

Explaining Spanish and Polish Approaches to the European Neighbourhood Policy

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Polish and Spanish proposals relative to the EU's Southern and Eastern Dimensions. Furthermore, plausible explanations are forwarded regarding the resemblances between Spain's and Poland's policies towards neighbourhood: the national interests considerations based on the constructivist approach; policy entrepreneurship in the context of institutional conditions of the European Foreign Policy and the process of lessons drawing in the framework of the European Foreign Policy policy-making process.

Keywords: *European Neighbourhood Policy, Spain, Poland*

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1. Introduction

Since 2002, several EU member states and acceding countries have been especially active during the process of designing a new comprehensive framework of relations with the neighbouring countries that evolved into the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Conversely, other member states were not especially interested in the creation of such a new institutional and political framework due to the fact that the EU already had at its disposal a great deal of policies, instruments and mechanisms for conducting relations with neighbours. Therefore, in some aspects, ENP seems to constitute another layer of EU policies towards its neighbourhood with the aim of dealing with the increasing diversity of EU's member states preferences as well as of the neighbours. But at the same time the future position of initiatives such as the Barcelona Process or the Strategic Partnership with Mediterranean and Middle East remain unclear in view of the adoption of the ENP. The celebration of 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the Five Year Work Programme adopted during the Euro-Mediterranean summit in November 2005 indicate the willingness to continue the cooperation in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership together with the implementation of Association Agreements and European Neighbourhood Action Plans (Council of the European Union 2005b: 1). According to the Chairman statement of this summit, the ENP was assessed as an instrument that will "reinforce and complement the Barcelona Process" (Council of the European Union 2005c: 2). In view of these ambiguities and potentially overlapping frameworks, the divergence between EU member states preferences might be considered as a plausible explanation of the current shape of the ENP.

This paper analyzes the policies of two member states especially interested in EU policies towards its neighbourhood, arguing that there are striking similarities between Spanish and Polish projects to develop EU policies towards its neighbourhood and in the means they use to promote their proposals at the EU level. The paper is divided in two parts. In the first part, Spanish proposals on the EU policy towards the Southern Mediterranean countries and Polish proposal of establishing an Eastern Dimension of the EU are described in order to outline their similar features. In the second part

of the paper some plausible explanations are forwarded regarding the resemblances between Spain's and Poland's policies towards neighbourhood in the framework of the European Foreign Policy (EFP).

The first plausible explanation is based on the assumption that EU member states perceive EFP realm as an additional arena where their national interests and preferences are pursued. In this sense the EFP serve as a "resonance box" for national foreign policies and as a point of reference to deal with issues that are difficult to solve through unilateral policies. In order to define Spanish and Polish national interests, the constructivist driven methodology developed by Jutta Weldes is adopted. According to her argument, we may define national interests as "social constructions created as meaningful objects out of the intersubjective and culturally established meanings with which the world, the international system and the place of the states in it, is understood". In specific, it means that national interest emerge out of the situation descriptions and problem definitions through which state officials and others make sense of the world around them (Weldes 1996: 280). The description and problem definitions in relation to Spanish and Polish respective neighbouring areas are reconstructed in this paper on the basis of texts (academic and policy analysis) that synthesizes the world-views of policy makers in Spain and Poland.

The second plausible explanation refers to the institutional conditions of the EFP framework on foreign policy making of EU member states. Due to the nature of collective and multi-level policy-making of the EFP, member states willing to promote particular policies tend to behave as policy entrepreneurs, that is to say, as actors that represent "the capacity to innovate on the previous courses of action" and are willing to invest resources in order to achieve that innovation (Bicchi 2002: 4-5). Policies of entrepreneurship pursued by member states attempt to hold the leadership in initiatives and policies towards specific areas. In order to achieve these objectives, entrepreneurs employ different legitimate resources that help to incorporate their particular preferences and visions of the issue at

stake into the EFP agenda and try to gain support of other actors¹. Among these resources, the most important are coalition building with actors that share specific national concerns and the use of arguments to persuade other actors that their policy proposals address broad European concerns and interests². The similarities between Spain's and Poland's performance in the framework of the EU neighbourhood policy might be explained by the fact that the EFP institutional setting create incentives to use specific resources to promote one's interests.

The third and last source of explanation is the process of lesson-drawing in the framework of the EFP policy-making. Concretely, in the cases addressed in this paper, it will be assessed if Spanish experiences with the projection of the Mediterranean regions in the EFP framework were taken into consideration and learned when Poland forwarded its propositions on the Eastern Dimension of the EU. In general, the lesson-drawing developed by Richard Rose (1993) refers to voluntary activity of transfer of innovatory policy developed elsewhere in the belief that it will be similarly successful in a different context (Stone 1999: 52).

2. Sketching Spanish and Polish proposals on EU policies towards the neighbourhood

The following section describes the content of Spanish and Polish proposals regarding the relations between the EU and its neighbouring regions. The section begins with an examination of the Spanish input in the establishment and development of the so-called Barcelona Process. Following that, the Polish proposal for establishing an Eastern Dimension of the EU is presented. The presentation of Spanish and Polish proposals on EU policy towards neighbouring regions permits to indicate various striking resemblances between them. Among these, at least four general features might be outlined.

¹ Moreover, following the approach of strategic action, strategic use of norms/arguments within institutional environments (Schimmelfennig 2003b; Sedelmeier 2000), it is assumed that the innovation of the existing policy is pursued through rationally-driven actions.

² In this sense, the concept of "rhetorical action" (Schimmelfennig 2001, 2003a) might serve as the plausible explanation of the behaviour of states trying to advance their priorities in the EFP environment.

In the first place, Spain and Poland pursue the inclusion of issues related to their respective neighbourhood into the mainstream of the EFP, but as a specific and differentiated dimension of it. Secondly, both countries propose that the EU should adopt a broad and far-reaching framework of relations with their respective neighbours, encompassing multiple issue-areas where the EU has competences. In both cases, these issue-areas included policy and security affairs, economic cooperation, people-to-people contacts, and cooperation in issues related to Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). Thirdly, both countries pursue the establishment of specific instruments of cooperation, mainly special funds and programs that would deal with specific concerns to foster cooperation between the EU and neighbour countries. Fourthly, both Spanish and Polish proposals forwarded to the EU put special emphasizes in involving the third countries in specific common policies developed by the EU and member states.

