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# Winner of the Saki Ruth Dockrill Memorial Prize 'The Unity of Europe is inevitable': Poland and the European Economic Community in the 1970s

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## ABSTRACT

This article explores the effects of Western European integration on socialist Poland in the 1970s. It argues that the existence of the European Economic Community (EEC) and its actions in that period helped weaken the Polish regime by accelerating its engagement with the West and provoking conflicts, at the national level between different groups within the socialist elite, and at the international level between members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

## KEYWORDS

Poland; European Economic Community; détente; Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

## Introduction

When Poland concluded its accession to the European Union (EU) in 2003, three prominent politicians signed the confirmation document: Leszek Miller, the Prime Minister; Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Danuta Hübner, the Minister for European Affairs. All three were members of the Democratic Left Alliance-led government, and before the democratic transition members of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). The fact that the post-socialist party played a significant role in Poland's accession to the EU is considered a historical paradox and evidence of an opportunistic stand on the part of the Polish socialist elite. Officially, Poland only recognised and established diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1988. According to both popular narrative and scientific inquiry, this is the date which marks the beginning of the Polish-EU relationship considered as a part of the general process of Poland's democratisation and economic transformation. However, the relationship between Poland and an integrating Western Europe had a pre-history in the circumstances of a continent divided by the Cold War.

After the creation of the EEC, also known as the Common Market, in 1957, the socialist bloc considered it an economic extension of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and a tool of capitalist imperialism. For these ideological reasons, the Soviet Union and allied countries agreed not to recognise its existence and to avoid contact with its supranational body, the European Commission. In the view of the European socialist regimes, however, the increasing unity of Western Europe was not

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only a political problem. The EEC's goal was to introduce a common market with restricted access to outsiders – a significant threat to East-West trade.

Meanwhile, the socialist states also experimented with economic integration. Founded in 1949, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) was a platform for economic policy coordination and cooperation between its members. Unlike the EEC, the CMEA never developed supranational institutions, but operated as a traditional international organisation with the national delegations holding the decisive power. While formally maintaining this structure, throughout its existence the CMEA remained unofficially dominated by its largest member, the Soviet Union.

The relationship between the socialist states and integrating Western Europe is usually considered in terms of these two competing integration processes.<sup>1</sup> In her study of CMEA's response to the EEC, Svi Kansikas shows that different national interests continued to clash in the organisation, limiting its ability to reform.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, despite the CMEA, political events were still interpreted and political interest defined in the national rather than the international framework. For this reason, specific socialist regimes' attitudes to the EEC have recently attracted much interest.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Poland, however, research has only focused on the highest policymaking bodies, leaving much of the picture overlooked.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, historiography has started to recognise the EEC as an actor in Cold War European relations, revealing its political ambitions and the economic challenge it posed.<sup>5</sup> Angela Romano provides particularly valuable insights in this respect, demonstrating how the actions of the EEC towards the socialist regimes helped loosen Cold War tensions in Europe.<sup>6</sup>

This article builds on the literature cited here by confirming the critical role of Western European integration in late Cold War developments. Examining the Polish relationship with the EEC in the 1970s, it argues that Western European integration weakened the

<sup>1</sup>Svi Kansikas, *Socialist Countries Face the European Community: Soviet-Bloc Controversies over East-West Trade* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014); Jack G. Kaikati, "Models of Success and Failure in European Integration," *East European Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1992): 291–307; and Domenico Mario Nuti, "Economic Relations between the European Community and CMEA," Working Paper No. 88/360 (Florence: European University Institute, 1988).

<sup>2</sup>Svi Kansikas, "Room to Manoeuvre? National Interests and Coalition-Building in the CMEA, 1969–74," in *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, ed. Sari Autio-Saraso and Katalin Miklóssy (London: Routledge, 2011), 193–209.

<sup>3</sup>Maximilian Graf, "Nichtanerkennung zu eigenen Lasten? Die DDR und die Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft in den 'langen 1970er-Jahren,'" in *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung* (Berlin: Metropole Verlag, 2020), 225–38; Elena Dragomir, "Breaking the CMEA Hold: Romania in Search of a 'Strategy' towards the European Economic Community, 1958–1974," *European Review of History* (2019), doi:10.1080/13507486.2019.1694492; Pál Germuska, "Balancing Between the COMECON and the EEC: Hungarian Elite Debates on European Integration during the Long 1970s," *Cold War History* (2019), doi:10.1080/14682745.2018.1544972; Maximilian Graf, "Die DDR und die EWG 1957–1990," *Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande* 51, no. 1 (2019): 21–35, doi: 10.4000/Allemagne.1352; Elitza Stanoeva, "Squeezed between External Trade Barriers and Internal Economic Problems: Bulgaria's Trade with Denmark in the 1970s," *European Review of History* (2019), doi:10.1080/13507486.2019.1663796; Benedetto Zaccaria, "Yugoslavia, Italy, and European Integration: was Osimo 1975 a Pyrrhic Victory?," *Cold War History* (2019), doi:10.1080/14682745.2019.1657094; Stefano Bottoni, "Unrequited Love? The Romanian Communist Party and the EEC in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Kommunismus und Europa. Europapolitik und vorstellungeneuropäischer kommunistischer Parteien im Kalten Krieg*, ed. Francesco Di Palma and Wolfgang Mueller (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016), 118–37; Benedetto Zaccaria, *The EEC's Yugoslav Policy in Cold War Europe, 1968–1980* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); and Ivan Obadić, "A Troubled Relationship: Yugoslavia and the European Economic Community in Détente," *European Review of History* 21, no. 2 (2014): 329–48, doi:10.1080/13507486.2014.888709.

<sup>4</sup>Wanda Jarzabek, "The Polish United Workers' Party and Western European Integration, 1957–1979," in *Kommunismus und Europa. Europapolitik und vorstellungeneuropäischer kommunistischer Parteien im Kalten Krieg*, ed. Francesco Di Palma and Wolfgang Mueller (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016), 106–17; and Dagmara Jajeśniak-Quast, "Reaktionen auf die Westeuropäische Wirtschaftsintegration in Ostmitteleuropa: Die Tschechoslowakei und Polen in den fünfziger bis zu den siebziger Jahren," *Journal of European Integration History* 13, no. 2 (2007): 69–84.

<sup>5</sup>Piers Ludlow, "European Integration and the Cold War," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn Paul Leffer and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. 2, 179–97.

<sup>6</sup>Angela Romano, "Untying Cold War Knots: The European Community and Eastern Europe in the Long 1970s," *Cold War History* 14, no. 2 (2014): 153–73, doi: 10.1080/14682745.2013.791680.

Polish socialist regime by pushing it towards closer engagement with the West and reinforcing conflicts at the national level and within the socialist bloc. First, it focuses on efforts to collect information about the integration process in the West to show the country's concern with the EEC. Second, it reveals how the integration process in the West accelerated Poland's cooperation with the capitalist world in the early 1970s. Third, it examines the late 1970s, when the problem of the EEC moved to the CMEA level, provoking divergence between the organisation's members and different groups among the socialist elite in Poland, including the PUWP leadership, representatives of state bodies, and the academic community. The conclusion sums up the consequences of these tensions and Poland's engagement with the West for the state of the socialist regime.

