

Session II

Lessons of EU Neighbourhood Policy

Chair:

Tadeusz Mazowiecki, former Prime Minister of Poland, Warsaw

Speakers:

Victor Martins, former Vice-Minister for European Affairs
of Portugal, Lisbon

Fernando Moran Lopez, former Foreign Minister of Spain, Madrid

Hermann von Richthofen, Plenipotentiary of the Prime Minister
of Brandenburg for co-operation with Poland, Berlin

Antti Satuli, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki



Victor Martins

former Vice-Minister for European Affairs
of Portugal, Lisbon

Opening the second session, Mr Martins made it clear that Portugal's accession to the European Union had a strong positive effect on the overall foreign relations of the Community. Portugal also benefited as it further developed its relations with non-European countries thanks to the mandate of EU membership.

Mr Martins outlined his country's geography and history and referred to Lisbon's links to Latin America, Africa and Asia. This legacy has enabled a great contribution of Portugal into the EU's foreign relations. Lisbon has been active in this field since the time of accession: Mr Martins pointed out that the Accession Treaty included a declaration emphasising the special importance of the EU's relations with Latin America as one of Brussel's priorities.

If a Member State wants to determine the foreign policy of the European Union, it should define an agenda, take advantage of Council Presidency, become a leading actor, and communicate with the general public.

Mr Martins emphasised that the EU's approach to the Western hemisphere was deepened with Portugal's involvement in several dimensions: the Union acknowledged the importance of its relations with Latin America and decided to start institutional involvement. The dialogue engaged both individual countries and regional organisations, in particular Latin America's important body ECOSUR. Portugal was the driver of many initiatives, especially those promoting the Union. Mr Martins said that it was during the Portuguese Presidency in 1992 that the first MERCOSUR meeting was organised; a year later, also on Lisbon's initiative, MERCOSUR started to draft a framework agreement with the EU. It was also due to Lisbon's initiative that the European Union signed its first framework agreement with Brazil. Mr Martins said that it would not have been possible without informal relations, especially available to Portuguese politicians: it is not irrelevant that Portugal and Brazil share a common language. Other initiatives mentioned by Mr Martins

include the Europe–Latin America Forum co-founded by the Portuguese Institute. The Forum helps to bring non-governmental organisations into co-operation and has become the proponent of new important steps, including a review of the Common Agricultural Policy in the context of negotiations between MERCOSUR and the EU. Mr Martins stressed that the issues of agricultural policy continue to play a key role in negotiations of market liberalisation; now that the debate is taking place at the Forum, a non-governmental, non-State institution, new prospects are opening up and governments are relieved from having to explicate particularly sensitive issues.

Mr Martins spoke in favour of active development of the EU's foreign policy, especially where EU Member States have extensive expertise. Mr Martins also identified a special challenge of demonstrating the prospects and experiences of each country to the other EU Member States. "How to make national interests interesting to Europe?" asked the speaker, pointing to scientific research, reasonably challenged assistance, measures supporting dialogue, and in particular promotion of economic co-operation. He quoted Lisbon's impressive achievements: in 1998-1999, Portugal became the largest foreign investor in Brazil. Mr Martins added that such involvement should stem from the position of each country in the EU structure: a Member State wishing to be actively engaged in shaping foreign relations must have a success story too. At the same time, EU membership helps to raise the profile and the position of the country world-wide: resolution of the East Timor conflict and peace in Angola, where Portugal's role was key, would not have been possible without the country's strong position in the EU.



Tadeusz Mazowiecki

former Prime Minister of Poland, Warsaw

Mr Mazowiecki fully agreed with Mr Martins's conviction of the importance of traditional relations of EU Members States with other countries. He also put forth the question to what extent relations with non-EU countries enrich the Union and to what extent they may dilute available resources. Should initiatives of countries boasting a special legacy, such as Portugal, be perceived as centralising or decentralising?

