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**EASTERN PARTNERSHIP IN POLISH
FOREIGN POLICY**

The aim of this dissertation is to present contemporary trends in Polish foreign policy in relation to the Eastern Partnership initiative. To reach the intended goal the interests of Poland in terms of foreign policy towards its eastern neighbours should be first discussed, and then also the attempt of incorporating them into the European Union's projects.

In order to fulfil this assumption, analysis of ethnohistorical conditions influencing the shape of Polish eastern policy as well as the shape and development of Eastern Partnership itself was conducted.

One of the points to be established was the extent in which historical past influences the contemporary relationships of EU countries with the countries within the Eastern Partnership, as well as how these conditions shape Polish foreign policy. At the same time, one of the focal points became the attitude of Poland towards Eastern Partnership of the European Union.

The subject of this dissertation seems especially significant and justified, as from the very beginning of the Eastern Partnership initiative there has been a ceaseless debate concerning its actual shape, chances of its further existence and also its perspectives for the future.

The general argument of this dissertation boils down to the statement that the Eastern Partnership programme has a major impact on the directions of Polish foreign policy. What speaks in favour of this argument is the fact that many European politicians, as well as the public opinion of many countries, perceive this initiative as a substitute for the actual participation in the EU which postpones the perspective of joining the union for some undefined future. Moreover, during recent years many factors occurred that enabled the skeptics of the Eastern Partnership to express their idea that the funds spent on its financing seemed to be too small to achieve any other than propaganda success.

The main argument is accompanied by research hypothesis:

The first of them comes down to the statement that the Eastern Partnership is a project fitting into the frames of Polish ambitions, interests and goals towards the countries to the east of Polish borders.

The second hypothesis claims that the Eastern Partnership is the first initiative prepared and conducted by the EU, which proves the constructive and creative abilities of Polish foreign policy. What will become decisive for the initiative's further success is the practical implementation of its priorities depending on the future standpoint of EU countries, eastern partners and European Commission. Limited financial resources seem to be pushing towards the search for additional sources of funding for the implementation of the Partnership's priorities.

According to the third hypothesis it should be kept in mind that the Eastern Partnership is an initiative of strategic significance both for the Polish foreign policy and for the EU itself, as it reassures stability on the union's eastern borders.

Another, fourth hypothesis presents the idea that Poland should be directly involved in Eastern Partnership implementation, initiating projects of cooperation, enhancing the creation of some institutional framework, etc. Constant interest should be raised and engagement of EU countries sought. At the same time it should be remembered that Eastern Partnership does not serve as an alternative for the enlargement of the EU, but rather serves as a reply to the reluctance of the member states towards further enlargements. Thus, it should work as a means of bringing the eastern partners and the UE countries together, and for those willing to integrate, it should facilitate their preparations.

According to the fifth hypothesis, in case the project fails the position of Poland in the east, but also in the EU, will be heavily affected, putting into question its ability to create and fulfil the preferable role of a leader influencing the shape of the eastern policy of the EU.

The construction of this dissertation is based on the factual criterion and the data has been grouped into five chapters divided into smaller subsections.

Considerations are introduced in the first chapter that is also concerned with the eastern Poland's policy, its evolution, implementation and effectiveness in the context of the EU's eastern policy. This chapter gives the characteristics of the main research trends in the international relation's theory that can help describe the Eastern Partnership initiative.

The second chapter focuses on the aims, mechanisms and conditions of the Eastern Partnership initiative. This chapter gives an insight into important components of the initiative, ways of financing it as well as the impact of the geopolitical changes on the programme.

The third chapter is devoted to the practical implementation of the Eastern Partnership's assumptions within the Polish foreign policy.

The fourth chapter contains a summary and conclusions concerning the implementation of the Eastern Partnership initiative within the Polish foreign policy, but also points out future directions of action connected with this initiative.

The dissertation is closed by the final chapter that sums up all the arguments and leads to conclusions. Finally, the bibliography is added at the end and divided into sources, literature and press publications.