## 1. Looking towards the West

After events in 1970, the Polish socialist regime redefined its foreign and economic policy priorities. The 7 December 1970 Treaty of Warsaw with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), in which the two countries agreed on the inviolability of the Oder-Neisse border, unblocked Polish scepticism regarding international détente. Cementing security gains through closer bilateral cooperation with the FRG and other Western European countries emerged as crucial tasks.<sup>7</sup> The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), offering new opportunities for exchanges between capitalist and socialist states, corresponded with Poland's aims and received its strong support.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, price rises introduced on 12 December caused popular protests previously unseen in Polish socialist history, evidencing the weaknesses of previous economic strategies and facilitating political change. The new leadership proclaimed a modernisation programme promising to improve quality of life. Foreign loans and technology imports from the West would enable ambitious plans and foreign currency credits could be easily repaid with profits from new production. Efficient trade with capitalist states thus conditioned the success of the new economic agenda.

Western European integration threatened these Polish plans. Poland had already experienced the adverse effects of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which limited its agricultural exports, in the mid-1960s. The Hague Summit in 1969 gave the Western European Integration process a new dynamism. The original six members finally agreed on enlargement, envisaged the completion of the Common Market, and decided to deepen their integration.<sup>9</sup> The prospect of the EEC expanding towards the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland meant that Polish trade with the West would be further restricted. Moreover, the EEC decided to complete the Common Commercial Policy (CCP), which prohibited outsiders from signing bilateral economic agreements with its member states, presenting them with unified European terms and making them deal directly with the European Commission. Finally, the summit also established European Political Cooperation, a tool for foreign policy coordination which foreshadowed the

<sup>7</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs guidelines for 1971, accepted by Political Bureau, 11 May 1971, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej (Central Committee of Polish United Workers Party) (KC PZPR) 1354, V/92, Archiwum Akt Nowych (Warsaw, Poland: Central Archives of Modern Records, AAN).

<sup>8</sup>Wanda Jarząbek, "Hope and Reality: Poland and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1964–1989," Working Paper No. 56 (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 2008).

<sup>9</sup>Special issue on the Hague Summit 1969, *Journal of European Integration History* 9, no. 2 (2003).

increasing political cohesion of the EEC. The renewed Western European integration project clashed with the Polish leadership's aims and made interaction between the two actors difficult to avoid.

Nevertheless, these contacts remained restricted by the agreement between the CMEA members, under which the socialist regimes would not make deals with the European Commission or recognise it as a diplomatic entity. This ideologically motivated policy clashed with the economic interests of some CMEA members, especially Poland, Hungary, and Romania, which had already concentrated over 10% of their foreign trade in the EEC in 1971. In contrast, the Soviet Union's trade with EEC members was minimal and predominantly involved resources, which were excluded from the Common Market regulations.<sup>10</sup> While this trade structure allowed the Soviet Union to disregard the existence of the EEC, the countries most impacted could challenge this position within the CMEA. As recent studies have shown, despite being informally dominated by its biggest member, the organisation offered other socialist regimes a chance to defend their economic interests.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in the late 1960s Poland and Romania pushed through acceptance of informal so-called 'technical' contacts with European Commission representatives. Through these, Poland managed partly to overcome the harmful effects of the CAP, concluding agreements on the export of products such as eggs and poultry.<sup>12</sup>

Given the Polish leadership's new agenda and the prospect of closer Western European integration, this modest cooperation needed to be extended. This conclusion emerged from a report to the PUWP Political Bureau by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade in May 1971 proposing that complex topics such as trade in textiles should be dealt with through broader agreements and that various contacts should be used to collect information about the EEC and establish closer relations. This goal could best be achieved through diplomatic networks, an increase in scientific exchange, and participation in trade events.<sup>13</sup> The report was approved by the PUWP Political Bureau, which additionally stated in the protocol of its meeting that the Soviet Union should be regularly informed about the results of talks with the EEC.<sup>14</sup>

This decision demonstrates the role that the PUWP leadership played in working out policy regarding the EEC. In the 1970s, the PUWP Political Bureau rarely discussed the question during its meetings.<sup>15</sup> That, however, does not mean that the EEC was not an object of Poland's concerns. While problems related to Western European integration only received detailed attention from the key political body when they involved the CMEA or the Soviet Union, various state bodies and academic institutions regularly looked at the EEC and maintained unofficial relations with its representatives. The strategy of transferring responsibilities to a lower level may have aimed at avoiding unnecessary tensions with the Soviet Union and other CMEA members. As 1971 foreign policy guidelines specified, contacts with the EEC should be expanded

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<sup>10</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Trade report on relationship with EEC, 4 May 1971, KC PZPR 1354, V/92, 2–3, AAN.

<sup>11</sup>Laurien Crump and Simon Godard, "Reassessing Communist International Organisations: A Comparative Analysis of COMECON and the Warsaw Pact in Relation to their Cold War Competitors," *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 1 (2018): 85–109, doi:10.1017/S0960777317000455; and Kansikas, *Socialist Countries Face*, 28–34.

<sup>12</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Trade report on relationship with EEC, 4 May 1971, KC PZPR 1354, V/92, 2–3, AAN.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 3–5.

<sup>14</sup>Minute from Political Bureau meeting, 4 May 1971, KC, PZPR 1354, V/92, 4, AAN.

<sup>15</sup>Jarząbek, "The Polish United Workers' Party," 117.

‘discreetly’.<sup>16</sup> This interpretation fits the general assumption about the Polish relationship with the Soviet Union at that time. While the country followed its overall foreign policy line, it also tried to manoeuvre independently without raising attention.<sup>17</sup>

With the renewed political direction, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade jointly called for the establishment of a special unit in Brussels working on Western European integration. In June 1971 the Government accepted the proposal and established three additional diplomatic positions in Belgium. Although the Bureau of the Trade Councillor had more experience in Western European integration, the unit became a part of the Embassy. The report confirming the decision stated: ‘It is obvious that its activity cannot be narrowed down to trade and economic matters. We must also look at the EEC from the political side because this aspect plays a vital role in the integration process.’ The unique institutional structure with the head of the body not representing either of the Ministries allowed compromise between the two, which competed for supervision over the unit, but each could delegate one employee as first secretaries. The new three-person team was to report to both ministers.<sup>18</sup>

To head the unit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended Zbigniew Chrupek, who received further support from the PUWP.<sup>19</sup> Chrupek had hardly any political experience, previously pursuing an academic career at the Faculty of Economic Science at the University of Warsaw.<sup>20</sup> As head of the unit he was supported by Adam Paczocha, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs employee.<sup>21</sup> While officially working as a diplomat in Paris since 1965, in reality Paczocha was an undercover lieutenant colonel in the Polish Army.<sup>22</sup> Economic issues related to the EEC were researched by Zbigniew Zajązkowski, a foreign trade professional designated by the Ministry of Foreign Trade. This structure, with experts mixed with secret service representatives, was maintained throughout the decade. In 1976, Paczocha was replaced by Tomasz Kośmider, who, while working officially for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in reality was an employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>23</sup> The same year, Zajązkowski’s position was taken over by Jerzy Orzeszko, again a professional from the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Chrupek kept his chair until 1977 when Antoni Osmański, previously head of the international integration team in the Department for Western Europe (IV) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, acquired his position. The Polish Ambassador to Belgium between 1971 and 1980, Stanisław Kociołek, further supported the group’s activity, taking care of correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The unit’s main tasks were to collect information about the political and economic aspects of Western European integration and analyse them. Personal contacts

<sup>16</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs guidelines for 1971, accepted by Political Bureau, 11 May 1971, KC PZPR 1354, V/92, 21, AAN.

