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## Latin American direction in the Polish foreign policy : relations with Latin American and Caribbean states after 2004

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## **LATIN AMERICAN DIRECTION IN THE POLISH FOREIGN POLICY. RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES AFTER 2004**

### **ABSTRACT**

The issues important for the EU are reflected in the political, economic, and social decisions made by Poland on the international arena, and influence the character and level of bilateral relations between Poland and particular Latin American countries. This article presents the political aspect of the relations between Poland and Latin American states after the Polish accession to the EU in 2004. The goal is not only to present the mutual political relations of Poland and Latin American and Caribbean countries after May 1, 2004, but most of all to consider the influence of Polish accession on the dynamics and development of those relations.

### **Key words**

Polish foreign policy, Latin America and the Caribbean states, political dialogue, official visits, political and economic consultations, inter-parliamentary cooperation

### **STRESZCZENIE**

Istotna dla UE problematyka znajduje swoje odzwierciedlenie w wielu podejmowanych na arenie międzynarodowej decyzjach politycznych, gospodarczych i społecznych państwa polskiego, wpływając również na charakter i poziom utrzymywanych przez nie stosunków bilateralnych z poszczególnymi krajami Ameryki Łacińskiej. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia jedynie aspekt polityczny relacji Polski z państwami latynoamerykańskimi od momentu jej włączenia do struktur europejskich w 2004 roku. Celem nie jest wyłącznie przedstawienie wzajemnych kontaktów politycznych Polski oraz krajów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów po 1 maja 2004 roku, ale przede wszystkim rozważenie wpływu polskiej akcesji na dynamikę oraz rozwój tych stosunków.

### **Słowa kluczowe**

polska polityka zagraniczna, państwa Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów, dialog polityczny, wizyty oficjalne, konsultacje polityczno-ekonomiczne, współpraca międzyparlamentarna

## 1. Introduction

The Polish accession to the European Union has largely determined the shape of the foreign policy towards not only the most important players on the international arena, but also towards the states of marginal importance to the Polish aspirations on the international plain. Poland became another state that builds and develops EU strategies, programs, and projects related to developing countries, including those from Latin America and the Caribbean. As a Member State, Poland is committed to share and shape EU positions on the matters pertaining to that region, which had a considerable impact on bilateral relations between Poland and particular Latin American states.

The cooperation between the European Union and the sub-region of Latin America mainly takes the form of a political dialogue, economic relations development, and aid programs<sup>1</sup>. Priority is given to promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law, creating civil society, strengthening mutual understanding, shaping favourable conditions for investments and trade, and cooperating in the field of safety (both internal and external).<sup>2</sup> As was mentioned above, the issues important to the EU are reflected in the political, economic, and social decisions made by the Polish state on the international arena, and influence the character and level of bilateral relations of Poland. This article presents the political aspect of the relations between Poland and Latin American states after the Polish accession to the EU in 2004. The goal is not only to present the mutual political relations of Poland and Latin American and Caribbean states after May 1, 2004, but, most of all, to consider the influence of Polish accession on the dynamics and development of those relations.

## 2. The strategy of the Republic of Poland towards non-European developing countries

The first challenge that appeared before the Polish policy toward Latin America during the accession to the European Union was determining and ordering the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. Zajączkowski, *Ameryka Łacińska w polityce Unii Europejskiej* [Latin America in the Policy of the European Union] [in:] *Ameryka Łacińska we współczesnym świecie* [Latin America in the Contemporary World], M.F. Gawrycki (ed.), Warszawa 2006, pp. 274–275.

<sup>2</sup> *A Stronger Partnership between the European Union and Latin America*, The Directorate-General for External Relations, [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/la/docs/com05\\_636\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/la/docs/com05_636_en.pdf) [access: 26.06.2012].

goals and actions planned in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. The result of the effort undertaken by the Ministry of Economy and Labor and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was adopting “The Strategy of the Republic of Poland towards Non-European Developing Countries.” The Council of Ministers adopted this document on November 30, 2004. It presented an overall and long-term view on the main principles and key objectives of the Polish foreign policy towards Latin American states, which were included in the project alongside the developing countries in Africa and Asia.<sup>3</sup> The document stated that the main goals of Poland towards Latin American countries are establishing political partnership, as well as a stable and, at the same time, mutually profitable economic and trade cooperation. One of the major tasks was to promote the benefits of the enlargement of the European Union by highlighting the fact that an increase in the number of Member States does not disadvantage Latin American states in the access to European aid and investment funds. It was also emphasized that an equally important objective is to accentuate in bilateral relations the complimentary character of the Polish policy with EU principles.<sup>4</sup>