2.1 Spanish Mediterranean agenda in the framework of EFP

Since the beginning of the 1990s Spain became to be perceived as a mainstreamer in the EFP, especially in the area of Mediterranean cooperation (Barbé 1998b). Initially, Spain proposed that the Mediterranean dimension of the institutional system of European security should be based on the formulas of bilateral and European Community cooperation, the Euro-Arab dialogue, and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (Dezcallar 1992: 54)³. After the failure of various initiatives, Spain later intended resolutely to include its Mediterranean agenda within the EU foreign policy. Spain supported a comprehensive approach to Mediterranean security and stability, including its military, political, economic, social and cultural aspects. Additionally, Spain lobbied for greater financial involvement of the EU in the Mediterranean areas, which finally led to an increase of the financial package in the framework of the new MEDA programme (European Council in Cannes in June 1995) (Baixeras 1996; Tovias 1999: 225-231).

³ Therefore, Spain promoted and supported various international initiatives that were aimed at institutionalizing the cooperation in the Mediterranean basin, but outside the EU framework (Barbé 1991, 1993; Fernández Ordoñez 1991).

The result of this active lobbying in favour of Mediterranean issues was the celebration in November 1995 of the Barcelona Conference that gave ground to the institutionalized Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). However, after the vigorous activity of Felipe González's socialist governments in the promotion of the Mediterranean issues in the EU framework that resulted in the Barcelona Process, the new conservative government limited its activity in the Mediterranean to manage the existing framework of relations⁴. On the other hand, on the side of the Spanish government led by José María Aznar some criticism started to grow concerning the progress of the EMP and the method of the cooperation in the framework of EMP.

Even though the implementation of EMP agenda continued to be the priority of the Spanish conservative government, a special emphasis was put, at least rhetorically, on the economic aspects of the Partnership, namely the conclusion of the Association Agreements with Mediterranean countries and the reinforcement of economic cooperation and liberalization. The Spanish Presidency of the EU in 2002 was used as an opportunity to put forward some ambitious projects to be debated during its presidency term, especially with the occasion of the Fifth Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Valencia in April 2002. Many of these initiatives were not new in the priorities of the Spanish governments, but acquired new relevance in a changed international context, especially that of the fight against terrorism and the dialogue between cultures and civilizations. Special attention was also paid to economic issues. Once again Spain promoted the creation of the so-called Bank of Euromediterranean Development aimed at supporting economic development in the Mediterranean, as was the case of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Eastern Europe⁵. Regarding the institutional method of the EMP cooperation, Spain supported the initiative to create a Parliamentary Assembly and, in order to give more political continuity to the EMP, Spain advanced the proposition to

⁴ At the beginning of the first Aznar's term, some analysts already observed that the new Spanish government would provably play a less prominent role in Mediterranean politics (Gillespie 1997: 45).

⁵ The proposal of setting up a Bank for Euromediterranean Development was watered down with the creation of a credit facility within the framework of the European Investment Bank.

create the figure of Mr. MED –a high-level diplomatic official of the EU⁶.

The results of the Spanish Presidency in 2002 were deemed as positive for the development of the EMP taking into account the convulsed international context in the Mediterranean area. The Valencia Action Plan detailing a “road map” for the EMP was agreed among 27 participants. Among other numerous initiatives, the Plan paid special attention to initiatives aimed at fighting against terrorism and organized crime and other issues linked to the Justice and Home Affairs. Despite that measures related to JHA were included in the social and cultural chapter, their horizontal content gained particular political relevance. The Action Plan also advanced the idea of strengthening cooperation in the field of ESDP.

The economic chapter of the Action Plan was extensive and, among many initiatives, it confirmed the political compromise of creating in 2010 a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area. The Valencia Action Plan also supported the processes of south-south trade integration; the promotion of investment in infrastructures and interconnections in transports, energy and telecommunications networks, etc. Concrete initiatives were also approved in the social, cultural and humanitarian chapter, among others, the setting up of a Euromediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Civilizations (a Spanish-Swedish initiative in origin), and the adoption of the Action Plan on the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations.

Foreign policy of the socialist government elected in 2004 has sought to upgrade Spanish Mediterranean agenda focusing on the improvement of its relations with Morocco. However, the renewed interest in Mediterranean issues does not imply broad changes in the policy proposals advanced by Spain. Actually, Spanish priorities in the Mediterranean agenda are focused on its symbolic dimension, as for example the celebration of the anniversary conference in Barce-

⁶ Spanish agenda regarding the EMP was presented in the speech of Spanish Secretary of State Miguel Nadal in the Committee of Foreign Affairs in European Parliament (Nadal 2002). For a comprehensive evaluation of proposals and advances in the EMP during Spanish presidency see Soler i Lecha and Walter-Puig (2002).

lona at the level of heads of state or government. But the main Spanish priority seems to be the re-launch of the Barcelona Process by adapting it to the new international situation. In this sense, Spain insists that the adaptation of the EMP should address both the international context and challenges (terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human and drugs trafficking, money laundering and organized crime) as well as the internal development in the EU, mainly the problems arising from the illegal immigration (Barbé, Soler i Lecha 2005: 94-98).

Spanish agenda on the future of the EMP is quite extensive, but there are five areas of cooperation with the Mediterranean countries that are of special importance from the Spanish point of view: terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction; greater political and economic reforms and trade liberalization; education; democratic values, tolerance and common respect; and migration and social integration⁷. In view of this broad Spanish Mediterranean agenda, the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Conference was perceived by the socialist government as an opportunity to renew the EU compromise with the Mediterranean basin and to give greater visibility to the Mediterranean agenda in the enlarged EU.

In view of this anniversary Spain proposed series of initiatives and projects to be adopted in the framework of the EMP. The point of departure of the Spanish propositions is the emphasis on “the need of political and security cooperation for a definition of a common area of peace and stability” that should include: political dialogue, prevention and conflicts resolution, strengthening of democracy, expansion of the area of freedom, good governance and better protection of human rights, and all those processes that include citizens’ participation; inclusion of Mediterranean partners in the ESDP dialogue; reinforcement of cooperation in the fight against terrorism; and the deepening of the institutionalization of the political dialogue through the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, creation of informal Ad-hoc Groups and Pilot Projects based on the concept of variable geometries, twinning projects in JHA-related areas (police and security forces training, justice administra-

⁷ Spanish proposals concerning the EMP are based on the speech delivered by Spanish secretary of European Affairs, Miguel Ángel Navarro Portera (2005).

tion, border management, fight against terrorism or money laundering), and last but not least, institutionalization of ministerial meetings on JHA supplemented by senior officials' meetings to deal with asylum and migration issues.

The proposed measures to foster economic and financial cooperation remain the same as, for example, the promotion of economic and institutional reforms or the reinforcement of cooperation in the economic and financial areas and the fostering of macro-economic dialogue. Spain also stressed the importance of greater civil society participation and people-to-people contacts (Erasmus-type scholarships and cooperation between universities and academic sectors); combat of illiteracy, promotion of education and gender equality; participation of regions and municipalities in the Barcelona Process; and enhancing cooperation in migration matters, an "extremely important area".

