



France and Poland in and around Europe - Reengaging together strategically

June 17-18 - Wojnowice, Poland

SUNDAY, JUNE 16

- 13:00-23:00 **Participants' Arrival**
- 16:00-18:00 **Collective visit of Wroclaw (optional)**
- 19:00 **Welcoming dinner (optional)**

MONDAY, JUNE 17

- 10:00-10:30 **Welcoming remarks, introduction of participants, description of the project agenda**
Speakers: Laurynas Vaičiūnas, President, Kolegium Europy Wschodniej
Romain Le Quiniou, co-Founder, Euro Créative
- 10:30-12:00 **Roundtable #1: France and Poland – New Beginning at Times of War**

The relation between France and Poland is profound and historic. However, since 1990s, despite the return of Poland in Europe, bilateral relations between Paris and Warsaw have remained largely underdeveloped. Various factors have contributed to this situation, including mutual misunderstandings, a lack of French interest for Central and Eastern Europe, political disagreements, and the progressive weakening of societal and cultural links. Nevertheless, the importance of these countries at EU level and their developed economic relationship highlight significant potential for growth. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, coupled with the return of Donald Tusk as Prime Minister and the establishment of a pro-EU government, along with France's strategic update regarding the CEE region, favor a resurgence if not a momentum for this bilateral relation. With compatible visions on a more strategic Europe and a shared commitment to strengthening European defense, Poland and France are currently rebuilding their relationship both bilaterally and through minilateral formats such as the Weimar Triangle. Meanwhile, Paris and Warsaw are preparing a historic bilateral treaty designed to elevate their relationship to a new level. What is the current state of Franco-Polish relations? What are the key actors and the main tools driving this relationship? What should be the main areas of cooperation to be developed in the forthcoming bilateral treaty? And finally, what are the perspectives for the future of this bilateral relationship, especially after the June national election in France?

Inputs: Prof. Tomasz Orłowski- Former ambassador to France and Italy, Deputy minister of Foreign Affairs (12 mins)
Pierre Haroche, Lecturer in International Relations & International Security, Queens Mary University, Associate Research fellow, Jacques Delors Institute (12 mins)

Moderation: *Laurynas Vaičiūnas, President, Kolegium Europy Wschodniej*

12:00-13:00 **Lunch**

13:00-14:30 **Roundtable #2: Future of Transatlantic Relations – Developing the European Pillar of NATO**

In the context of Transatlantic relations, France and Poland are traditionally seen as having different perspectives. Poland is regarded as the most pro-US and pro-NATO country in Europe, viewing its national security, and European security more broadly, as reliant primarily on Transatlantic relations. Conversely, France has often been critical of NATO, advocating for a vision of European security based on strategic autonomy or at least through the development of European capacities predominantly. This longstanding misunderstanding peaked in the late 2010s, marked by significant divergences on the development of European security. President Macron's remarks on the “brain death of NATO” symbolized this turbulent period in Franco-Polish relations. While differences persist, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and rising uncertainties within Transatlantic relations, including regarding upcoming US elections, have fostered increased strategic convergence between Paris and Warsaw in defense and security. And despite remaining differences, there is a growing consensus that European security should be bolstered by enhancing the capacities and budgets of all European nations and strengthening the European pillar within NATO. What are the remaining differences between France and Poland regarding transatlantic relations? How important are NATO and the US regarding Eastern flank security? How can France and Poland adapt to a diminishing focus of the United States on European security? How can France and Poland contribute to the development of the European pillar within NATO? What are the perspectives regarding upcoming NATO Summit in Washington?

Inputs: Agnieszka Legucka, Senior Research Fellow, Polish Institute of International Affairs, PISM (12 mins)
Gaspard Schnitzler, Research Director Program Defence Industry and Security, IRIS (12 mins)

Moderation: *Romain Le Quiniou, co-Founder, Euro Créative*

14:30-14:45 **Coffee Break**

14:45-16:15 **Roundtable #3 – ‘Europe Puissance’ – Strategic Visions for a Stronger Europe**