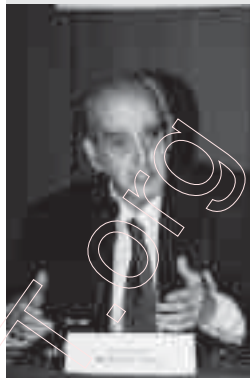
Fernando Moran Lopez

former Foreign Minister of Spain, Madrid

Mr Moran Lopez outlined the relations of the Kingdom of Spain with neighbouring countries, including France and Portugal, but also Morocco as well as Gibraltar and its sovereign, the United Kingdom, an issue often overlooked by the commentators of Iberian politics.

Mr Moran Lopez described the Spanish accession negotiations at the turn of the 1970s and the 1980s. In his opinion, the agricultural policy was the major issue of contention in the negotiations between Madrid and Paris. Mr Moran Lopez stressed absence of mutual territorial claims; in his opinion, tensions and rivalry in Spanish-French relations were mainly a matter of prestige and dissipated in time. Historical wounds were successfully healed in Spain's relations with Portugal. Mr Moran Lopez emphasised the economic growth of both countries (Spain is the second largest foreign investor in Portugal) and lack of any mutual claims; he also pointed to phenomenal Portuguese cultural boom in today's Spain. Translations of great Portuguese writers and growth of university departments studying Portugal's culture are just as important in good neighbourly relations as regional co-operation.

In this context, the lack of progress in resolving the status of Gibraltar is of some concern. Mr Moran Lopez described the controversy between Madrid and London over the peninsula dating back to the 18th century and the War of Spanish Succession. However, he stressed that both countries declared that they were ready to discuss the future of Gibraltar and to accept all possible solutions. Mr Moran Lopez said that Spain deliberately decided not to debate the issue at the forum of the EU: the future of the peninsula is a question of bilateral relations.



While Mr Moran Lopez did not explicitly say so, yet he seemed to imply that this model should be applied to all controversies between EU Member States. The relations between Spain and Morocco also suggest that Spain seconds such an approach: Mr Moran Lopez said that despite political and territorial sensitivities, both countries are in negotiations and continue close working relations, as was the case with the 2002 crisis over temporary takeover of a disputed Mediterranean island by Morocco troops.

Mr Moran Lopez also enumerated the instruments available to those EU Member States who wish to actively develop good neighbourly relations, including in particular cross-border co-operation of regional authorities in border regions.

One of the main instruments available to those EU Member States who wish to actively develop good neighbourly relations is co-operation of regional authorities in border regions.

Hermann von Richthofen

Plenipotentiary of the Prime Minister of Brandenburg
for co-operation with Poland, Berlin

Mr von Richthofen mainly discussed the advantages of regional co-operation, drawing on his personal experience as a Brandenburgian politician responsible for co-operation with Poland (the German land and Poland share more than 250 kilometres of border).

Mr von Richthofen outlined the history and practice of regional co-operation and put forth a range of solutions which could help to better define the EU's future eastern policy. In his opinion, new innovative measures should be used in the EU's relations with Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. This is particularly relevant given the many challenges ahead: safeguards to be put in place along the Polish-Belarus border and the complex issue of the Kaliningrad enclave which must be offered solutions in line with the Schengen *acquis* yet far from isolating the population.

Speaking about possible transit solutions for the population of Kaliningrad, Mr von Richthofen pointed to a similar situation experienced until recently by the city of Berlin. He also made the important declaration that the EU's eastern policy should strive to strengthen the security and stability in Europe. Mr von Richthofen referred to NATO's Partnership for Peace formula which was very effective in Eastern Europe in the mid-1990s. He said this model of stabilisation could continue with European democracies still outside the EU, especially since NATO has more experience in the region than the EU.

Mr von Richthofen outlined the relations between Brandenburg and Poland and emphasised their multi-tiered nature: they are maintained at the local (municipal), regional, and central level. He also called for improved compatibility of assistance programmes as a necessary condition of success of cross-border projects.