<sup>17</sup>Jakub Szumski, “Leonid Brezhnev and Edward Gierek: The Making and Breaking of an Uneven Friendship,” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 45, no. 3 (2018): 253–86, doi:10.1163/18763324.20181290; Włodzimierz Borodziej, “Polskie peryferie polityki zagranicznej Związku Radzieckiego- lata siedemdziesiąte,” in *Modernizacja. Centrum. Peryferie*, ed. Włodzimierz Borodziej and Sławomir Dębski (Warsaw: PISM, 2009), 51–72; and Andrzej Skrzypek, *Mechanizmy klientelizmu. Stosunki polsko-radzieckie 1964–1989* (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztor, 2008).

<sup>18</sup>Proposal for creating special unit in Brussels, September 1971, Dep. IV (Department for Western Europe), 27/77, w.11, Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (Warsaw, Poland: Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (AMSZ).

<sup>19</sup>Trepczyński to Olszewski, 26 August 1971, Dep. IV, 27/77, w.11, AMSZ.

<sup>20</sup>Chrupek file, 2521/8683. Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (Ministry of National Education) (MEN), AAN.

<sup>21</sup>Paszek to Kociołek, 12 October 1971, Dep. IV, 27/77, w.11, AMSZ.

<sup>22</sup>Paczocha file, BU 2602/21,123, Archiwum Instytutu Pamięi Narodowej (Warsaw, Poland: Archives of Institute of National Remembrance) (AIPN).

<sup>23</sup>Jarecki file, BU 2974/454/D, AIPN.

with Western diplomats were defined as the principal means of fulfilling these goals.<sup>24</sup> This strategy was a substantial departure from that of the 1960s, when unofficial contacts were maintained only occasionally. The head of the unit was mainly responsible for these contacts. Chrupek, and later Osmański, established fruitful relationships with Umberto Stefani from the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, who both met regularly. Stefani became the principal point of Polish contacts with the EEC in the 1970s and a critical source of knowledge about the organisation's plans.

While the EEC unit in Brussels was the most significant supplier of information concerning Western European integration, the Polish representation in Geneva also played a vital role. As the headquarters of both the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), it offered unique opportunities for interactions with Western diplomats and representatives of the European Commission. For this reason, members of Polish delegations in the 1970s, especially Tadeusz Jodko and Stanisław Topa, both professionals from the Ministry of Foreign Trade, regularly reported on the EEC.

Apart from Brussels and Geneva, the two ministries also relied on their representatives in the EEC member states, frequently asking them for reports concerning Western European integration. In 1973 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempted to coordinate these efforts and requested each Embassy to delegate one employee to work exclusively on Western European integration.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, it started to organise annual meetings of Ambassadors to EEC member states on the integration process.<sup>26</sup> Similar gatherings were hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Trade for Trade Councillors and for representatives of both ministries together.<sup>27</sup>

Given the improved flow of information about Western European integration, in 1971 the Ministry of Foreign Trade created a special team working on the subject.<sup>28</sup> Two years later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs followed and established a similar body in the Department for Western Europe (IV).<sup>29</sup>

In Warsaw, a few individuals played particularly instrumental roles in research on Western European integration. This group included Zdzisław Rurarz, who had been a personal advisor to the PUWP First Secretary and to the Ministers of Foreign Trade and of Foreign Affairs, as well as to Stanisław Długosz, Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade. Both were trained at the prestigious Main School of Planning and Statistics, had international experience, and continued academic research alongside their political activities.

The significant ministerial interest in the integration process was accompanied by secret service activity under Paczocha, with the cryptonym 'Parnas', and later Kośmider with the cryptonym 'Jarecki'. The Ministry of Internal Affairs put significant emphasis on personal contacts with and surveillance of Western diplomats.<sup>30</sup> In an operation entitled 'Treaty', they collected information concerning the employees of the EEC bodies in

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<sup>24</sup>Chrupek's report, May 1972, Dep. IV, 48/77, w.16, AMSZ.

<sup>25</sup>Sokolak to Embassies in EEC states, 30 June 1973, Dep. IV, 48/77, w.16, AMSZ.

<sup>26</sup>Memo from meeting about EEC, 2 May 1973, Dep. IV, 48/77, w.15, AMSZ.

<sup>27</sup>Memo from meeting about EEC, 16 February 1972, Dep. IV, 46/77, w.10, AMSZ.

<sup>28</sup>Proposal for institutional changes, 8 May 1971, Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego (Ministry of Foreign Trade) (MHZ) 351, 33/11, AAN.

<sup>29</sup>Proposal for creating international organisation team, June 1973, Dep. IV, 48/77, w.16, AMSZ.

<sup>30</sup>Work plan concerning EEC, 2 April 1976, BU 3559/12, AIPN.

Brussels. The department dedicated to socialist states at the European Commission was under constant observation, and some modest attempts were made to conscript its employees.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, Polish spies were keen to observe EEC-related research and training institutions such as the College of Europe in Bruges and the European University Institute in Florence. Not only did they monitor the topics of seminars and theses produced, but they also made attempts at recruiting faculty members.<sup>32</sup> The secret service in Brussels also developed long-term plans to recruit students from the College of Europe interested in pursuing a career in the European Commission. However, the candidates they found did not pass the entrance exams.<sup>33</sup> Although 'Parnas' and 'Jarecki' had no spectacular successes, they regularly provided detailed information on Western European integration and the individuals involved.

The reports and documents produced, both legitimately and otherwise, were often transmitted to research institutions. The Polish Institute of International Affairs, the Polish Foreign Trade Institute, and the Main School of Planning and Statistics were the key institutions scrutinising the EEC. The journal *International Affairs*, issued monthly by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, almost always opened with an article on European détente, usually touching on Western European integration, as did *Foreign Trade*, associated with the Polish Foreign Trade Institute and published by the Polish Foreign Trade Chamber. In these journals, authors like Józef Soldaczuk, Michał Łytko, Wirginia Grabska, and Tomasz Bartoszewicz pioneered research on Western European integration. Moreover, both monthlies often published work by authors engaged in policymaking, including Rurarz and Długosz.

Many of the academics working on the EEC were entitled to go on research missions to Brussels and Bruges and maintain relations with Western institutions studying integration. With the help of the Brussels Embassy they often met prominent representatives of EEC bodies. An example is Grabska in 1969 and 1979.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the research institutions also played an important role by hosting Western politicians, including those involved in the integration process. For instance, in November 1971 the European Commissioner for External Relations and Trade was invited to a conference hosted by the Polish Institute of International Affairs in Warsaw.<sup>35</sup>

The academic research produced regularly arrived at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, the careers of Chrupek, Rurarz, and Długosz illustrate the revolving doors between academia and policymaking. However, in addition to their influence on policymaking, academics often became agents for contacts with the EEC and covers for them.

The efforts illustrated here demonstrate the significance of European affairs in Polish policy in the 1970s. The prospect of increasing Western Europe's exclusiveness and Poland's political and economic agendas resulted in the creation of an institutional apparatus to scrutinise the integration. The individuals engaged in work concerning

<sup>31</sup>Jarecki's report, 10 February 1976, BU 03264/898, AIPN.

<sup>32</sup>Work plan for 1979, 17 January 1979, BU 3559/12, AIPN.

<sup>33</sup>Rycki's report, 6 November 1977, BU 3559/12, AIPN.

<sup>34</sup>Grabska's report, 29 October 1978, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych (Polish Institute of International Affairs) (PISM), 1738/988, AAN.

<sup>35</sup>Kociołek to Staniszewski, 3 October 1971, Dep. IV, 28/77, w.6, AMSZ.



the EEC reflect the importance attached to the integration processes. Unlike other fields of state policy, that concerning Western European integration almost exclusively involved professionals.