The states of utmost importance in the region are: the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Argentine Republic, the United Mexican States, and the Republic of Chile. Among the factors beneficial to the development of cooperation with the abovementioned states are such issues as the cooperation of a given state with the European Union manifesting itself in maintaining and intensifying political, cultural, scientific, and economic relations; the stability of economy and political system; and the presence of a large Polish community. It was also noted that the problems and controversies in bilateral relations can result from such factors as a limited diversification of the Polish export offer (in the case of relations with Brazil), a threat of a financial and economic crisis in Argentina, a deteriorating condition of internal safety and unregulated issues concerning veterinary regulations in Mexico, and also the lack of legal solutions concerning intellectual property in Chile.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the priority states, the strategy also lists other states important for Poland. These are the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic

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<sup>3</sup> *Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się* [The Strategy of the Republic of Poland towards Non-European Developing Countries], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/Akty%20prawne/inne/Strategia%20RP%20wobec%20krajow%20rozw.pdf> [access: 28.06.2012].

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

of Colombia. It emphasizes that, among the reasons for strengthening relations with Venezuela, there is the fact that Venezuela has rich deposits of natural resources; however, the main obstacle in the way towards closer cooperation is an unstable political situation, social, and difficulties in stabilizing the Venezuelan economy. As for Colombia, it is noted that a relatively stable economic growth rate, cooperation with the European Union, and Polish-Colombian cultural and scientific relations facilitate a great deal of the development of interactions and contribute to a growing rapprochement between the nations. On the other hand, the factors that hinder the strengthening relations there are a weak internal demand in Colombia, a lack of a stable tax regulations, a prolonged internal conflict, and an increase in organized crime that is centred around drug production and smuggling.<sup>6</sup>

The aforementioned principles of “The Strategy of the Republic of Poland towards Non-European Developing Countries” described in detail the directions of Polish actions as a new Member State of the European Union towards Latin American states. It is worth noting that the document emphasizes the importance of direct and more intensive political dialogue, apart from economic and trade cooperation. Contacts at the governmental level and an active participation in shaping the EU policy for strengthening partnership, directed at Latin American states, were recognized as important objectives of Poland on the international arena. Furthermore, the issues connected with respect for human rights, development of democracy, and security hold equally important places in the actions planned towards the states from that region.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Shaping mutual contacts

Numerous official meetings, the activity of Poland in the European Union, inter-parliamentary cooperation, and the activity of the political and economic commissions realized the guidelines defined in “The Strategy.”

The first matter worth commenting upon are the official visits and the contacts of the highest state representatives during EU and Latin American

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<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem; Zespół Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów. Departament Ameryki MSZ RP [LAC Region, American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland], *Stosunki Polska – Ameryka Łacińska i Karaiby* [Relations between Poland and Latin America and the Caribbean] [in:] *Ameryka Łacińska w polskiej polityce* [Latin America in Polish Politics], A. Dembiczyński (ed.), Warszawa 2009, pp. 9–10.

region summits. An important gesture, which was understood as an invitation to commence talks on an upcoming meeting of state representatives in Mexico, was the visit of Mexican President Vincente Fox Quesada in Poland on May 15, 2004. However, an event that really allowed Poland to establish close cooperation with the region was the Third European Union – Latin America and Caribbean Summit of Heads of State and Government. It was held in Guadalajara, Mexico over May 27–29, 2004. During the summit, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski held talks with the presidents of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay. Thanks to these talks, Poland was able to show that its foreign policy after the accession to the European Union shall also be aimed at the development of multi-level contacts with Latin American states.<sup>8</sup>