From the Spanish point of view, the Barcelona Process remains the core of the relationship between the EU and the Mediterranean countries, even after the adoption of the ENP. New instruments and policies towards the neighbourhood are perceived as additional instruments to strengthen the economic or political dimensions of the Barcelona Process. Similarly, Spain aims at subordinating the "Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East" to the Barcelona Process. As stated by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Spain's position on the ENP is to "avoid that the policy of new neighbours ends up being a hidden pre-accession policy for the Eastern countries, thus confirming the discrimination between regions, and to make sure that the new Strategic Association for the Mediterranean and the Middle East does not deviate the Union's attention from the Barcelona Process"⁸.

2.2 Polish proposal of Eastern Dimension of the EU

Poland is a newcomer in the EU, but even before the accession to the EU in May 2004, this country presented its own proposals on the EU towards its Eastern neighbourhood. Since the very begin-

⁸ *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Generales*, Comisiones Mixtas (para la Unión Europea), VIII Legislatura, 20, 20 December 2004, p. 7.

ning of accession negotiations, Poland indicated its willingness to participate in the CFSP policy-making and to contribute to the creation of an EU Eastern Dimension and orientate decisively its content. In June 2001 Poland submitted to the EU presidency its initial position on the future of the relations with Eastern neighbours (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2001). Since then, Polish propositions evolved from very generic ideas and assumptions to more detailed proposals of solutions and mechanisms to be implemented in the EU Eastern policy. In the subsequent months, Poland presented further thorough positions on this topic (Hübner 2002; Cimoszewicz 2002), but the most important and comprehensive document on the future of relations with Eastern neighbours was the non-paper presented in January 2003, just after the conclusion of the accession negotiations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003; Cimoszewicz 2003a).

From the institutional point of view, the creation of the Eastern Dimension of the EU pursued the establishment of a broad framework of coordination for the relations with Eastern neighbours of the EU. Poland perceived the EU as the leading international actor in the Eastern neighbourhood. Therefore the Eastern Dimension of the EU, an “umbrella framework” or new “regional platform for cooperation”, should constitute a coordination mechanism for policies and projects inside the EU in order to create better synergies between EU activities towards other regional as well as international structures and organizations active in the region. Following the Polish proposals, the Eastern Dimension of the EU should be constituted by three pillars: EU activities (CFSP and RELEX activities), policies of the EU member states both in its bilateral as well as multilateral form, and non-governmental activities of the institutions of civil society (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 87).

An important evolution is observed in relation to the issue of which countries should be involved in the Eastern Dimension of the EU. In 2001 Poland proposed that the future Eastern Dimension should address the whole post-soviet space, although differentiating between Eastern European countries, the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia, and with special emphasis put on Russia, Kaliningrad, and Ukraine. However, in other positions, Poland focused its attention on the relations with future direct neighbours of the enlarged EU:

Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Russia. Finally, Russia was excluded from Polish considerations about the Eastern Dimension, since “the existing framework of cooperation is well developed and seems to function quite well” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 89). Moreover, the new Eastern policy had to be a mean of supporting the integration of neighbours within the EU and therefore “this element is not applicable to Russia, which does not aspire to the EU membership” (Cimoszewicz 2004: 22). Regarding Russia, Polish positions initially stressed that Russia’s future relations with the EU should focus on making “better use of the existing framework of cooperation to achieve specific results” (Cimoszewicz 2003b: 8) and supported the idea of developing the concept of common European economic space. After the EU-Russia summit in May 2003, Poland supported the idea of the “four common spaces” that should be also applied to EU relations with Ukraine and Moldova but “tailored to their European aspirations” (Cimoszewicz 2003d: 8).

Consequently, Poland initially did not adopt a clear position on the final purpose of the Eastern Dimension of the EU. Instead, many and diverse ideas, such as trade agreements, new generation of association agreements, customs union, “enhanced co-operation” or confederation between the EU and Ukraine, and EU and Belarus, were advanced as possible frameworks of relations (Hübner 2002: 6). But finally, Poland adopted the position that the EU should pursue an “open doors policy” and support “European perspective” of the countries that are willing to adhere to the EU in the future and are ready to accomplish with accession criteria’s. Poland put special emphasis on Ukraine, arguing that it is “the interest of the enlarged EU to recognize the European choice of this country, which is important for stability and security in the eastern part of the continent” and in consequence, the EU should appreciate in its own interest “long-term European policy towards the country’s membership to the EU” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 88). The European perspective for Belarus and Moldova was conversely considered with more caution in the Polish proposals due to the internal situation in both countries.

The definition of principles and rules which should govern this policy also evolved. According to Poland, the first principle, that of conditionality, “should be applied consistently to the relations with

all Eastern European neighbours, neither discriminating nor favouring any of them". This principle should depend on the progress in democratic reforms, the respect of human rights and minority rights and values upon which the Union is based and "the standards recognized by the international community in international relations", and on "building democratic institutions and market economy, improving governance as well as fighting corruption" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 93).

The principle of conditionality gives ground to the second principle that would rule the Eastern Dimension of the EU: the principle of differentiation. This principle has two aims: the differentiation among the target countries of the initiative and the differentiation of the Eastern Dimension of the EU from other EFP initiatives. Firstly, the differentiation should enable individual development of relations with each of the states implicated taking into account the differences between the Eastern states and their different needs and aspirations. In this sense, the differentiation was aimed at instituting the equality between Eastern states in relations with the EU (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 86). According to Polish proposals, the Eastern Dimension should constitute a "coherent, comprehensive framework of its eastern policy that will enable individual development of relations with each of the countries concerned, without prejudicing their final formula" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 86). Secondly, the Eastern Dimension was approached as a way to differentiate the EU policy towards its Eastern neighbours from the policies undertaken in the framework of the Northern Dimension or the Barcelona Process. Due to the "essential differences" between Eastern and Southern neighbouring states a "different approach and diverse policies of the Union towards these two regions" were strongly supported (Cimoszewicz 2003c: 43).

In proposals concerning the future of relations with Eastern neighbours of the enlarged EU, Poland proposed numerous mechanisms and areas of cooperation: deepened political dialogue with regular consultations in the areas of economy, home affairs, energy; gradual, asymmetrical liberalization of trade in close connection with reforms in key areas of economic life; EU's involvement in development of the energy and transport infrastructure; ensuring control of borders, co-operation between border services; close co-

operation in the area of justice and home affairs; support to the human dimension of regional co-operation: exchange of youth, access to educational programs (Hübner 2002; Cimoszewicz 2002). These initial proposals were further detailed in additional documents and were divided into seven issue-areas: enhanced political dialogue of the EU with Eastern neighbours; assistance in democratic and economic transformations; economic cooperation that would lead to the establishment of the free trade zone with the EU; energy cooperation with Russia and Ukraine aiming at securing stable and reliable energy supply to the enlarged EU, focusing on joint infrastructure projects in the energy sector, transport and communication; cooperation in the area of justice and home affairs; solution of security problems, including crisis prevention and management; and people-to-people contacts, cultural contacts and access to information (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 90-93).