However, this can also be attributed to the novelty and complexity of the integration process. The institutional framework dealing with the EEC reveals difficulties in understanding it and working out policy towards it. The problematic partnership of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs illustrate the puzzle of conflicting political and economic perceptions of European integration. Moreover, the supranational European Commission challenged the traditional nation-state view of foreign policymaking, resulting in attempts to develop institutional bodies focusing on new entities in international relations and mobilising experts to work on the integration processes.

## 2. National manoeuvring, 1971–74

All the state bodies looking at the EEC assessed it as a negative phenomenon. Apart from trading difficulties, they blamed it for deepening division on the continent. At the same time, however, they were all convinced of the irreversibility of the integration process. According to an analysis by the Ministry of Foreign Trade, ‘the unity of Western Europe is inevitable.’<sup>36</sup> Academic publications on the topic assumed the same.<sup>37</sup> As a consequence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade regularly insisted on defining a clear strategy to deal with the EEC.<sup>38</sup> Despite this pressure, in the first half of the decade the PUWP Political Bureau rarely issued recommendations concerning Western European integration. Moreover, CMEA activity concerning the EEC was minimal, and according to reports by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was unlikely to play a role in regulating the relationship.<sup>39</sup> In these circumstances, Poland’s national strategy was based on difficult manoeuvring between the CMEA’s non-recognition policy and the quickly narrowing possibilities offered by the EEC. This situation paradoxically accelerated Polish engagement with the capitalist world, encouraging bilateral relations with Western states, increasing its activity in international organisations, fuelling economic cooperation with the Western part of the continent, and finally intensifying unofficial contacts with the European Commission.

From the CMEA standpoint, the EEC was a non-existent entity, so relations with its members were to be carried out bilaterally.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, a 1971 document defining Polish foreign policy stated:

‘Our goal is to maintain, as long as possible, bilateral relations with the EEC states, not allowing any interference by the Commission. In the short term, we should take advantage of these relations to mitigate harmful restrictive and discrimination practices.’<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Report on EEC, 17 January 1972, Dep. IV, 46/77, w.10, 8, AMSZ.

<sup>37</sup>E.g. Michał Łytko, “Pierwsze zarysy rozszerzonej EWG,” *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 10 (1971): 34–55.

<sup>38</sup>E.g. Olszowski to Jaroszewicz, 7 August 1971, Dep. IV, 27/77, w.11, AMSZ.

<sup>39</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs guidelines for 1971, accepted by Political Bureau, 11 May 1971, KC PZPR 1354, V/92, 20, AAN.

<sup>40</sup>Report from CMEA meeting, 20 June 1972, KC PZPR 1354, V/104, 8, AAN.

<sup>41</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs guidelines for 1971, accepted by Political Bureau, 11 May 1971, KC PZPR 1354, V/92, 20–21, AAN.

With the introduction of the CCP expected in 1975, securing the ability to trade with EEC members emerged as a crucial task. Consequently, by 1974 Poland had concluded economic agreements with all six original EEC members and two out of three new ones. These were followed by unprecedented diplomatic activity and efforts to institutionalise relations, for example through annual bilateral ‘round table’ meetings between politicians and economists.

In addition to safeguarding trade, bilateral ties were thought of as a means to influence the EEC’s attitude to the socialist regimes. In January 1972, a meeting of Ambassadors and Trade Councillors in EEC member states made such a policy recommendation. Its report particularly identified France as a country suited to this purpose.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, French politicians and French diplomats in Brussels not only became leading sources of information on EEC plans and debates, but also the principal advocates of maintaining close relations with the socialist regimes among EEC members.<sup>43</sup> Alongside flourishing trade and political rapprochement, French support in facing the challenge of the EEC strengthened the special relationship between the two countries.

Anticipation of the political and economic closure of Western Europe also triggered interest in countries outside the EEC. Their non-participation in the organisation motivated a rise in Polish diplomatic activity towards Sweden, Norway, and Finland.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Poland tried to establish ties with Spain and Portugal. As a Ministry of Foreign Affairs report stated: ‘We need to secure our interest in Spain in case the EEC integrates it.’<sup>45</sup>

Poland’s unusual bilateral activity went together with increasing interest in multi-lateral cooperation. Apart from Poland’s general realisation of the changing character of international relations, it initiated a search for a cooperation platform with the EEC without officially recognising it and for an alternative to its integration model.

To secure Polish economic interests, GATT was particularly important. Created in 1946, it aimed to facilitate and promote free international trade by eliminating tariffs. Poland joined GATT in 1967, becoming after Czechoslovakia the second socialist member. As reports by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade stated, the Polish delegation to GATT’s primary goal was to mitigate the harmful effects of EEC policy.<sup>46</sup>

The multilateral forum constituted an excellent place for unofficial interaction with European Commission representatives. Moreover, GATT functioned on the basis of the Most-Favourite Nation clause (MFN), meaning that the members were to apply equally beneficial terms of trade. The creation of the EEC threatened this as it aimed to protect the Common Market through external tariffs and quantity restrictions. Participating in GATT gave Poland an argument against EEC discrimination, which the Ministry of Foreign Trade recommended was to be applied in talks with Western diplomats.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the restrictions introduced by the EEC impacted not only Poland but also

<sup>42</sup>Memo from meeting about EEC, 16 February 1972, Dep. IV, 46/77, w.10, AMSZ.

<sup>43</sup>Takeshi Yamamoto, ‘Détente or Integration? EC Response to Soviet Policy Change towards the Common Market, 1970–1975,’ *Cold War History* 7, no. 1 (2007): 81–3, doi:10.1080/14682740701197680.

<sup>44</sup>Work plan for 1971, 23 March 1971, Dep. IV, 27/77, w.10, 15, AMSZ.

<sup>45</sup>Work plan for 1978, 3 January 1978, Dep. IV, 2/84, w.4, 43, AMSZ.

<sup>46</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Trade report on multilateral cooperation, accepted by Political Bureau, June 1977, KC PZPR 1354, V/145, 6, 145, AAN.

<sup>47</sup>Instruction for talks with Western diplomats, 26 January 1972, Dep. IV, 46/77, w.10, 1, AMSZ.

other states, including the US and Japan. Paradoxically, these countries became Polish allies in the GATT negotiations, strengthening its position.<sup>48</sup> The effects of GATT talks became visible in 1974 when Poland signed an international agreement on textile trade, which obliged the signatories to lower tariffs and quantity restrictions annually.

Recognising the possibilities it offered, the Polish foreign trade experts started to glorify GATT. A report from Brussels by Zajączkowski named the GATT system a pillar of peaceful coexistence after the Second World War.<sup>49</sup> According to Rurarz, the EEC represented 'localism' and 'exclusivism' while GATT stood for 'globalism', which he considered the future of the economy.<sup>50</sup> Given the value attached to it, the Ministry of Foreign Trade opted to improve Polish influence in GATT and at the same time raise the organisation's interest in Polish affairs. The invitation of the GATT director general to Poland in 1973 was to serve these goals.<sup>51</sup>

While mitigating the adverse effects of EEC integration, GATT was fundamentally a Western organisation representing the interests and values of capitalist states. Moreover, it obliged its participants to annually increase their trade with other members by 7%, which systematically increased Poland's entanglement with the capitalist economy.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) was another multilateral platform offering Poland closer engagement with the Western European states. Unlike GATT, it did not require any economic adjustments but only facilitated multilateral economic cooperation. Gathering all the CMEA and EEC members, the ECE was the only space where all the representatives of both sides of Europe regularly met and discussed. Poland had high hopes for its development and expected that after the CSCE it would become a permanent framework for East-West economic cooperation.<sup>52</sup> Academic journals also described the ECE as much better suited for European integration than the EEC.<sup>53</sup> As with GATT, the need to create an alternative to Western European exclusiveness drove Polish engagement in the ECE.