Mr von Richthofen listed four major areas of horizontal co-operation: co-operation between small and medium-sized enterprises (and necessary development of the transport network); cross-border co-operation (from municipalities to Euroregions); co-operation in the field of security (including the police force); co-operation between educational institutions. He advocated support for the knowledge-based society, which requires institutional co-operation, staff training and exchange, and regional planning of educational initiatives.

Mr von Richthofen also called for a transfer of experience acquired in German-Polish co-operation to the countries east of the new EU border. He stressed that the transfer is crucial to the “Partnership for Security,” as all initiatives averting new dividing lines in Central and Eastern Europe may be called.

Antti Satuli

Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki

Mr Satuli outlined the Northern Dimension of the European Union, initiated and co-founded by his country. There are many parallels between the development of the Northern Dimension and the present efforts made to define the EU’s eastern policy. Thus, Mr Satuli welcomed the non-paper presented by Poland as a contribution to a new dimension of EU policies.

Mr Satuli quoted the fundamental principle of the Northern Dimension, namely that the northern policy of the European Union should derive from the interests of the EU in the region, primarily the goal of ensuring peace and stability. The northern policy concept developed by Finland in the late 1990s has been integrated with other EU policies.

Mr Satuli pointed to a new challenge facing the Finnish political class after EU accession: the task of expanding the range of activity so as to take position on issues previously perceived as remote, such as Mediterranean politics. The meeting of Mediterranean ministers held in Finland was a breakthrough as southern EU Member States acknowledged the need to develop a northern policy. It is symbolic that the first Northern Dimension Action Plan was adopted at a meeting in Santa Maria di Feira, Portugal; Spain also proved a strong ally.

Mr Satuli warned against blocking of mutual initiatives by regional coalitions. The challenge of large investment necessary for the reconstruction of the West Balkans was an acid test to the EU’s solidarity. The Union lived up to the challenge; however, it was more difficult to encourage other part-

When Finland joined the European Union, we soon realized that Barcelona process posed challenges to the entire Union, not only to the Mediterranean countries.



ners, especially Russia, to join the initiative.

Mr Satuli spoke in favour of the EU-Russia Co-operation Agreement which came into force in December 1997. Although some opportunities afforded by the agreement were left unexplored, yet the formula provides a stable legislative and legal framework. Mr Satuli said that Poland and the Baltic states were concerned that the Northern Dimension mainly focused on the relations between the EU and Russia; yet in the course of time all parties appreciated the merits of the mechanism.

We in Finland count on reciprocity: the EU has interests both in the South and in the North.

Mr Satuli listed the priorities of the Northern Dimension: co-operation in environmental protection, nuclear security, the Kaliningrad issue, combating crime. In his opinion, “the European Council has never before taken such a concrete and comprehensive approach to co-operation in Northern Europe.” This was possible thanks to the efforts of regional co-operation councils (including the Barents Council) and the Directorates General.

With its understanding of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, Poland will be a cherished partner in the EU.

Mr Satuli admitted that the introduction and development of the Northern Dimension did not bring about immediate changes in the EU budget. However, available resources and budget instruments (including co-financing of TACIS and INTERREG projects) are now used more effectively. In his opinion, the new and future EU Member States will contribute their expertise and experience as well as political know-how to the future Eastern Dimension of the EU.

DISCUSSION

Kataryna Wolczuk

Birmingham University

Ms Wolczuk said that simple parallels with the experience of Portugal as a bridge between the European Union and Latin America are not directly applicable to the relations with the EU's eastern neighbours: unlike East European countries, Latin American countries are not planning to join the Union. Ms Wolczuk also pointed to the Member States' differing views on the future Eastern Dimension of the Union and asked a question about the prospects of Ukraine's future EU membership.