Poland also proposed to upgrade the existing agreements between the EU and Ukraine, and between the EU and Moldova to the level of Association Agreements. Additionally, Poland put special emphasis on the assistance and cooperation programmes, which in the light of these proposals, seem very comparable to pre-accession or even EU's regional development programs. In order to allow greater synergies between projects, Poland supported the reform of the TACIS programme and a better coordination between TACIS, INTERREG and PHARE Cross-border Cooperation programmes. Poland also proposed the establishment of a European Democracy Fund directed to NGOs in targeted countries; European Scholarship Programme and European Traineeship Programme; assistance programmes in institutional building, twinning projects and technical assistance in developing local government structures, establishment of a European Information Centre; assistance in development of infrastructural linking (new border crossing); the development of regional and cross-border cooperation; training courses, support to business incubators or establishment of European Investment Fund for Eastern Europe directed to small and medium enterprises (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 94-97). To a certain degree, it can be observed that these propositions are based on the own experiences and best practices identified during Polish process of accession to the EU.

A significant part of these ideas and detailed solutions supported by Poland were reflected in the ENP documents. However, the basic Polish proposition of creating an Eastern Dimension of the EU as a separate framework of relations did not materialize and the effects of Polish input to the overall ENP framework were rather mixed. However, after the adoption of the ENP, Poland kept pressing to include its propositions and points of view in the documents and plans prepared for the implementation of the ENP. It is especially the case of the Action Plan for Ukraine, into which Poland achieved to include after the Orange Revolution various proposals forwarded with Germany in October 2004⁹. Thus, even if the project of Eastern Dimension did not finally prosper, the Polish agenda for relations with Eastern neighbours was not abandoned.

3. Three explanations of Spanish and Polish positions on the ENP: national interests, institutional conditions and lessons drawing

This section examines the three possible groups of causes explaining the emergence of Spanish and Polish similar approaches to EU neighbourhood policies in the framework of the EFP: first, Spanish and Polish similar perceptions and the understanding of national interests regarding their respective neighbourhoods; second, the institutional environment of the EFP, which encourage similar ways to advance national Spanish and Polish priorities; and third, the existence of learning process in Poland drawing from former Spanish experiences in promoting the Mediterranean Dimension of the EFP.

3.1. National concerns at stake

The first explanation of the resemblance of Polish and Spanish priorities as regards the ENP might be explained by their analogous

⁹ In October 2004 Poland and Germany forwarded common proposals of how to strengthen the relations between Ukraine and the EU. These proposals included, among others, strengthening political and security dialogue, conclusion of new EU-Ukraine agreement, flexibility in existing visa regime, recognition of Ukraine as free-market economy, preparation to the agreement on free trade area between Ukraine and EU and participation of Ukraine in Internal Market (Rada Ministrów 2005: 33-34; Gromadzki *et al.* 2005: 14).

national concerns emerging from converging perceptions on the challenges and opportunities posed by their respective neighbourhoods. It is assumed that dominant national concerns constitute the basis for construction of national interests, driving motivations for national foreign policy actions. In Spanish as well as Polish cases these concerns are related to the security aspects of their respective foreign policies in the neighbourhood.

In the Spanish case, the Mediterranean dimension constitutes one of the fixed axes of the foreign policy, based both on the geographical proximity and historical tradition. Southern Mediterranean region and “autonomous scenarios of conflict” in Northern Africa represented the main source of security concerns and potential conflicts during the Spanish transition towards democracy initiated in 1970s (Ceuta, Melilla, Gibraltar straight, internal conflicts in Northern Africa, Canary Islands) (Morán 1980: 143-147, Viñas 1984; Fisas 1985: 143-144, 168-233; Alonso Zaldívar 1988: 71-73). The turning point in the Spanish perception of the Mediterranean region coincided with the end of the Cold War and the first war in the Persian Gulf. Two factors constitute the roots of the Spanish foreign policy in the Mediterranean region since the end of Cold War.

In first place, security concerns that had been traditionally characterized by military and territorial issues were reconsidered and redefined so as to include broader sources of security challenges and threats. Although previous military threats and challenges did not entirely disappear, Spanish concerns focused on “soft” security issues related to the possible negative externalities coming from the economic *décalage* between the both shores of Mediterranean basin: social instability, immigration pressures, Islamic fundamentalism and demographic boom in southern Mediterranean countries. In this sense, the perception of an increasing interdependence between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea, started to be seriously considered by Spanish foreign policy makers. Therefore, Spain was increasingly conscious that their security could be affected by negative spill-over effects arising from enduring political, economic and social crisis in the neighbouring region, and in consequence, the Mediterranean continued to be perceived as the main security priority (Grasa 1993; del Campo 1992, 1998; del Campo, Camacho 2003).

The events in the 21st century further reinforced the perception of the Mediterranean as a source of insecurity. The conflict with Morocco in July 2002 on the Island of Perejil-Leyla reaffirmed that Spanish territory interests in North Africa might be challenged also by a military conflict. Later on, as a consequence of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in United States and 11 March 2004 in Madrid, the fight against terrorism was placed on the top of Spanish priorities in the Mediterranean region. Additionally, the perception of insecurity increased with the enduring conflicts (especially Western Sahara) that confront the main powers of the region.

The second consequence of the changes in international system after the Cold War was the intensification of the Spanish “periphery syndrome” based on the perception that as a consequence of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the European political agenda would be absorbed exclusively by the concerns regarding Eastern Europe. This new situation have continuously aroused the Spanish concern that, being situated in the other end of the European continent, the country might be left alone with its particular concerns and problems originating in the Mediterranean. Therefore, Spain has ever since opposed to the tendency that Eastern Europe could turn out to be considered the most important challenge to the European security. From the early 1990s Spain defined its foreign policy in the framework of the EFP with the aim to balancing between Southern and Eastern dimensions of EU’s neighbourhood (Barbé 1998a) through the policy of advocating its own international objective, particularly in the Maghreb, promoting the Mediterranean issues in every of the European institutions and changing its security policy, with the purpose of participating in the core of the “international Europe” (Barbé 1996: 260). In view of these constrains and opportunities offered by the EU, the projections of national concerns and problem transfer (Torreblanca 2001) to the EU’s level was perceived as the rational approach to deal with issues that were hardly resolvable unilaterally outside the EFP realm.

Polish activity in promoting the Eastern Dimension of the EU also corresponds to specific security concerns originating from the Eastern neighbourhood of this country. It is due to various internal fac-

tors that Poland appears to be very active in the domain of the Eastern Dimension in the framework of the EFP.