The position of Poland was confirmed in 2006 at the IV Summit in Vienna (May 12–13), when Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz held talks on the subject of widening the areas of cooperation with the Vice President of Colombia and the Presidents of Chile and Mexico. During that summit, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Anna Fotyga met Bruno Stagno Ugarte, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica. In the following year, Prime Minister Donald Tusk visited Peru and Chile. He also took part in the V European Union – Latin America and Caribbean Summit held in Lima on May 16–17, 2008. During the session, he met the Presidents of Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia. Moreover, during the session of the General Assembly of the UN in 2009, President Lech Kaczyński held talks with the Colombian President Álvaro Uribe. The aim of each of these meetings was to intensify political dialogue and to make agreements on key issues for the development of relation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Briefing Podsekretarza Stanu w MSZ Sergiusza Najara nt. III Szczytu Unia Europejska – Ameryka Łacińska i Karaiby*, 25 maja 2004 r. – akredytacje, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Briefing,Podsekretarza,Stanu,w,MSZ,Sergiusza,Najara,nt.,III,Szczytu,Unia,Europejska,,Ameryka,Lacinska,i,Karaiby,,25,maja,2004,r,-,akredytacje,587.html> [access: 29.06.2012]; *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski. Informator. Tom II. Ameryka Północna i Południowa 1918–2007* [Polish Diplomatic Relations. Reference. Volume II. North and South America 1918–2007], K. Szczepanik, A. Herman-Łukasik, B. Janicka (eds.), Warszawa 2008, p. 129; *Zespół Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów. Departament Ameryki MSZ RP* [LAC Region, American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland], op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Premier Donald Tusk na V Szczytzie Ameryka Łacińska i Karaiby – Unia Europejska* [Prime Minister Donald Tusk at the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of Latin America and Caribbean – European Union], Chancellery of The Prime Minister, [http://www.premier.gov.pl/centrum\\_prasowe/wydarzenia/premier\\_donald\\_tusk\\_na\\_v\\_szczyt,1433/](http://www.premier.gov.pl/centrum_prasowe/wydarzenia/premier_donald_tusk_na_v_szczyt,1433/) [access: 29.06.2012]; *Stosunki dyplomatyczne...*, op.cit., p. 103; *Szczyt UE – LAC – K. Marcinkiewicz*

On May 5–7, 2010 Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski made an official visit to the Republic of Peru and the Republic of Colombia. The goal of the visit to Peru was to maintain high-level political contacts started by the visit of Prime Minister Donald Tusk. During the meeting, the Peruvian side expressed gratitude for the Polish support during the process of negotiating a Multilateral Trade Agreement between the European Union, Peru, and Colombia. In the course of the meeting, the good state of political relations and the need for intensifying economic cooperation were emphasized. Additionally, it was also agreed that Peru shall support Poland's candidacy for membership on the Human Rights Council. Also, it was agreed that Poland and Peru shall support each other's candidacy to the United Nations Security Council. Furthermore, the Peruvian side promised to speed up work on the agreement on cooperation in combating organized crime and on the agreement on the transfer of condemned persons (that would allow the transfer of the Polish citizens who are serving sentences in Peru). The visit to Colombia was equally successful. During the talks it was decided that political cooperation should be strengthened in the forums of the Community of Democracies and the United Nations. Colombia, like Peru, agreed to support the Polish candidacy to the Human Rights Council. The state of political relations was deemed very good; however, it was stated that economic relations should be significantly strengthened. Both the Polish and the Colombian side promised to intensify negotiations on bilateral cooperation in the area of combating organized crime. It is worth mentioning that the decisions made during these talks were reflected in the position of the Polish delegation to the VI Summit held in Madrid on May 17–18, 2010.<sup>10</sup>

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[The Summit of UE – LAC – K. Marcinkiewicz], Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Vienna, <http://www.wien.polemb.net/?document=270> [access: 29.06.2012].; *Współpraca Polska – Ameryka Łacińska i Karaiby* [Cooperation Poland – Latin America and the Caribbean], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Wspolpraca,Polska,-,Ameryka,Lacinska,i,Karaiby,38832.html> [access: 29.06.2012]; *Zespół Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów. Departament Ameryki MSZ RP* [LAC Region, American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland], op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Wizyty Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych Radosława Sikorskiego w Peru i w Kolumbii* [Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski in Peru and Colombia], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Wizyty,Ministra,Spraw,Zagranicznych,%20Radoslaw,Sikorskiego,w,Peru,i,w,Kolumbii,35502.html> [access: 29.06.2012]; *Udział ministra Radosława Sikorskiego w VI Szczycie Szefów Państw i Rządów Unii Europejskiej, Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów* [Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski in the 6<sup>th</sup> Summit of Heads of State and Government of the European

