andriy Szkil, a Ukrainian opposition activist, leaves no doubt on this question. “I think that in 5-6 years a timetable for Ukraine joining the European Union will be set out. There is no other way for Ukraine”⁵⁸.

On 31st January 2005 at a meeting of foreign ministers of the 25 states of the Union again set out its manifesto for Kiev, containing assurances of support for WTO membership, intention to grant Ukraine the status of a market economy state, easing of visa restrictions and the future creation of a free trade zone⁵⁹.

On 21st February 2005 the European Union-Ukraine Action Plan was signed in Brussels, within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy⁶⁰, together with an annex which gave the Union's response to the heightened expectations of Ukraine after the Orange Revolution, including some “soft” commitments on the Union's part, such as replacing the PCA with a new agreement by 2008, and financial and consultancy support for Ukrainian reform⁶¹. The annex also included an European Union declaration on the subject of increasing Ukraine's access to European Investment Bank funds up to the sum of 250 million euros.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner commented on it thus: “If we enroll Ukraine in the Action Plan, it is not to distance ourselves from Ukraine, on the contrary, it is to approach closer”⁶².

Realization of the European Neighbourhood policy is backed by the European Instruments of Neighbourhood and Partnership, which replaces previous aid funds [e.g. TACIS – author's note] addressed to neighbouring states which don't presently have prospect of European Union membership.

The application was confirmed in 2004. The European Union-Ukraine Action Plan is planned for three years.

Achieving this strategic aim of Ukrainian foreign policy, of getting closer to membership of the European Union, could play an immeasurably important role in shaping the policies of Ukraine's new rulers. Bringing to life the decisions of the European Union-Ukraine Action Plan could with luck take the place of the so far lacking national development strategy. Likewise European Neighbourhood Policies create many possibilities for supporting transformative efforts⁶³.

By analyzing the possibilities of eventual integration and cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union one can see three potential variants of rapprochement.

The first of these established a change of the previously established process of “widening Europe” and thus increasing the number of candidate states for full integration into the European Union. The scope of the last widening of the European Union in May 2004 is a proof that this idea is no longer current.

The second solution was the assumption that the process of “widening Europe” finished with acceptance of candidate states into the Union on a first-come-first-served basis. Then a European “grey zone” would appear, not especially large, comprising Moldavia, part of the Balkans, Russia and Belarus. Ukraine might then become a stable and important partner of the European Union, or, according to the pessimistic version, fall into isolation.

The third way depends on a change of strategy of “Institutional Europe” deciding that it's no use having a new border between Russia and Central Europe, nor pressure to choose one road at the cost of the other. In this situation Ukraine would surely keep its ambiguously defined status quo⁶⁴.

Nonetheless, everything indicates that Ukraine, also for geopolitical reasons, is destined for a continuous balancing act between the European Union and Russia. Moving the centre of gravity in any direction could be very unwise. The remaining question is the true centre of gravity? The answer depends on Ukraine's new rulers.

Andrew Wilson, expert on Ukraine and lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at London's University college, says this: “Ukraine has a special place on the border of two great geopolitical

⁵⁷ cf. The political portrait of Ukraine, no 18, 1997, Publish : Wilson A.: Ukrainians, Warsaw 2002, p.310

⁵⁸ Lakowski G.: We are going to Europe, an interview with Andriy Szkil, a Ukrainian opposition activist, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17th Jan 2005, p.12

⁵⁹ Słojewska A.: Visas and trade first, *Rzeczpospolita*, 1st Feb 2005, p.7

⁶⁰ Wolowski P.: Ukraine in the Euro Atlantic Family“, Eastern Studies Centre, multimedia presentation, <http://www.osw.waw.pl>

⁶¹ cf. Soltyk R.: The European Union restrains Brussels, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31st Jan 2005, p.14

⁶² Soltyk R.: Ukraine to the West, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10th Feb 2005, p.1

⁶³ Gorska A.: Ukraine, where are you going to?, Eastern Studies Centre, multimedia presentation, <http://www.osw.waw.pl>

⁶⁴ cf. Wilson A.: Ukrainians, p.311-312

concepts – the ideas of “Europe” and of “Eurasia”, and her future in large measure depends on her attitude to this notion at the beginning of the new millennium”⁶⁵.

It’s undeniable that from the beginning of 2004 European Union-Ukrainian relations underwent clear changes. Intensification and dynamism followed. This process was undoubtedly a historical consequence of the Orange Revolution. Nonetheless, these events did not lead to a softening of the official position of the European Union, which held back from formulating even a distant prospect of membership for Ukraine⁶⁶.

Independent of the final state of integration, the European Union, while supporting the pro-European tendency in Ukraine, should not engage in any local personal arguments, but should limit herself to stimulating change in the system, as political divisions in Ukraine are not generally ideological in character, but are based on business and region⁶⁷.

According to the results of an opinion poll carried out in February and March 2005 among citizens of Germany, France, Poland, Great Britain, Italy and Spain, up to 55% of those polled are in favour of Ukrainian entry into the European Union⁶⁸. So one cannot speak of widespread antipathy of the Union’s residents towards further widening.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former advisor to the US president Jimmy Carter, said some time ago that “Ukraine chooses Europe, and sometime between 2005 and 2015 will become a serious candidate for full membership in the NATO and the European Union”⁶⁹.

That’s the present situation. Nonetheless the future story of the process of integration of Ukraine with the European Union will be created by those interested in resolving all the arguments for and against such a resolution.

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⁶⁵ Ibidem, p.299

⁶⁶ cf. Pelczynska – Nalecz K. : “The ENP in practice – the European Union’s policy towards Russia , Ukraine ,Byelorussia and Moldavia one year after the publication of the Strategy Plan”, Eastern Studies Centre , multimedia presentation, <http://www.osw.waw.pl>

⁶⁷ cf. Pelczynska – Nalecz K. et al. : “The Eastern Policy of the European Union – the Visegrad Countries’ Perspective”, Eastern Studies Centre , multimedia presentation, <http://www.osw.waw.pl>, p.25

⁶⁸ cf. Pawlicki J.: We want Ukraine to be a member of the European Union, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24th March 2005, p.10

⁶⁹ Wilson A.: Ukrainians, p.313

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Summary

This article attempts to follow the relationship between the European Union and Ukraine over the last decade. In the first part of the article the author presents the development of Ukraine-European Union relationships before the outbreak of the Orange Revolution. The next part presents an analysis of the European Union's reaction to the events surrounding the Ukrainian push for freedom. The combination of formal and informal statements and documents appearing on the question of European Union-Ukrainian relations in the context of a wider understanding of the Eastern policies of the European Union allows us to look at the problem from another perspective. Tracing the prospects for future relations between the Union and Ukraine the author indicates difficulties the European Union may encounter in formulating an unambiguous declaration on the next steps regarding her Eastern neighbours. The desire for balance shown by the European Union in relation to the Russian Federation makes this inevitable. The Ukraine faces the same difficulty. Concluding, the author states that the road of further developments remains open.