Generally, Polish perception of its Eastern neighbourhood as a vital security area is grounded on historical experiences and geographical proximity to the potentially turbulent Eastern neighbourhood shape¹⁰. Despite the fact that the immediate consequence of the disintegration of the Soviet Union was confusion and uncertainty regarding the prospects of new states that emerged in the post-soviet space, Poland tried constantly to influence the developments of the situation on its Eastern border in order to secure the conditions for its newly acquired pro-Western orientation. Thus, this perception of challenges for Polish security emerged from both the weakness of authorities of the new post-soviet states and the possibility of return of hegemonic and expansionist tendencies in Russia (Kościuk 1993: 36-44; Kuźnir 1993: 15). The fundamental concern in the Polish perception was the prospect on the geopolitical constellation that could emerge as a consequence of the transformation processes in the post-soviet area. Consequently also the Polish “security strategy” from 1992 identified on its Eastern border the most important sources of external threats and challenges¹¹. As a result of this constellation of factors, the driving motivation of Polish foreign policy during 1990s was to avoid Poland and Central Europe becoming a buffer zone between the ex-Soviet Union countries and the West, that is to say, to avoid the reappearance of historically well-known risk to be sandwiched between a powerful Germany and Russia. Therefore, from the beginning of 1990s, Polish foreign and security strategic priorities were aimed at the accession to NATO and the EU in order to assure Polish security and create conditions to enhance economic and social transformations towards a stable and free market democracy. Polish Eastern policy was subsumed into this overshadowing strategic aim, but the conscience of interde-

¹⁰ Polish strategic culture, and hence Polish foreign and security activities, is motivated in great manner by historically-driven arguments and the construction and reconstruction of the past in Polish public discourse (Osica 2004).

¹¹ “Założenia polskiej polityki bezpieczeństwa oraz polityki bezpieczeństwa i strategii obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warszawa, 2 listopada 1992”, in: “Strategie bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski po 1989 roku”, *Zeszyty Akademii Dyplomatycznej*, 13, part II, Warszawa: Akademia Dyplomatyczna Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych 2004, pp. 15-16.

pendences between these two directions of Polish foreign policy was growing (Ziółkowski 2001: 37-38). This apparent contradiction was translated into the thesis that vigorous Polish Eastern policy would facilitate the integration of Poland into NATO and EU (Garnett 1997, Pavliuk 1997: 53) which in turn would counterbalance the most important challenges to Polish security situated on the East (Zięba 1997).

The emergence of new independent states on the Eastern border of Poland created absolutely new geostrategic conditions for its security and foreign policy. For example, from Polish perception the independent Ukraine prevents the recreation of “neo-imperial” tendencies in Russia and increases the security and independence of Poland from direct Russian interferences¹². Therefore, in Polish eyes, the emergence of an independent Ukraine, “new great power” in Europe, constituted “an absolutely new feature of Poland’s geopolitical environment, one of major qualitative significance” (Kościuk 1993: 42). Since 1991, Poland’s eastern policy was developed exclusively in the framework of bilateral relations with Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

The relations with Russia were throughout the 1990s immersed in constant crisis over Russian disagreement on NATO’s enlargement, and after a short period of visible improvement in 2002, the relations worsened due to Polish engagement in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Currently Russia constitutes the primary concern in Polish foreign policy since its policy, for example of energy supplies or its “near abroad” policy, is perceived as potentially harmful for Polish interests. Poland aimed at preventing the possibility that Russia might use Polish energetic dependence from Russian energy resources to blackmail Poland and other countries. Another concern regarding Russia was that this country could hinder Ukrainian processes of internal democratic transformations and the maintenance of a Euro-Atlantic-oriented foreign policy.

¹² Some analysts even argued that close relations between Poland and Ukraine constitute an extremely important new feature in the post-cold war system of European security (Brzeziński 1993; Pavliuk 1997).

In view of these divergences, Polish-Ukrainian relations have been plainly different from the Polish-Russian ones. Since mid-1990s Poland and Ukraine started to develop their relations in what was termed as “strategic partnership” (Burant 1999; Zięba 2002; Wolczuk, Wolczuk 2003). From the Polish point of view, Ukraine is the basic point of reference on its Eastern border, as this country constitutes a valuable partner to counter-balance the risks related to Russia. And for Poland a pro-European Ukraine is of strategic interest because it would permit to directly attach the biggest Eastern neighbour to the Euro-Atlantic system of security and to prevent Russia from recreating an imperial policy in its “near abroad”. Belarus, in its turn, constitutes the third point of reference in Polish Eastern policy. Due to the authoritarian regime in this country, the violation of minority rights of the Polish minority and criticisms to the Polish pro-Western policy, this country constitutes a permanent source of tensions.

In general, from the Polish point of view, Eastern neighbourhood constitutes the major source of challenges and risks to its security. These concerns appear to be an important motive to initiate actions directed to develop EU policies and strategies to address these issues.

3.2. Projection of national concerns in the EFP framework.

The second advanced explanation was that the EFP institutional setting encourages Spain and Poland to promote their priorities employing a similar range of mechanisms and arguments aimed at the incorporation of their proposals into the EFP agenda. In first place, diplomatic actions pursued by both states to promote their proposals comprise coalition building among states and other actors that could be “receptive” and/or “sensitive” to the issues raised¹³. Additionally to the employment of diplomatic resources of coalition building or gaining the institutions’ support, Spanish and Polish actions aimed at projecting their specific priorities were based on a preconceived argumentative discourse. In both cases actors attempt to convince

¹³ The undertakings to build a coalition to support a given policy include also EU institutions, mainly the European Commission and the European Parliament.

partners that their propositions are based on the legitimate defence of European and not only national interests.

Coalitions of “sensitiveness”

Spanish policy directed to promote Mediterranean issues in the EFP framework required continued diplomatic efforts, together with a great dose of flexibility to adapt to changing contexts inside and outside of the EU. According to Gillespie (1997: 40), Spain used the combination of alliance, pressure and compromise to achieve progress in the preparation of Barcelona Conference’s financial package. Spain assumed that the cooperation with Italy and France should contribute to “convince European countries that we should turn to the Mediterranean, towards the South, and design a policy that will also improve the European security and stability, through establishing mechanisms of economic, cultural, political cooperation with these countries, facing together the demographic and fundamentalism challenges that are threatening the stabilization of these countries and the calm in the Mediterranean” (Serra 1990: 204). In result of this coalition building strategy based on the assumed shared Mediterranean sensitiveness of some countries, “the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative should be seen more as a product, not of North-South partnership, but of Hispano-French and southern European countries, secured by González among others” (Gillespie 1997:46).