Apart from the aforementioned meetings, the visits made on the account of participation in various celebrations also deserve attention. During the inauguration of President Martina Torrijos Espino of Panama, between August 31 and September 1, 2004, and during the swearing-in ceremony of Tabaré Ramón Vázquez, the newly-appointed President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, which took place between February 28 and March 3, 2005, the President of the Republic of Poland Aleksander Kwaśniewski was represented by Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Andrzej Załucki.<sup>11</sup> On March 11, 2006, Maria Kaczyńska, the wife of President Lech Kaczyński, participated in the celebrations held in Santiago de Chile on the occasion of President Michelle Bachelet taking office,<sup>12</sup> and, on December 1 of the same year, she participated in the transfer-of-executive-power ceremony to President-elect Filipe Calderón Hinojosa by outgoing President Vicente Fox Quesada.<sup>13</sup> Despite the fact that during these visits the subject of developing political and economic cooperation were not mentioned, they had considerable influence on the deepening of dialogue since they were a sign of respect for the partner in the relations.

Since the accession to the European Union, Polish officials were not only guests in Latin American states, but also were the hosts and organizers of numerous meetings. For instance, in the second half of 2004, President Vicente Fox Quesada of Mexico; Luiz Fernando Furlan, the Brazilian Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade; and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia Maria Carolina Barco Isackson visited Poland. Two years later, over the period of March 21–24, 2006, the Costa Rican foreign minister, Roberto Tovar Faja, stayed in Poland. Moreover, on June 25 and 26, 2007, Foreign Minister José Antonio García Belaúnde of Peru visited Poland.<sup>14</sup>

Another important element of Polish relations Latin American and the Caribbean states is the mechanism of political and economic consultations

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Union, Latin America and the Caribbean], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Udzial,ministra,Radoslawy,Sikorskiego,w,VI,Szczycie,Szefow,Panstw,i,Rzadow,Unii,Europejskiej,,Ameryki,Lacinskiej,i,Karaibow,3878.html> [access: 26.06.2012].

<sup>11</sup> *Stosunki dyplomatyczne...*, op.cit., p. 141, 212.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 129.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37, 97, 103, 151; *Zespół Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów. Departament Ameryki MSZ RP* [LAC Region, American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland], op.cit., p. 10.



conducted at the level of vice ministers or political directors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Such consultations were organized long before Poland's accession to the European Union and they only became more pronounced afterwards. After Poland became a Member State, those meetings were organized more frequently, and more subjects were touched upon.<sup>15</sup>

On August 30, 2004, the third round of Polish-Colombian political consultations was held. It was chaired by Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland Andrzej Załucki and by Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia Camilo Reyes.<sup>16</sup> On September 6 of the same year, a second round of Polish-Costa Rican consultations took place in Warsaw. Andrzej Załucki and Marco Vinicio Vargas Pereira, the Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both states, chaired it.<sup>17</sup> On April 6, 2005, a Polish-Peruvian debate took place in Warsaw, which was presided over by Załucki and Armando Lecaros de Cossío, the Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>18</sup> One month later, on May 18, the fourth round of Polish-Colombian consultations was held in Warsaw; it was chaired by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Załucki and Reyes.<sup>19</sup> In 2006, the number of consultations significantly rose. On March 29, a fourth meeting of representatives of Poland and Peru was held in Warsaw under the chairmanship of the Under Secretaries of State: Witold Waszczykowski and Harold Forsyth Mejia.<sup>20</sup> On April 19, Polish-Mexican consultations were also held in Warsaw, during which two Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Waszczykowski and María de Lourdes Aranda Bezaury, debated.<sup>21</sup> On October 2, Witold Waszczykowski and María Belela Herrera Sanguinetti chaired talks between Poland and Uruguay.<sup>22</sup> The fourth Polish-Venezuelan consultations took place on October 16.<sup>23</sup> Numerous meetings, during which political and economic issues were debated, were also held throughout 2007. On April 7, Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two states, Waszczykowski and Aranda, chaired the

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<sup>15</sup> *Współpraca...*, op.cit.; *Zespół Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów. Departament Ameryki MSZ RP* [LAC Region, American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland], op.cit., pp. 10–11.