While securing bilateral and multilateral channels of cooperation with the EEC members for the future, Poland also aimed to gain as much as possible before the imminent closure of the Common Market. Cooperation agreements and credits were the principal tools in Poland's modernisation programme threatened by the Western European integration.

Introduction of the CCP would mean not only the end of bilateral economic agreements with the EEC member states, but also the unification of all of those countries' tariffs. Consequently, states traditionally offering Poland beneficial terms of trade were to adjust their standards to the others. The new policy did not include, however, cooperation agreements concluded before its introduction. Therefore, signing as many cooperation deals as possible was a good strategy to avoid the harmful effects of Western European integration. Advice to this effect came from Stefani during talks with Chrupek in early 1974. He encouraged the Polish diplomat to take advantage of the

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<sup>48</sup>Report on US-EEC relations, 7 January 1972, Dep. IV, 46/77, w.10, AMSZ.

<sup>49</sup>Zajączkowski and Szuman's report, 14 September 1972, Dep. IV, 46/77, w.10, 20, AMSZ.

<sup>50</sup>Zdzisław Rurarz, *Dylematy rozwoju. Dziewięć wykładów z międzynarodowych stosunków gospodarczych* (Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1977), 145.

<sup>51</sup>Memo on Oliver Long visit, 13 June 1973, MHZ 351, 33/11, AAN.

<sup>52</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs guidelines for 1975, accepted by Political Bureau, 28 January 1975, KC PZPR 1354, V/128, 17, AAN.

<sup>53</sup>E.g. Michał Dobroczyński and Witold Zaremba, "Koordynacja europejskiej współpracy gospodarczej," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 5 (1972): 27–38.

favourable circumstances related to the CSCE talks at the time and conclude many cooperation agreements.<sup>54</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a similar political recommendation, emphasising that ‘we need to secure our partnerships through long-term complex trade and cooperation agreements.’<sup>55</sup>

An even more significant concern was related to credit opportunities, regularly named in Polish analyses as a possible adverse outcome of Western European integration.<sup>56</sup> As the European Commission never aimed to regulate credit, this anxiety was misguided.<sup>57</sup> However, in 1972 the Ministry of Foreign Trade sent the following recommendation to the Government:

We should expect that the EEC will aim to unify the terms of investment credits for socialist states, especially after 1974. We should take advantage of the time separating us from this moment to get indebted as much as possible with the EEC member states. The position of debtor would also secure the interest of those states.<sup>58</sup>

The general strategy of exploiting a ‘beneficial momentum’ in the early 1970s resulted in an unprecedented development of economic exchanges with capitalist countries, in particular with EEC members. Within just four years, Poland increased its number of cooperation agreements eightfold.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, its foreign debt grew tenfold.<sup>60</sup>

The expansion of diplomatic and economic ties, however, sometimes reached a dead end, making direct relations with the EEC inevitable. In the early 1970s, this happened with official EEC participation in the CSCE and further restrictions on Polish exports of textiles and meat. However, it was not before 1974 and the looming introduction of the CCP that unofficial contacts with representatives of the European Commission multiplied. Carefully following debates between the EEC members, Poland hoped that internal tensions, deepened at the time because of the oil crisis, as well as French advocacy would prevent implementation of the CCP.<sup>61</sup> Although on various occasions in 1974 Stefani assured Chrupek that the new regulation was definite, Polish diplomats in Brussels and Geneva used their networks to verify the information.<sup>62</sup> Eventually in October, Poland and other socialist states received an official aide-memoire concerning the future of EEC external relations after the introduction of the CCP.<sup>63</sup>

In the early 1970s, the CMEA’s non-recognition policy limited Poland’s ability to respond to Western integration while not offering any solution to the difficulties it caused. Not willing to challenge the CMEA common policy, Poland aimed to establish and exploit as many links as possible with Western Europe. Although the increase in Polish engagement with the West and the capitalist economy cannot only be attributed to the EEC, as it was conditioned by a change in domestic policy and by more general global trends, the integration of Western Europe accelerated the phenomenon.

<sup>54</sup>Chrupek and Paczocha’s report, 29 January 1974, Dep. IV, 20/79, w.12, 10, AMSZ.

<sup>55</sup>Work plan for 1974, December 1973, Dep. IV, 20/79, w.11, 3, AMSZ.

<sup>56</sup>Report on CMEA-EEC relations, accepted by Political Bureau, 14 March 1972, KC PZPR 1354, V/101, 12, AAN.

<sup>57</sup>Romano, “Untying Cold War Knots,” 14.

<sup>58</sup>Ministry of Foreign Trade memo on foreign loans, 25 January 1972, Urząd Rady Ministrów (Government) (URM) 290, KT 75/8, 10, AAN.

<sup>59</sup>Proposal on cooperative production, accepted by Government, 18 February 1977, URM 290, 5.4/135, 8, AAN.

<sup>60</sup>*Economic Bulletin for Europe*, UN, 37 (1985): 236.

<sup>61</sup>Chrupek and Paczocha’s report, 30 January 1974, AMSZ, Dep. IV, 20/79, w.12.

<sup>62</sup>Kociołek to Długosz, 27 June 1974, Dep. IV, 20/79, w.12, AMSZ.

<sup>63</sup>Topa to Kisiel, 14 November 1974, Dep. IV, 20/79, w.11, AMSZ.

Responding to the EEC challenge at the national level, as Poland did in the early 1970s, exposed the limits of the traditional bilateral approach to international relations. For this reason, much emphasis was put on multilateral cooperation and engaging directly with European Commissioners. However, it was not only new regulations, most notably the CCP, which disadvantaged Poland in talks with the EEC. Facing the nine strengthened and unified countries from a standalone position did not promise equal negotiations. This logic underlay an increase in socialist cooperation concerning the EEC in the second half of the 1970s.

### 3. The CMEA takes over, 1975–80

While national efforts to overcome the challenge of the EEC characterised the early 1970s, the initiative largely moved to the CMEA after 1975. This highlighted questions concerning the Polish attitude towards socialist integration and the effectiveness of socialist cooperation. In the late 1970s, the proceeding integration combined with increasing difficulties in Poland fuelled differences among the socialist elite, at the national level as well as internationally between the socialist states.

For Poland, initially securing ties with the EEC members went hand in hand with attempts to improve the performance of the CMEA. Poland had called for reform of the organisation since the 1960s. However, its proposals, for example concerning currency convertibility, were never implemented.<sup>64</sup> These ideas originated in academic research, which in both the 1960s and 1970s devoted much attention to socialist integration. The global rise of political and economic integration processes, most notably the proceeding unification of Western Europe, encouraged such an interest. Research institutions and academic journals often explored parallels between the CMEA and the EEC as two different models of European integration.<sup>65</sup> The juxtaposition impacted perceptions of cooperation between the socialist states, as the vocabulary used shows. While the CMEA was described in the 1950s as ‘socialist solidarity’, with the rise of Western ‘integration’ in the 1960s, the same term started to be applied to what was happening in the East.<sup>66</sup> Following this pattern, in the 1970s some highly positioned policymakers perceived the EEC as a possible source of inspiration for the future of the CMEA.<sup>67</sup>

On the other hand, parallels between the two integrations also caused concern. As mentioned, all the state bodies working on the EEC assessed the idea of separation between the two parts of Europe negatively. According to this logic, strengthening the CMEA would only deepen this division and push Poland closer to the Soviet Union. In his memoirs, Rurarz recalls that, considering such a scenario, he had been against any form of integration. He also criticised academics praising the Western European model, such as Sołdaczuk. In his view, positive perceptions of the EEC and its supranational authority would

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<sup>64</sup>Kansikas, *Socialist Countries Face*, 59–115.