Spain has also consistently looked for support from the part of EU institutions. The role of national representatives in EU institutions has been crucial to translate Spanish particular concerns. The role of Spanish officials was particularly visible during the preparatory phase of the Barcelona Conference, when relevant positions in the European Commission were occupied by Spaniards¹⁴. But not only Spanish top-officials were involved into the launching of the Barcelona Process, but also distinct departments of the European Com-

¹⁴ For example, the current President of the Spanish Parliament, Manuel Marín, was the Commissioner in charge of relations with the Southern Mediterranean; current Spanish Special Ambassador for Mediterranean Affairs, Juan Prat worked for the Commission on the launching of the EMP. Before, Commissioner Abel Matutes was responsible for Mediterranean, North-South and Latin America relations.

mission dealing with Mediterranean issues were held by Spanish communitarian officials. Similarly, the committees and other bodies of the European Parliament relevant for the foreign policy actions were dominated by Spanish Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The Spanish interest has been especially evident in Spanish MEPs' participation in the interparliamentary delegations in that they have usually obtained the chairs or vice-chairs of the delegations for relations with the Maghreb (Herranz 2005: 93-94).

The Conference in Barcelona in November 1995 "represented an important diplomatic triumph for Spain that helped her emergence as a southern force within the EU", but on the other hand "it also tied Spain's external prestige very closely to the success or failure of the EMP, which was to be developed in a notoriously unpredictable part of the world" (Gillespie 2000: 156). This diplomatic success allowed Spain to gain leadership in the Mediterranean dimension of the EFP recognized by other actors. The direct involvement of Spaniards in the EU policy making towards the Mediterranean region explains also the attitude of "ownership" and responsibility for the progress and results of the Barcelona Process.

Poland promotes its ideas about the Eastern Dimensions of the EU by employing similar diplomatic and institutional resources as Spain. In order to build up wider coalition of states willing to enhance EU's relations with the Eastern neighbourhood, Poland also employed manifold diplomatic resources. Recently, the majority of these efforts have been focused on relations between the EU and Ukraine, so that Polish advocacy for an Eastern dimension has been replaced by the support of the "European perspective for Ukraine".

Due to the fact that the debate on the ENP took place before Poland's accession to the EU, many of these actions were developed outside the framework of the EU. Especially visible was the Polish activity in the framework of several Central European subregional and regional organizations. Poland tried to gain advantage when holding the presidencies of these organizations in order to frame the agenda of the political debates. This is the case of Poland's Presidency term of the Central Europe Initiative (CEI) in 2003, when Poland proposed to evaluate together with the EU institutions the role of the CEI in the future Eastern Dimension of the EU. Political

meetings in the frameworks of the organization were dominated by the debates on the Eastern Dimension of the EU and the ENP. During the Polish Presidency in the Council of States of the Baltic Sea (2004/2005), Poland also indicated the need to involve this organization into the debate on the ENP and the Eastern Dimension. And finally, the Polish Presidency of the Visegrád Group (2004/2005) was considered as a useful framework of cooperation between the members of the group on issues related to the Eastern Dimension and it is expected to contribute to the debate on the ENP (Visegrád Group 2004a). During and after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Visegrád Group already issued statements supporting the “European perspective” for Ukraine (Visegrád Group 2004b, 2005). And finally, Poland looked for support for their propositions during the meetings held in the framework of the Weimar Triangle.

On the other hand, Poland was also trying to get support from other individual EU member states. During the debate on the ENP, it emerged an informal group of states (the so-called E-11 caucus) interested in the Eastern Dimension of the EU in broad sense, and especially in relations between the EU and Ukraine¹⁵. Polish cooperation with other member states was especially active during the Orange Revolution crisis when Poland worked together with Lithuania and Germany and in further phases, it presented various joint initiatives on enhancing relations between the EU and Ukraine. It seems that, despite their differences, Poland perceive Lithuania and Germany as the main two partners to pursue EU policy towards Ukraine¹⁶.

Since its accession to the EU, Poland also made use of the EU institutions in order to gain support for its preferred policies. Despite that the EP is deserved a secondary role in the general architecture of ENP, it constitutes a central arena for Polish lobbying on how to implement this policy. Cooperation between Polish MEPs from dif-

¹⁵ This group of states that are “involved and feel the Eastern policy” (EuroPAP 2004) comprises Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. However, the establishment of this informal group was criticized by other EU member states and institutions (Gromadzki *et al.* 2005: 15).

¹⁶ The prospects of Polish-Germany cooperation in issues related to Ukraine are analyzed by Fałkowski and Lang (2004).

ferent political groups has contributed to an increasing awareness of the EP of the issues related to Ukraine or Belarus. Similarly to the Spanish case, Polish MEPs predominate in the inter-parliamentary delegations with Eastern European states. Again, a Polish MEP, Konrad Szymański, was nominated as EP's rapporteur on the regulation establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. On the other hand, this use of the European Parliament's instruments was especially visible also during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. This case was assessed by MEPs and members of the EP's Secretariat as an example of how the European Parliament ought to function during international crisis (Herranz 2005: 91-93). And finally, in January 2005 Polish MEPs were the initiators of an EP resolution that called the Council and Commission "to consider at the same time a revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, which must take account of the new situation, thus giving the new Ukrainian Government the opportunity to renegotiate the Plan in the light of its deep aspirations for European integration" (European Parliament 2005)¹⁷. Nationality of EU officials in other institutions also seems to have important role. For example, in spite of the fact that the Polish Commissioner, Danuta Hübner, deals with regional policy, she was also active in adopting positions supporting the EU perspectives of Ukraine¹⁸.

Discourse on "European interests"

During the promotion of Mediterranean agenda, Spanish diplomats assumed that their objective was to "constantly remember to the other European countries that the calm in the Mediterranean and the guarantee of the security and stability in the countries of the South of Europe is vital for the security of the entire Europe" (Serra 1990: 204). Spain, by trying to convince the other European partners of the legitimacy of these claims, wanted to avoid the criticism that the country was trying to impose its particular visions of the issue at

¹⁷ In result of these pressures, the EU-Ukraine Action Plan was amended in February and ten additional measures were included by the EU (Council of the European Union 2005a: 13-14).

¹⁸ For example, in the 25 February 2005 Danuta Hübner stated that Ukraine together with Turkey would become member of the UE as far as in 2015 (EuroPAP 2005b). This reference was highly criticised by European politics as a too far-reaching promise, and actually is not included in the text of the delivered speech.

stake. In this sense, Gillespie argues that “Spanish officials invariably insist that they never set out to dominate the Mediterranean policy-making of the EU, but rather to convince fellow member states that the Mediterranean is a European problem, requiring a collective response in the interests of Europe’s own stability” (Gillespie 1997: 34). In order to convince other actors of EFP Spanish representatives have employed various arguments in order to gain support for a greater involvement in the Mediterranean. However, the most frequent are those that indicate “European responsibility in the Mediterranean”; the need “to guarantee and to strengthen the European integration” through the solution of the Mediterranean challenge; and the dichotomy of “challenges and opportunities” that represent the Mediterranean for Europe.