<sup>16</sup> *Stosunki dyplomatyczne...*, op.cit., p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 103.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 150.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 150.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 129.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 213.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 220.

sixth round of Polish-Mexican consultations in Mexico.<sup>24</sup> On May 2, the fifth Polish-Peruvian consultations were held in Lima. On July 27, the third round of Polish-Argentinian consultations was held in Buenos Aires. The delegations were led by Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Andrzej Załucki and Roberto García Moritán.<sup>25</sup> On December 3, Polish-Chilean consultations took place in Warsaw, during which Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ryszard Schnepf represented Poland while Chile was by Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Alberto van Klaveren.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of November, Warsaw was the location of the second round of Polish-Ecuadorean consultations. On March 18, 2008, Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ryszard Schnepf co-chaired the sixth session of Polish and Peruvian consultations.<sup>27</sup> On July 29–30, 2008, the fifth round of Polish-Venezuelan meetings was held in Caracas. The Polish delegation was led by Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ryszard Schnepf and Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Economy Rafał Baniak, while the Venezuelan delegation was led by Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Europe Alejandro Fleming.<sup>28</sup> In the following years the popularity of political and economic consultations did not fade. For example, in 2010 consultations were held with Argentina, Chile, and Mexico. Furthermore, talks on the policies and economic contacts were conducted with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia. Next, in May 2011 a meeting with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Salvador was held in Warsaw.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, within the scope of the strategy focused on strengthening economic cooperation with the region of Latin America realized by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on April 16–17, 2012, a working visit was paid by Beata Stelmach, the Under Secretary of State for

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<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 129.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> *Wizyta Wiceministra Stanu w MSZ RP Pana Ryszarda Schnepfa w Peru* [Visit of Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Ryszard Schnepf in Peru], Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Lima, <http://www.lima.polemb.net/?document=134&PHPSESSID=73b4222039901863f8624a650ea7db31> [access: 30.06.2012].

<sup>28</sup> *V runda konsultacji polityczno-gospodarczych z Boliwariańską Republiką Wenezueli* [5<sup>th</sup> Round of Political and Economical Consultations with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/V,runda,konsultacji,polityczno-gospodarczych,z,Boliwarianska,Republika,Wenezueli,20342.html> [access: 30.06.2012].

<sup>29</sup> *Współpraca...*, op.cit.

Global Economic Policy, to Santiago de Chile. The objective of the talks was to provide diplomatic support for Polish business entities interested in the Chilean market and promoting joint ventures.<sup>30</sup>

The goals of the political and economic consultations were intensifying diplomatic relations, deepening the dialogue, and arriving at a common understanding on various international issues. The meetings are also an expression of the aspiration to bring Europe and Latin America closer together. Additionally, there was also a desire to stimulate investments, to increase trade exchange and its diversification, and to develop direct cooperation between entrepreneurs.

The last interesting area of political relations with the Latin American states is the inter-parliamentary cooperation. Cooperation at this level is achieved through the bilateral relations of the parliamentary leaders, the chairmen of foreign affairs committees, and the chairmen of parliamentary groups. As it was the case with the consultations, the contacts between the representatives of the parliaments were established before the Polish accession to the European Union. However, they have increased since Poland's EU accession.<sup>31</sup>

On June 2, 2004, an official visit to Poland was made by a delegation from the Upper Chamber of the Argentinian Parliament chaired by Mercedes Margerita Oviedo and Mario Dominigo Daniele.<sup>32</sup> On January 27, 2006, the Leader of the Upper Chamber of Chilean Parliament Sergio Romero Pizarro visited Poland<sup>33</sup> On October 26–27 of the same year, a meeting with the Leader of the Lower Chamber of the Chilean Parliament Antonio Leal Labrín was held in Warsaw.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Wizyta Minister Beaty Stelmach w Chile* [Visit of Minister Beata Stelmach in Chile], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Wizyta,Minister,Beata,Stelmach,w,Chile,51519.html> [access: 04.07.2012].

<sup>31</sup> *Zespół Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów. Departament Ameryki MSZ RP* [LAC Region, American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland], op.cit., p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Wizyta delegacji Senatu Argentyny* [The Visit of the Delegation of the Senate of Argentina], Senate of the Republic of Poland, [http://ww2.senat.pl/k5/agenda/goscie/2004/04\\_0602a.htm](http://ww2.senat.pl/k5/agenda/goscie/2004/04_0602a.htm) [access: 04.07.2012].

<sup>33</sup> *Wizyta delegacji Senatu Chile* [The Visit of the Delegation of the Senate of Chile], Senate of the Republic of Poland, <http://ww2.senat.pl/k6/agenda/goscie/2006/060127.htm> [access: 04.07.2012].