<sup>65</sup>E.g. Józef Sołdaczuk, “Handel Wschód-Zachód a rozwój gospodarczy w Europie Wschodniej i Zachodniej,” *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 9 (1971): 37–53; and “Dyskusja: Procesy międzynarodowej integracji w Europie,” *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 10 (1979): 153–68.

<sup>66</sup>Interview with Professor Andrzej Zawistowski, *70 lat temu utworzono RWPG*, 25 January 2019, <https://nowahistoria.interia.pl/prl/news-70-lat-temu-utworzono-rade-wzajemnej-pomocy-gospodarczej,nld,2801930>, accessed 1 February 2020.

<sup>67</sup>Kisiel to Winiewicz, 25 October 1969, Dep. IV, 27/77, w.11, AMSZ.

encourage the Soviet Union to use a similar mechanism and increase and institutionalise its control over the CMEA.<sup>68</sup>

However, the organisation had much to offer, both economically and politically. The academic parallel between the two integrations implied that a reformed and efficient CMEA could boost the member states' economies, as the EEC did in Western Europe. Moreover, a coordinated approach at the CMEA level could potentially reinforce the position of the socialist regimes in negotiations with the EEC. Finally, ideologically, the CMEA was a critical pillar of international communism. For these reasons, the socialist elite never undermined its role publicly. The PUWP leadership in particular insisted on socialist unity, driven by either political or economic strategies or simply loyalty to Moscow. This clashed with the unofficial opinions of those who were afraid of closer socialist cooperation and increasing domination by the Soviet Union.

Although some of the elite were interested in reinforcing the CMEA, the reality of socialist cooperation was disappointing. In bilateral meetings in the 1970s, Poland hardly ever consulted other socialist states on its policy concerning Western European integration. Similarly, minimal coordination took place in international organisations such as the GATT and the ECE. On the contrary, reports from Geneva and Brussels reveal that Poland was often annoyed with the positions taken by other CMEA countries. When in 1971 at the ECE forum the socialist states caused controversy by refusing to speak to representatives of the European Commission, Poland vigorously assured Western diplomats in Brussels that it did not participate in this boycott.<sup>69</sup> After a political reshuffle in December 1970, Poland often used its international image to distinguish itself from other regimes and gain special treatment in the West.

Other socialist regimes also applied such a strategy. Yugoslavia, the only European socialist regime outside the informal sphere of Soviet influence and only an associate member of CMEA, had already recognised the EEC in 1970 and signed a trade agreement with it.<sup>70</sup> Romania, also exploiting its national uniqueness, in 1972 applied to the EEC for a status in the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which granted developing economies beneficial access to its market. Going against the ideological stance according to which socialist Europe represented the second world, not the third, this decision especially irritated other CMEA members.<sup>71</sup> For Poland specifically, the prospect of Romania receiving GSP status was also an economic matter. Reports from Brussels assessed that such a scenario would worsen the position of Polish products in the Common Market, which would be filled with Romanian goods.<sup>72</sup> Although both countries aimed to secure trade with the EEC in the 1970s, they rarely informed each other of their decisions. Paradoxically, Polish diplomats in Brussels often learned about Romanian positions from EEC officials, most notably Stefani.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Hungary, whose economic situation was most comparable to that of Poland, did not become a partner in facing the EEC challenge. As in the case of the socialist elite in Poland, the question of Western European integration highlighted the differences between CMEA members.

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<sup>68</sup>Zdzisław Rurarz, *Byłem doradcą Gierka* (Chicago: Andy Grafik, 1990), 137.

<sup>69</sup>Kociołek to Staniszewski, 5 October 1971, Dep. IV, 28/77, w.6, AMSZ.

<sup>70</sup>Zaccaria, *The EEC's Yugoslav Policy*; and Obadić, "A Troubled Relationship."

<sup>71</sup>Kansikas, *Socialist Countries Face*, 98–100; and Dragomir, "Breaking the CMEA Hold," 20.

<sup>72</sup>Report on EEC, 16 June 1973, 48/77 w.16, 2, AMSZ.

<sup>73</sup>Kociołek to Staniszewski, 22 February 1972, Dep. IV, 46/77, w.10, AMSZ.

Fearing a strengthening of socialist cooperation and interested in fuelling the existing divergences, the European Commission pursued a strategy of dealing with the socialist countries independently.<sup>74</sup> As a consequence, in late 1974 it issued the previously mentioned aide-memoire, which specified the terms of trade to be applied after the introduction of the CCP and invited all the socialist regimes to bilateral negotiations. Immediately afterwards, the Soviet Union circulated instructions to the CMEA members prohibiting them from accepting the document, or if they had already accepted it, to give it back as soon as possible. Like the other socialist states, the Polish delegation in Geneva gave back the aide-memoire after receiving it. Jodko revealed in a report that the event caused significant controversy. When he approached the head of the EEC representation in Geneva, with the document, the diplomat became angry about the denial of the existence of the European Commission and threatened that Poland could expect a deterioration in the EEC's attitude.<sup>75</sup>

Against the goal of the EEC, the event opened a period of much closer cooperation among the socialist states and much stronger Soviet involvement in the matter. Acting under pressure from CMEA members interested in expanding trade with the EEC, Leonid Brezhnev leader of the Soviet Union had already called for a normalisation of the relationship between the two organisations in 1972.<sup>76</sup> However, it was not until late 1974 with the prospect of the CCP being introduced that the CMEA invited the European Commission to launch talks. The first meeting took place in February 1975. The European Commission's Director-General for External Relations flew to Moscow to meet the head of the CMEA secretariat. However, the meeting did not bring any useful results and was assessed negatively by both sides. In Brussels, Stefani told Chrupek that the competencies and goals of the socialist organisation remained unclear.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, the members of the CMEA delegation claimed that 'the conversation had an aggressive and unpleasant character.'<sup>78</sup> Neither side expected agreement to be reached any time soon. In fact, interrupted by numerous controversies and long-lasting deadlocks, the EEC-CMEA talks were not concluded until 1988.

The primary obstacle in the negotiations was different visions of the final agreement. The EEC hoped for political gains, particularly its official recognition. The European Commission regarded the possible deal as a general document of little specific value rather than a detailed regulation concerning trade, which it preferred to conclude with each country independently. On the other hand, the CMEA wanted to use the treaty as a framework for economic exchange. Among other things, the socialist proposal included MFN status and credit guarantees.<sup>79</sup>

Additionally, the EEC-CMEA talks were troubled by a 'territorial clause' present in the agreements concluded by the European Commission, which by including West Berlin clashed with the Four Power Agreement on the city confirmed in 1971. The German Democratic Republic (GDR), which for years had exploited its position vis-à-vis the EEC as its trade with the FRG was excluded from the organisation's external tariffs and

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<sup>74</sup>Romano, "Untying Cold War Knots," 165.

<sup>75</sup>Topa to Sokolak, 12 November 1974, Dep. IV, 20/79 w.12, AMSZ.

<sup>76</sup>Kansikas, *Socialist Countries Face*, 110–15.