The “responsibility” of the EU for intensifying relations with Mediterranean is justified in Spanish discourse by historical, geographical, economic, political and cultural reasons. But the “responsibility” of the EU for strengthening the relations with the Maghreb countries also comes from the fact that the EU is a victim of its own success since the EU acquired an important role in the international relations. Consequently, due to the “power of attraction” of the EU, it should assume its responsibility on the direct neighbourhood (González Navarro 1992). Spain has also emphasised that stable relations with the Maghreb countries would be beneficial for increasing the efficiency of the EFP or even for the success of the entire European integration. In this way, Primer Minister González stated that “Europe cannot complete its construction without previously attempting to solve the accumulated problems in North Africa” (Barbé 1999: 55). And more than ten years later, a Spanish official stated that “the future of our Southern Mediterranean partners will determine the external dimension of the European construction” (Nadal 2002). In the Spanish discourse, the “failure” of the EU in the Mediterranean threatens the achieved progress of the EU integration and poses a threat to the future development of the EU integration.

Spanish representatives, additionally to these symbolic arguments, also employed arguments of more pragmatic nature in the sense that the Mediterranean offers many unexplored opportunities to the EU. Spanish officials have also insisted on underlining the various inter-

dependencies between Europe and the Mediterranean, for example, the level of economic interdependences in terms of trade, which are favourable to the EU, countries or the level of energetic dependence of Europe. With these arguments, Spanish officials have tried to counterbalance the perceived shift of the EU interest towards Eastern Europe. For example, before the Barcelona Conference, Felipe González complained that the economic involvement of the EU in Eastern Europe was bigger than that in the Mediterranean (Tovias 1999: 228).

Polish discourse on the Eastern Dimension since 2001 has also been based on a preconceived set of arguments directed to the other EU partners (Haukkala 2002: 28). The analysis of documents and discourses indicate that the Polish discourse is based on some recurrent arguments aimed at increasing the legitimacy of their proposals. Poland pretended to present the proposal of the Eastern Dimension as an opportunity to strengthen the “cohesion and coordination” of the EFP. Poland presented itself as the viable intermediary in relations with Eastern neighbours indicating good relationship with these countries thus being in a position of “good advocate of their integration with Europe” (Cimoszewicz 2003b: 8) and presented itself as a case of successful economic and political transformation that might serve as example for other Eastern European states. Additionally, good knowledge of the region and the experience and know-how of Polish institutions, experts and NGOs was considered in Poland to be useful for Eastern countries and moreover it “can perhaps bring some new, fresh ideas to the discussion” in the EU (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 86).

The need of establishing a separate Eastern Dimension of the EU was justified by the need to “abolish the existing dividing lines” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003: 85) or preventing the appearance of “any new dividing lines between our newly born Europe in Copenhagen and the rest of the continent” (Cimoszewicz 2003b: 7). However, in the Polish discourse about the Eastern Dimension, the arguments about “responsibility”, “future of European integration” or “challenges and opportunities” also constitute the core of the argumentative resources. According to Danuta Hübner, the EU will become a global power but considering its nearest neighbourhood as its main area of responsibility (Hübner 2002: 5). The European

responsibility was grounded on Polish conviction that without its Eastern neighbours the project of European integration would be incomplete since these countries are European in terms not only geographical, but also historical and cultural (Cimoszewicz 2004: 20). As stated by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, “the East of Europe remains important for the future of the entire continent” and “the Eastern Dimension of the European Union should constitute one of the major pillars of the EU global profile”. Therefore, the prospect for Eastern Europe is also the strategic interests for the EU since the situation in these countries might impact on the whole European integration process.

3.3. Lesson drawing among EU’s member states

The similarities between Spanish and Polish performance in the framework of the EU neighbourhood policy might be explained by Poland’s process of lesson-drawing from the Spanish experiences in promoting the Mediterranean dimension of the EFP. The point of departure of a lesson-drawing process is normally the domestic dissatisfaction with current policies and domestic status quo, which motivates policymakers to engage in a process of learning from abroad. Four degrees of adaptation of transferred programs and policy models through lessons-drawing can be distinguished: “copying (direct and complete transfer), emulation (adoption, with adjustment to different circumstances, of a program already in effect elsewhere, or the transfer of the ideas behind the program), combination (mixtures of policies from different places), and inspiration (another program inspiring policy change with the final outcome not drawing on the original)” (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier 2005: 21).

Polish proposals of putting in place the Eastern Dimension of the EU were usually attributed to the Finnish example of advancing the Northern Dimensions of the EU. However it was concluded that this model was not fully extrapolable to Polish proposals since the motives underlying the Northern Dimension were hardly transferable to the Polish proposed Eastern Dimension (Haukkala 2002: 26-28;

Browning, Joenniemi 2003; Makarychev 2004)¹⁹. Additional explanation of why the Northern Dimension was not fully adopted in Polish proposals might be that some Spanish experiences in promoting the European Mediterranean policy were also studied in Poland. This line of exploring the interaction between Eastern and Mediterranean Dimension is grounded also on the fact that Spanish experiences in democratic transformation as well as European integration constituted an important reference for Polish own transformation process as well as European policy since the beginning of 1990s (Bernatowicz 1993). Additionally, this explanation is sustained by the fact that many actors involved in Polish foreign policy made multiple references to the Spanish case when the Polish European policy and the Eastern Dimension were discussed. Therefore, the additional source of explanation of some similarities between Polish and Spanish approaches to the European Neighbourhood Policy lies in the concepts of lesson-drawing and imitation.

At the beginning of 2001, Poland's foreign policy was dominated by the perception of failure of its Eastern policy as well as a feeling of disappointment and impotence. The public debate on Polish Eastern policy raised the need of reconsidering this policy in view of new challenges and opportunities created by the internal situation in Eastern neighbours and the accession to the EU. Many authors indicated that the implementation of Polish ambitious objectives of its Eastern policy could not be supported by sufficient instruments and resources. Therefore, Poland's internal debate about its own Eastern policy evolved towards the consideration that the accession to the EU was a decisive factor that would affect positively the future of the Polish Eastern policy bringing new opportunities to attain Polish objectives (Najder 2001; Fundacja Stefan Batory 2001; Bachmann 2001; Wóycicki 2001). As a result of this internal debate, various Polish think-thanks presented well-elaborated propositions concerning the future of the relations between the enlarged EU and its new Eastern neighbours (Cichocki *et al.* 2002; Harasimowicz, Żurawski vel Grajewski 2003; Pełczyńska-Nałęcz *et al.* 2003; Gromadzki *et al.* 2003). Many of the ideas expressed in these proposi-

¹⁹ Due to this fact, the compatibility between Northern Dimension and Eastern Dimension was also questioned. Polish official documents reflect rather ambiguous position on the future compatibility between those two dimensions.

tions were discussed in multiple conferences and seminars with participations of Polish diplomats and further reflected in Polish official proposals.

