



02.04.2015

Conference

Poland and Romania - Consolidating a Strategic Partnership

(National University of Political Studies and Public Administration)

– EVENT REPORT –

On Thursday, 2 April 2015, the European Institute of Romania (EIR), in collaboration with the Embassy of Poland in Romania and the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (NUPSPA), organized the conference *Poland and Romania – Consolidating a Strategic Partnership*.

The event, which enjoyed a large student presence, was attended by H.E. Mr. **Marek Szczygieł**, the Ambassador of Poland in Romania, Mr. **Leonard Orban**, Presidential Adviser for European Affairs, Ms. **Daniela-Brîndușa Băzăvan**, Director/Plenipotentiary Minister, Department of European Union, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Professor **Alina Bărgăoanu**, PhD, Pro-rector of NUPSPA, and Professor **Gabriela Drăgan**, PhD, General Director of EIR.

“The illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation has dramatically changed the geopolitical landscape in Europe”, stated Ambassador **Marek Szczygieł**, adding that, in this complicated context, **the tight and close collaboration between Romania and Poland**, powered by a strategic partnership starting from 2009, are essential for the **regional stability, security and prosperity**.

The head of the Polish diplomatic mission in Bucharest noted that the two countries are “on the same wavelength” in many specific dossiers inside the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a fact also emphasized by the Joint Declaration signed in March in Warsaw between the Romanian president Klaus Iohannis, and his Polish counterpart Bronisław Komorowski.

On that occasion, the two heads of state have called for strengthening NATO's role as an essential pillar of collective defence and security guarantees, and also for a strong European Union, characterized by cohesion and solidarity. “The next NATO summit will be held in Warsaw in 2016, and we hope that the Readiness Action Plan will be fully operational by then”, stressed the Ambassador, recalling the “strong signal” sent by the Wales Summit with regard to the commitment of North America and Europe toward Euro-Atlantic security.

“It is important that we have a President of the European Council originating from our region and it is necessary to upkeep and consolidate the Eastern Partnership project”, initiated by Poland and Sweden in 2009, according to H.E. The pro-rector of NUPSPA **Alina Bărgăoanu**, who moderated the event, said that *“Romania has much to learn from Poland, which, among other performances, was the only EU country that managed to avoid recession in recent years, bolstering instead a sustained economic growth”*.

“Our Polish friends make for a success story, both in EU and in NATO”, said the Presidential Adviser **Leonard Orban**, explaining that these successes came as a result of “great and consistent efforts, and not by chance”. *“There are clear indications that Poland is among the strongest EU states, having converging interests with Romania. We both want a stronger NATO and EU, a vision not shared by all Member States”,* said the former European



Commissioner, recalling, inter alia, the so-called group of **Friends of Cohesion** as an example of good cooperation between Romania and Poland. In the same line, Ms. **Daniela-Brîndușa Băzăvan** stated that "Poland is one of Romania's closest friends and a traditional ally". "*The new regional challenges make Poland and Romania two crucial partners for strengthening the Trans-Atlantic stability*", pointed out Ms. Băzăvan.

"*We are facing the most serious security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War, a crisis that seems far from ending anytime soon*" warned General Director of EIR **Gabriela Drăgan**, also expressing her support for the principle of strengthening the bilateral strategic partnership.

In this context, Mrs. Drăgan recalled the *Romanian-Polish Strategic Partnership: Sharing Mutual Visions* conference, organized by EIR in September 2013, with the participation of the then foreign ministers of the two countries, Radosław Sikorski and Titus Corlățean.

Subsequently, in November 2013, EIR, in collaboration with the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), published a joint policy paper (*Pushing the Turbo Button: What Next for the Polish-Romanian Strategic Partnership?*). And some of the observations and conclusions made then "still apply", said Mrs. Drăgan.

*Report by Bogdan Mureșan
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