<sup>77</sup>Kociołek to Feliksiak, 20 February 1975, Dep. IV, 17/81 w.9, AMSZ.

<sup>78</sup>Nowak to Trepczyński, 13 February 1975, Dep. IV, 17/81, w.9, AMSZ.

<sup>79</sup>Draft CMEA-EEC agreement, April 1977, Dep. IV, 2/83, w.6, AMSZ.

quantitative restrictions, was particularly attentive to any documents undermining the situation in Germany.<sup>80</sup> The Soviet Union was also against any contract which would endanger the territorial status quo in Europe.<sup>81</sup>

Despite palpable obstacles to compromise, the bodies working on Western European integration in Poland initially welcomed the breakthrough in the relationship between the two organisations. In fact, many postulates present in CMEA draft agreements, particularly credit guarantees, corresponded to Polish goals.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, the MNF status guaranteed by its GATT membership largely protected the country from adverse effects of the CCP.<sup>83</sup> In these circumstances, Polish diplomats in Brussels and Geneva resisted the tempting offers of a separate agreement arriving from the European Commission, according to Stefani 'against [their] own interest'.<sup>84</sup> This initial support for a unified CMEA front, however, declined with the deterioration of the situation in Poland and the further progress of Western European integration.

The positive developments on the continent, which peaked in 1975 with the launch of the CMEA-EEC talks and the Helsinki Accords concluding the CSCE, reversed in the second half of the decade. After Poland repressed workers' protests in 1976, Western countries accused the socialist regime of disrespecting human rights and therefore violating the third basket of Helsinki Accords. Moreover, the period revealed the negative effects of the Polish economic strategy of the early 1970s, above all rising indebtedness and a dependence on imports from the West. According to official statistics, by 1976 23% of Polish overall foreign trade and 55% of trade with capitalist states was concentrated in the EEC.<sup>85</sup> Expert reports stated that the country could only save itself from economic disaster through improved exports and a continual flow of credit.<sup>86</sup> Both were conditioned on a beneficial political climate and favourable terms for East-West trade. Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs saw securing détente on the continent as a key goal of Polish foreign policy.<sup>87</sup>

While the EEC members shared this aim, they simultaneously continued integrating.<sup>88</sup> The Tindemans Report of December 1975 paved the way for further progress. The document recommended ever closer union based on increasingly independent supranational institutions and called for a unilateral EEC position on relations with the rest of the world.<sup>89</sup> Chrupek interpreted this project as being aimed at socialist states and classified it as having an 'anti-Helsinki' character.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, in 1978 China concluded a trade agreement with the EEC, which was negotiated after the introduction of the CCP, putting additional pressure on the European socialist regimes.<sup>91</sup> Finally, in the late 1970s the

<sup>80</sup>Graf, "Nichtanerkennung zu eigenen Lasten?"; Graf, "Die DDR und die EWG."

<sup>81</sup>Romano, "Untying Cold War Knots," 171.

<sup>82</sup>Olszewski to Czyrek, 21 April 1977, Dep. IV, 2/83, w.6, AMSZ.

<sup>83</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Trade report on multilateral cooperation, accepted by Political Bureau, June 1977, KC PZPR 1354, V/145, 6, AAN.

<sup>84</sup>Kociołek to Feliksiak, 7 February 1975, Dep. IV, 17/81, w.9, AMSZ.

<sup>85</sup>*Rocznik statystyczny 1977* (Warsaw: Główny Urząd Statystyczny), 289.

<sup>86</sup>Planning Commission report, 20 October 1976, KC PZPR 1354, XI A/486, 33–5, AAN.

<sup>87</sup>Work plan for 1978, 30 December 1978, Dep. IV, 2/84, w.4, 2, AMSZ.

<sup>88</sup>Angela Romano, "The Main Task of the European Political Cooperation: Fostering Détente in Europe," in *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and The Cold War, 1965–1985*, ed. Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2010), 123–41.

<sup>89</sup>Jurgen Nielsen-Sikora, "The Idea of a European Union and a Citizen's Europe: The Tindemans Report and its Impact on Today's Europe," in *Beyond the Customs Union: The European Community's Quest for Deepening, Widening and Completion, 1969–1975*, ed. Jan Van Der Harst (Brussels: Bruylant, 2007), 377–89.

<sup>90</sup>Chrupek's report, 22 January 1976, Dep. IV, 32/82, w.18, 2, AMSZ.

<sup>91</sup>Paczocha's memo, 14 April 1978, Dep. IV, 1/84, w.16, 1, AMSZ.



Common Market introduced new regulations which further evidenced the progress of Western European integration, threatened the economic interests of the socialist regimes, and exposed the shortcomings of their cooperation.

In 1977, the EEC proclaimed a new 200-mile fishing zone in the Baltic Sea, endangering traditional Polish fishing quotas. The same year, the textile agreement concluded in the GATT framework expired and Polish diplomats needed to directly renegotiate it with the European Commission. Similarly, in 1978 the EEC decided to regulate the steel market, dragging all its socialist exporters into unofficial talks. While Poland managed to receive Soviet support regarding textiles and steel and conclude both segment agreements in 1978, the negotiations concerning fishing zones failed.<sup>92</sup> Facing the EEC alongside the Soviet Union and the GDR, two states also harmed by the new regulation, it turned out that the 'territorial clauses' present in the agreement were particularly difficult to overcome. In contrast, according to the Polish negotiator, Orzeszko, the favourable deal for the textile agreement was due to the fact that Poland faced the EEC by itself.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, reports from Brussels claimed that Poland was granted more beneficial terms than other CMEA members in the case of steel.<sup>94</sup>

The challenge of the new regulations was not only a Polish problem. Without consulting the Soviet Union, Romania had already signed a textile deal with the European Commission in 1976. At that time, the regime vigorously hindered the CMEA-EEC negotiations as it rejected the international organisation taking over some of its national prerogatives.<sup>95</sup> Unwilling to follow the radical path and similarly to Poland, Hungary successfully pressured the Soviet Union to allow segment agreements and compromise in cases involving the territorial clauses.<sup>96</sup> Around this time Bulgaria also undermined the unified CMEA front by asking the EEC for GSP status.<sup>97</sup> The Soviet Union received these attempts at regulating trade difficulties independently through direct contact with the European Commission negatively and condemned them at a CMEA meeting in Moscow in May 1978.<sup>98</sup> However, the organisation continually failed to secure the interests of the socialist states through a general agreement with the EEC. Moreover, segment deals on steel and textiles showed that the main challenges could be overcome without general consensus and that each regime had better chances of favourable treatment independently.

In these circumstances, reports produced by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Trade acquired a critical tone. In 1977 Rurarz identified four possible strategies to overcome the EEC problem. The first was for Poland to engage more in supporting the CMEA vision of an agreement between the organisations and lobby for it in Brussels. The second was to support a treaty with an unspecific character as advocated by the EEC. Violating the CMEA unified front and signing an independent deal with the European Commission was a third possible solution. The fourth option was to maintain the status quo as long as possible and secure Poland's economic interests through segment deals, as had been done since the 1960s. Going against the general agreement of the socialist states and recognising the EEC was dismissed as 'impossible'. Rurarz did not recommend supporting a deal in the form advocated by the CMEA, which he considered as detrimental

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<sup>92</sup>Olszewski to Feliksiak, 17 July 1978, Dep. IV, 2/84, w.4, AMSZ.

<sup>93</sup>Orzeszko's report, 23 November 1977, Dep. IV, 1/83, w.17, 1-2, AMSZ.

