

BACKGROUND PAPER ON POLISH-SWEDISH COOPERATION IN AREAS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

A Declaration on Political Cooperation in Areas of Strategic Importance between Poland and Sweden will be signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland and Sweden on 4 May 2011. This paper outlines the scope of the Declaration and provides more detailed information on the present state of the various areas of Polish-Swedish cooperation.

Cooperation will be based on specific projects, and will be carried out in an open, flexible and pragmatic manner. It concerns bilateral, regional, European Union and global affairs. It will be ongoing, open-ended cooperation i.e. it will not be limited to a fixed list of subjects, but rather will be carried out wherever it contributes to achieving the common political objectives of the two countries. There is already ongoing cooperation in many areas, and consultations on the relevant subjects take place regularly. It will continue in the form of visits and meetings, exchange of relevant experience and information on expert level, political consultations, conferences and seminars, staff training or other forms as agreed.

For each of the below listed areas, the Polish and Swedish side will nominate points of contact responsible for carrying the cooperation process forward.

Areas of cooperation:

European Union

- Financial recovery

Financial stability is high on both countries' agendas. Poland and Sweden contribute actively to EU efforts to overcome the current financial crisis and work for the prevention of future crises. Closer cooperation is in the interest of both countries.

- Europe 2020

Cooperation in realising the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 growth strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy designed to increase the competitiveness of the EU, boosting job creation and shifting Europe into a resource efficient economy is a shared interest of both countries.

- Single market

Poland and Sweden share the objective of removing the remaining single market barriers, and will cooperate closely to achieve this goal.

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

There is an ongoing active cooperation in implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The cooperation will be further enhanced regarding policy issues, based on the forthcoming Communication from the Commission, which will be processed during the Polish Presidency of the EU.

- Enlargement of the EU

Both countries attach particular importance to the enlargement of the Union. They share the view that enlargement should remain a strategic issue on the EU agenda. Consultations on this issue take place regularly.

- Common Foreign and Security Policy

Poland and Sweden remain devoted to the idea of strong and effective Common Foreign and Security Policy and will therefore continue regular consultations in this field to actively contribute to its development.

- European External Action Service (EEAS)

Successful development of the EEAS into an efficient tool for an effective and coherent EU Common Foreign and Security Policy is a shared objective. Close cooperation on shaping the EEAS should be an important part of our mutual exchange.

- Migration

The issues of migration and asylum are ever-present on the European agenda. Poland and Sweden cooperate closely with the aim of further strengthening EU policy and cooperation in this area, based on the common values of the EU, and in closer collaboration with our neighbours.

-EU's Neighbours

Excellent cooperation has developed between Poland and Sweden with regard to the EU's neighbours. The Eastern Partnership is a joint Polish-Swedish initiative, aiming at the integration of Eastern European partners with the EU. There is active cooperation in preparing for the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held during the Polish Presidency of the EU.

Close cooperation on a comprehensive approach to current developments in Northern Africa is also a priority for both countries.

Poland and Sweden jointly undertake initiatives to develop relations with the Russian region of Kaliningrad, within areas such as environment and civil security.

Poland and Sweden remain committed to actively supporting a democratic development and human rights in Belarus, and will continue to cooperate on specific projects in this regard. Efforts will be made to expand this cooperation also to other sectors, including environment.

Security and defence

There is already ongoing multilateral as well as bilateral cooperation between Poland and Sweden. Several proposals on closer cooperation are currently under discussion, including in the areas of operations and capability development. This area will be further developed in consultations between the Ministries of Defence and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Global issues

Closer cooperation on issues on the United Nations agenda is of mutual interest, such as the reform of the Security Council and the enhancement of the UN's role in Afghanistan.

Poland and Sweden are actively engaged in the work of the Community of Democracies and cooperate closely on issues concerning the organisation, including its reform, which will be discussed at the ministerial meeting in Vilnius in July.

Energy and climate

The Polish-Swedish Energy Platform is an example of the close cooperation between the two countries in areas of energy policy, including e.g. energy efficiency. Environmental technology solutions such as electricity and heating from biofuels, district heating and waste are also areas where Polish-Swedish cooperation is developed

Cooperation on issues relating to nuclear safety and storage of nuclear waste will be developed.

Close cooperation in the preparation of COP17 in Durban as well as enhanced cooperation in future EU and international climate policy design is envisaged.

Poland and Sweden note the importance of the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P), to which both countries contribute financially, and the possibility to expand E5P to other Eastern Partnership countries.

Arctic issues

Improved cooperation between Poland and Sweden on Arctic issues is being discussed. Cooperation in the framework of the Arctic Council will be strengthened by closer relations between member states and observers.

Consular issues

Further use of the agreement between the Polish Government and the Swedish Government on mutual visa representation, signed on 3 March 2010, which provides for new regulations and arrangements, is being discussed. So far, in accordance with executive agreements, when issuing visas Poland represents Sweden in the Kaliningrad consular district and in the consular district in Algiers. Sweden represents Poland in Dhaka.

Other issues under discussion

Trade and export promotion is an area that deserves great attention from both countries. Closer cooperation on these issues is mutually beneficial and should be developed.

Other areas of foreign policy can be added to the list of subjects where cooperation could be further developed and deepened. One example is disarmament, where Polish-Swedish initiatives have been taken in the past, e.g. the joint Bildt-Sikorski article on the reduction of tactical nuclear weapons.