In view of these concerns on Polish Eastern policy, various authors indicated Spain as an example of how an EU member state is projecting its specific traditional foreign policy concerns (Nowakowski 1998: 9; Paszewski 2003: 14; Fundacja Stefan Batory 2001: 11). According to one of the proposals on Eastern Dimension of the EU, “it would be difficult to imagine the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy vis-à-vis Morocco or Latin America being formulated without Spain’s participation. In a similar way, Poland should be involved in the shaping of the EU policy vis-à-vis Kyiv, Moscow or Minsk” (Harasimowicz, Żurawski vel Grajewski 2003: 4)²⁰. Indeed, some experiences of the Barcelona Process and Northern Dimension were indicated when the future Eastern Dimension of the EU was debated in Poland (Jesień 2002). Some experts pointed out that Poland in order to learn from Spanish experiences should strengthen its interests in Mediterranean Dimension of the EU and examine Spanish policy in this region as well as cooperate with this country in some issues regarding the ENP (Wojna 2004: 1207). Already in 2001, various Polish think-thanks signalled the Barcelona Process as an example of the method to engage neighbours in cooperation with the EU (Instytut Spraw Publicznych 2001: 8). However, it should be stressed that Spanish experiences were not studied thoroughly in Poland, but rather constituted a source of inspiration for the role that Poland could play in the EFP.

This inspiration is even more salient among Polish policy-makers than among the experts. Polish politicians promoting the Eastern Dimension in multiple occasions presented Spanish example as a precedent of successful projection of national concerns in the EFP framework. Therefore not only Poland does not question the existence of a strong Mediterranean Dimension but also publicly acknowledges that the Eastern Dimension of the EU should build on the experiences derived from the Barcelona Process (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003: 87). In this sense, some even state that the

²⁰ It is worth noting the use of this argument by the Polish president when the Eastern Dimension of the EU was presented (Kwaśniewski 2003: 11).

Barcelona Process provides them with good reason for insisting in the creation of an Eastern Dimension since “there is nothing equivalent to the Barcelona Process in the present EU policy towards the Eastern neighbours – there are no assistance agreements or assistance instruments comparable to those provided within the MEDA programme (...) the EU relations with its Eastern European countries are significantly different from those of the Mediterranean partners” (Cimoszewicz 2003d: 4). At the same time Poland refused the argument that the EU enlargement would have negative effects on the Barcelona Process.

As argued by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “cooperation between Spain and Poland might bring possibilities of mutual learning and enhancing the presence of both countries in Eastern and Southern neighbourhood of the EU” (Cimoszewicz 2003e). Poland expressed its support to the Barcelona Process and claimed that its experiences in transformation and “excellent” relations with many countries of the Mediterranean region could be a positive input to this policy. Therefore, Spanish experiences with its neighbourhood served as a source of inspiration for Polish considerations on the future Eastern Dimension of the EU. The most important lessons from the Spanish experiences learned by Poland are that Eastern Dimension of the EU should be a Polish specialization in the framework of the EFP as the Mediterranean Dimension is a Spanish specialization. Additionally, the idea that Poland might play an important role in the EU policy in the Middle East is grounded on the traditionally very good relations between Poland and both Arabic countries and Israel started to gain supporters. In this sense, EU involvement in the Mediterranean basin is perceived as a suitable “resonance box” to emphasize Polish policy in the region (Waszczykowski 2004: 48-49) and in this way to balance Poland’s involvement in “American projects” in the region – Iraq war. On the other hand, according to Spanish and Polish diplomats both countries started to share their experiences in dealing with respective neighbouring countries during their bilateral relations in 2003. Spanish-Polish bilateral summits at the level of governments included discussions on ENP related issues (EuroPAP 2005a) and diplomatic meetings at the level of official focused on the Barcelona Process, EU policy towards Middle East peace process and ENP.

4. Conclusions

This article was intended to examine Spanish and Polish proposals for European Neighbourhood Policy and to find out the origins of their resemblances. The article advances three sources of explanation (national interests, institutional environment and lessons drawing), arguing that all of them have played a role in determining Spanish and Polish positions on the EU policy towards neighbouring areas.

The option of uploading Spanish and Polish national concerns related to the neighbourhood is based on the analogous awareness about their geopolitical marginal situation in Europe. In both cases, the direct stimuli to their active policy of promotion of their respective neighbourhood agendas arise from security considerations. These security considerations include both “hard” military as well as “soft” security concerns. Similarly, both countries attempt to avoid the situation of being placed in the periphery of the continent and facing these challenges alone. On the other hand, both countries also perceive their geographical situation as an opportunity to Europeanize their national concerns related to the neighbourhood and to exploit them in order to increase their role in the framework of EFP.

In order to advance their agendas, both countries pursue action aimed at gaining support from other actors of the EFP. In the discursive argumentation of these proposals, the predominant objective is that of the “Europeanisation” of the issues at stake in order to present them as important to the common project of the EU integration. Both countries try to push forward their own agenda to the top of the EFP agenda due to the fact that strategic priorities might be rewarded with sufficient financial support. Additionally, leadership in these specific initiatives serve as a tool to increase the country’s prestige in the EFP.

In effect, Poland refers to Spanish experiences in promoting the Barcelona Process as an inspiration for the Polish positioning in the making the Eastern policy of the EU. Therefore, even if the project of establishing the Eastern Dimension of the EU was not accepted, it might be expected that specific ideas that were presented will

serve as the background for Polish initiatives when the EU will address questions connected to this geographical area. Bearing in mind these objectives, Poland stresses its recognition of the roles played by Spain in the Mediterranean Dimension since it aspires to acquire similar position in Eastern policy of the EU. This Polish ambition to become a leading actor in the EU neighbourhood policy might be assessed both as a positive input for the development of a sound European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as a source of divergence that could consolidate the new cleavage between the Eastern and Southern EU member states.

Finally, in further research should be considered the question if Spanish and Polish policies in their respective neighbourhood represent a challenge for ENP during its implementation phase. Spain and Poland have different sensibilities and foreign policy traditions, which might constitute a potential source of divergence and rivalry within the EU. The fact that Poland and Spain focus on their respective direct neighbourhoods constitutes potential source of incoherence and inefficiency in the relations of the EU with neighbouring countries (despite similarities of Spanish and Polish proposals regarding European policy towards neighbourhood). This question emerges from observations made during the phase of conceptual preparation of the ENP. The answer to these questions depends on the research to be made during the phase of the full implementation of the ENP mechanisms and instruments and assessing their results.

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