<sup>34</sup> *Wizyta przewodniczącego Izby Deputowanych Chile* [Visit of the President of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile], Senate of the Republic of Poland, <http://ww2.senat.pl/k6/agenda/goscie/2006/061027.htm> [access: 04.07.2012].

In the following year, the Speaker of the Polish Senate Bogdan Borusewicz held talks in Chile (April 16–18), Brazil (April 19–25), and Argentina (December 9–10).<sup>35</sup> It is worth to mention that the Polish Senate also hosted parliamentary representatives, as well as members of the national governments of Latin American countries, such as Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile Alberto Van Klaveren Stork (December 4, 2007) and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil Celso Nunes Amorim (June 18, 2010).<sup>36</sup>

An important issue raised during these meetings was the deepening the inter-parliamentary cooperation and describing its perspectives within the scope of EU-Latin America cooperation. On multiple occasions, it was emphasized in the talks that inter-parliamentary diplomacy could benefit the development of bilateral political and economic relations. Cooperation was based also on mutual sharing of experience and solutions to various problems (e.g. a pension system, or an electoral system). The representatives of the parliament discussed the standpoints of their respective states towards current affairs. Considerable importance was attached to the necessity for communication and compromise, as well as the need to concentrate not only on national problems, but also on global issues.

Furthermore, numerous initiatives undertaken by the foreign affairs committees and parliamentary groups contributed to the development of contacts between Poland and Latin American states at the parliamentary level. Currently, in the Polish Sejm there are six groups responsible for international cooperation with selected Latin American countries: Polish-Argentinian, Polish-Brazilian, Polish-Chilean, Polish-Ecuadorian, Polish-Mexican, and Polish-Peruvian.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Stosunki dyplomatyczne...*, op.cit., p. 18, 37, 46.

<sup>36</sup> *Marszałek Senatu przyjął ministra spraw zagranicznych Brazylii* [Speaker of the Senatemet Met Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil], Senate of the Republic of Poland, <http://ww2.senat.pl/k7/agenda/goscie/2010/100618.htm> [access: 04.07.2012]; *Wizyta wice-ministra spraw zagranicznych Chile* [Visit of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile], Senate of the Republic of Poland, <http://ww2.senat.pl/k7/agenda/goscie/2007/071204.htm> [access: 04.07.2012].

<sup>37</sup> *Grupy bilateralne* [Bilateral Groups], Sejm of the Republic of Poland, [http://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/agent.xsp?symbol=GRUPY\\_BILATERALNE&Nrkadencji=7&Typ=G&jzyk=PL](http://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/agent.xsp?symbol=GRUPY_BILATERALNE&Nrkadencji=7&Typ=G&jzyk=PL) [access: 04.07.2012].

#### 4. Bilateral relations after 2004 – A tentative assessment

The Polish accession to the European Union has created new possibilities for creating bilateral relations with Latin American and Caribbean states. Polish foreign policy has started to take advantage of the mutual understanding between the European and Latin American regions. Polish diplomacy, aiming at deepening the partnership and strengthening its position in Latin America, supported EU aspirations to enlarge its political, economic, cultural, and scientific influence in that region. Economic cooperation was marked as one of the basic goals of the relations with Latin American countries and it was considered to be a factor that considerably improved the Polish political influence in the region. On the other hand, dialogue and political consultations, as well as the promotion of democratic principles and a particular attention to the issues connected with human rights (especially in relation to Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua), have created a real possibility to enhance the presence of Poland in the region, partially because an increase in safety and lawfulness was an incentive for investment and trade exchange.<sup>38</sup>

However, the intended strategy for strengthening the political importance of the Polish state in the LAC region has encountered many difficulties. Among them were obstacles such as the global financial crisis and the pro-American Polish foreign policy. These issues were considered a priority, which meant that strengthening the relations with the Latin American region were placed on the backburner. Yet, cooperation with states from the region was furthered systematically, if not rapidly. The development of cooperation was not only a tool for the realization of Poland's particular political and economic interests, but also was an important instrument for increasing the importance of Poland in the EU as a state realizing its principles and an active participant in international actions, programs, and initiatives that were connected with Latin America.

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Zespół Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów. Departament Ameryki MSZ RP* [LAC Region, American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland], *op.cit.*, p. 11, 18.