Krzysztof Bobiński

Editor, "Union & Poland" Magazine, Warsaw

Mr Bobiński asked the speakers to outline the EU's position on the Middle East: Is it reasonable to speak of a co-ordinated Middle East policy of the EU? Is such a policy likely to be developed in the future?

Other questions from the audience included the following: Is it possible to use prospects of EU membership as an instrument of pressure or a tool promoting democratic evolution of government in a country? Was democratisation of Spain and Portugal prior to accession only accidental?

Antti Satuli

Mr Satuli said he is ready to accept the EU aspirations of Ukraine and the country's European character. Without prejudging the outcome of the process, he said that the EU is developing a common policy towards Ukraine; Poland's contribution in this regard could be crucial.

Mr Satuli also said that Middle Eastern issues continue to be discussed by EU Member States. Yet he refused the possibility that the EU should single-handedly resolve Middle Eastern problems; this would require broader international involvement. This region is more of an area of continued interest; it would be



premature to propose the principles of an EU Middle East policy.

Mr Satuli stressed that the political criteria, including real democratisation and respect for human rights, are a necessary (though insufficient) condition of EU mem-

bership. In this sense, democratic standards could be perceived as real instruments of pressure, which continues beyond accession since it ensures on-going enforcement.

Hermann von Richthofen

Mr von Richthofen spoke in favour of development of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border co-operation and a formula of their historic reconciliation as a precondition of further discussions on EU-Ukrainian relations. Cross-border co-operation and Euroregions can also be very effective as an instrument of democratisation in Belarus.

Fernando Moran Lopez

Mr Moran Lopez discussed the position of the EU on Middle Eastern issues and conflicts. He said that the EU's Middle East policy is part of a broader security and defence policy and part of a Mediterranean policy well defined within the Barcelona process. Mr Moran Lopez was however very sceptical about measures available to the EU: in particular, alleys for dialogue between the EU and Israel seem very narrow.

Mr Moran Lopez was much more optimistic about using the prospects of accession as a tool of democratisation. He referred to the situation of Spain and Portugal where EU supporters helped the peaceful evolution

of the countries. Mr Moran Lopez also called for further improvement of such instruments of pressure; this could be advanced by the work of the European Convention on constitutional formulas and Treaty sanctions triggered automatically in the case of any breach of democratic standards by an EU Member State.

Victor Martins

Mr Martins was the strongest supporter of a concrete proposal to be offered to Ukraine, including specific conditions and prospects of EU accession. This does not mean that the Union can now accept the accession of all countries which fulfil the conditions of membership or are interested to meet them. Nevertheless, the Union should take more conclusive steps in its relations with a country as important as Ukraine.

Mr Martins also called for the Union to deepen its relations, including economic relations, with East European countries. He pointed out that Portugal's membership of EFTA, an organisation promoting free market economy in Europe, was a gateway to the country's EU accession. Mr Martins called for further gradual economic integration as one of the most effective instruments conducive to in-bound and pro-European orientation of countries on the continent's periphery.

Mr Martins stressed the importance of prospects of EU membership to the evolution of each country. This was the incentive that helped Portugal to implement a range of reforms in government, fiscal and administrative systems, and to modernise the country. Moreover, EU democratic standards are an effective tool which can impact even those countries which do not aspire to EU membership. Mr Martins referred to negotiations between the EU and Brazil: the framework agreement, mainly economic in nature, was signed only when Brazil fulfilled a number of political criteria, among others respecting the human rights of "street children."

Mr Martins emphasised that Portugal's accession to the EU had no adverse effect on its capacity to pursue its own foreign policy taking advantage of historical relations with the countries of the Western hemisphere.

“Our foreign relations capacity increased after accession,” said Mr Martins referring to his earlier intervention.

Tadeusz Mazowiecki

Mr Mazowiecki followed up on Mr Martin’s final statement. The Portuguese case and the fact that the country can now more effectively pursue its own foreign policy should dispel any remaining doubts of Poles as to whether Poland will be able to continue its foreign policy after accession.

KAMUNIKAT