<sup>94</sup>Długosz to Czyrek, 13 July 1978, Dep. IV, 1/84, w.16, AMSZ.

<sup>95</sup>Bottoni, "Unrequited Love?"; Kansikas, *Socialist Countries Face*, 185-8.

<sup>96</sup>Germuska, "Balancing Between."

<sup>97</sup>Romano, "Untying Cold War Knots," 169.

<sup>98</sup>Report from CMEA meeting, 27 May 1978, Dep. IV, 1/84, w.16, 3, AMSZ.

for Poland and potentially lengthy, either. He regarded the status quo as a better strategy than any of the other options. At the same time, however, he warned that not recognising the EEC might irritate it and provoke it to introduce even more harmful regulations. He therefore pointed out the advantages of supporting the agreement on terms suggested by the European Commission. Rurarz considered such an agreement to be a first step, which would then allow Poland to regulate its economic issues independently.<sup>99</sup> Towards the end of the decade, the assumption that the CMEA would not be able to solve Poland's problems and that a trade agreement at the organisation level was against Polish interests became the mainstream view at the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Given the increasing discontent of the Soviet Union, however, it recommended not adopting this position at meetings in Moscow but allowing Romania to do so instead.<sup>100</sup>

While discreetly opting for limited economic regulation, at this time all the bodies concerned with the EEC pressed for recognising the organisation. Given Poland's growing economic problems and international developments, most notably the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the postulate became even more explicit in 1980. In March a Ministry of Foreign Affairs report stated: 'Taking into consideration the current international situation [...] we need to speed up and improve the status of the CMEA-EEC negotiations. Without downgrading the importance of economics, the agreement would primarily have great political importance.'<sup>101</sup>

Interestingly, during that period the secret service also lobbied for the relationship with the EEC to be regulated. A preliminary note attached to a report that 'Jarecki' sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs criticised the approach to the EEC:

What can Poland and other countries gain from closing their eyes to reality? If not today, tomorrow we will have to recognise the EEC, and every year of delay causes harm. [...] We must take into consideration ordinary envy. Apart from us, all the world recognises Jenkins and his Commission as the 'European government.' This hurts their ambitions and benefits China and the others. We can expect humiliation and harassment. From the fish affair, which resulted in throwing us out from fisheries, we have learnt nothing.<sup>102</sup>

Similarly, voices calling for recognition of the EEC also appeared in academic publications which followed the CMEA-EEC talks. For example, Bartoszewicz stated in a book published by the Polish Institute of International Affairs: '[T]he existence of the EEC is an objective fact which the socialist camp must realise.'<sup>103</sup>

Despite the calls for EEC recognition from different state bodies and academia, the PUWP leadership never openly challenged the unilateral CMEA front. Moreover, from mid-1980 Poland faced more severe problems. The *Solidarność* revolution, the dismissal of the 1970s leadership and the debt crisis turned the situation upside down. In September 1980, Stefani promised Osmański that the EEC would avoid commenting on the situation in Poland or openly supporting *Solidarność* and offered to help the country with credits.<sup>104</sup> Given the political instability and the pressure from the Ministry

<sup>99</sup>Rurarz's report on strategy in CMEA-EEC negotiations, 14 November 1977, Dep. IV, 1/83, w.17, AMSZ.

<sup>100</sup>Paczocha's report on CMEA-EEC negotiations, 16 March 1979, Dep. IV, 3/84, w.22, 3, AMSZ.

<sup>101</sup>Report on CMEA-ECC negotiations, 26 March 1980, Dep. IV, 43/84, w.16, AMSZ.

<sup>102</sup>Jarecki's report on EEC, 30 March 1979, BU 3559/12, AIPN.

<sup>103</sup>Tomasz Bartoszewicz, *Zewnętrzna polityka gospodarcza EWG* (Warsaw: PISM, 1977), 215.

<sup>104</sup>Memo on Osmański-Stefani meeting, Dep. IV, 44/84, w.6, AMSZ.

of Foreign Trade, the leadership decided to take advantage of this offer.<sup>105</sup> Although the sequence of events did not result in an official recognition of the EEC, it opened a new chapter in the relationship between Poland and integrating Western Europe. The latter firmly engaged in the political and economic situation in the former.

The picture of the late 1970s reveals the problems which the question of the EEC raised at the national and international levels. The deteriorating international and economic situation, together with proceeding Western European integration, reinforced disagreement concerning the CMEA's role and the clash of interests between different socialist states.

The Polish relationship with the EEC in the late 1970s demonstrates how integration changed the character of international relations in Europe. Processes in the West influenced processes in the East. The EEC was pushing towards increasing efficiency and closer unification, which first found reflection in academic inquiry and eventually in political action. In this context, the situation of states like Poland was particularly tricky. While negotiating independently with the EEC proved more fruitful, the unity of Western Europe evidenced that integration was the best, if not the only, path towards economic efficiency and competitiveness.

## Conclusion

The history of the Polish relationship with the EEC confirms the critical role of Western European integration in the decline of the socialist regimes. It became one of the factors driving Poland into closer political and economic cooperation with the capitalist world. In the early 1980s, Polish indebtedness was the highest among the socialist states, reaching US\$23 billion.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the numerous cooperation agreements concluded in the 1970s made Polish production dependent on imports from the West. Meanwhile, diplomatic ties established during the period provided a framework for permanent interactions between Western and Polish actors, allowing the former to tempt and pressure the latter. In the late 1970s, arguments concerning access to the Western European market, credit flows, and respect for human rights were not indifferent to Poland, which was struggling with economic difficulties. Both economically and politically, Poland entered the 1980s much more dependent on the other side of the Iron Curtain than 10 years before.

Furthermore, the EEC was at the origin of tensions among the socialist elite and between different CMEA members. Western European integration highlighted the differences between the PUWP leadership and state bodies supported by academic communities. Given the complexity and novelty of supranational integration, the bodies working on the EEC almost exclusively gathered experts. The increasing influence of these groups, represented by individuals such as Rurarz, fuelled tensions with the PUWP leadership leading to clashes between political recommendations and the actions undertaken. The conflict over the strategy for dealing with the EEC sheds light on the internal decomposition of socialist power, which fully materialised in the 1980s. As new literature evidences, internal tensions around the question of Western European integration were present also in the other socialist regimes.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, the independent manoeuvring driven by the national interests of the CMEA members vis-à-

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<sup>105</sup>Olechowski to Embassies in the EEC states, 18 December 1980, Dep. IV, 44/84, w.6, AMSZ.

<sup>106</sup>*Economic Bulletin for Europe*, UN 37 (1985): 236.

<sup>107</sup>Germuska, "Balancing Between"; Zaccaria, "Yugoslavia, Italy and European Integration."

vis the EEC foreshadowed the decline of the organisation. For socialist regime stability, the lack of unity was a political and economic weakness. This fits the interpretation proposed by Silvio Pons that the developing decomposition and fragmentation of the communist movement lay at the origin of the bloc's collapse.<sup>108</sup>

Finally, Western European integration set in motion processes which went beyond the Cold War. Close engagement with Western actors, including European Commission representatives, facilitated overcoming the hostility between elites on either side of the Iron Curtain. Moreover, the development of the EEC triggered reflection on the changing character of international relations. A multilateral logic gradually replaced the traditional nation-state thinking of the socialist regimes. In the 1970s it became clear that the security and economic stability of Europe could be best achieved through integration. These developments, in a divided continent and involving socialist elites, paved the way for the Polish application to join the EU only five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

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<sup>108</sup>Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution: A History of International Communism 1917–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).