For a long time, France has developed its strategic vision for the future of Europe. President Macron delivered two historic speeches at the Sorbonne, one in 2017 and a recent one in 2024. While both speeches were ambitious, there is now a sense of urgency for a stronger and more strategic Europe as we collectively face increasing strategic and threatening challenges. Poland, on the other hand, has typically been less vocal about its ambitions at the European level, focusing instead on national development after its

adhesion to the EU and subsequently focusing on a regional strategy in the CEE region. The return of a pro-European coalition in Warsaw since 2023 has sparked new ambitions at the EU level and open new perspectives. Given the current dysfunctions within the Franco-German engine, Poland has a greater opportunity to play a key role at the EU level. With a shared ambition to strengthen Europe, France and Poland can enhance their cooperation in various fields, including defense and security, energy, enlargement policies, institutional reforms, industry and innovation, as well as digital and environmental transitions. With the recent European elections and the forthcoming appointment of a new European Commission, it is an opportune time to build strategic cooperation between France and Poland facilitating the development of stronger and more strategic Europe. What are the main factors of convergence and the key disagreements between France and Poland when it comes to EU developments? Can Paris and Warsaw lead a strategic awakening of the European Union? Can they stimulate the EU as an international actor? How can France and Poland conciliate enlargement and key institutional reforms?

Inputs: Marek Grela, PhD, Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland (12 mins)

Joséphine Staron, Director of Studies and International Affairs, Synopia (12 mins)

Moderation: Łukasz Maślanka, Analyst, Centre of Eastern Studies, OSW

16:15-16:30 **Coffee Break**

16:30-18:00 **Roundtable #4 – Navigating Global Instability and Facing a New World Order Together**

The 21st century is increasingly characterized by instability, as Europe faces a rapid deterioration of international security, including in its own security environment. What once seemed unthinkable now appears ever more likely. The global system is evolving, with new actors emerging, often posing threats to European interests. These changes bring greater instability and fewer security guarantees, reducing the influence of the West in international affairs, and consequently diminishing Europe's role in international politics, economics, and culture. This evolving landscape also calls into question certain features of the international system, such as the growing irrelevance of UN institutions, the West's inability, or non-willingness to resolve regional crises in the Middle East or Africa, and an increased incapacity to address emerging threats like disinformation, cybersecurity, terrorism, economic security (chain of supplies, energy and raw materials, etc.). What are the perceptions in France and in Poland regarding the evolution of the international system? What are the future roles of Paris, Warsaw or Brussels within it? Is it possible to defend the international rules-based order together? How can Paris and Warsaw cooperate in the development of European capacities at international level to both protect Europe against threats and help Europe to benefits from new opportunities? Furthermore, how can Poland and France cooperate in formulating new approaches and engaging with the Global South?

Inputs: Prof. Michał Lubina, Lecturer, Jagiellonian University (12 mins)

François Heisbourg, Special Advisor, FRS (12 mins)

Moderation: Arthur Kenigsberg, President, Euro Créative

18:30-20:00 **Dinner and Night Owl Talk**

Speaker: Anna Radwan-Röhrenscheff, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland

21:00-23:00 **Football match France-Austria or leisure time**

TUESDAY, JUNE 18

09:00-10:15 **Roundtable #5 – Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, Central Asia – Facing Direct Security Threats and Building Strategic Presence in the Eastern Neighborhood**

Significant developments are unfolding in the Eastern neighborhood, marked by growing instability. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia has deteriorated considerably the security situation on the European continent, but instability is also present in various places of Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. This instability also coincides with a deterioration of democratic standards in the region, including in pro-EU countries such as Georgia. However, there are also opportunities, such as the renewed prospects for EU enlargement, particularly towards Ukraine and Moldova, which many Europeans now see as a strategic necessity. Additionally, there are emerging prospects in Central Asia for Europeans which have been reluctant to engage strategically over the past decades. The level of engagement between France and Poland in this region has historically differed. Poland has been a traditionally active player in the Eastern neighborhood, especially in supporting countries from the Eastern Partnership with Euro-Atlantic ambitions like Ukraine and Georgia. In contrast, France has been more reserved but has focused its engagement on specific countries such as Armenia and Kazakhstan for specific reasons. What are the level and nature of engagement in Eastern neighborhood of France and Poland? Is there a potential for cooperation in Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and/Central Asia? What about Black Sea region and the cooperation with key allies such as Romania or Ukraine? How can Poland and France work together to rebuild security architecture in Eastern Europe and make European enlargement a reality for the region?

Inputs: Agnieszka Bryc, PhD, Lecturer, Nicolaus Copernicus University (12 mins)
Lyudmyla Tautiyeva, Policy Analyst, European Future Innovation System (12 mins)

Moderation: Adam Balcer, Program Director, KEW

10:15-10:30 **Coffee Break**

10:30-11:45 **Roundtable #6 – MENA and Sahel Region – Limiting Impact of Security Threats in the Southern Neighborhood**

The security situation in the Southern Neighborhood has been rapidly deteriorating over the past decade, affecting both the MENA region and Africa, particularly the Sahel region. Underdevelopment and economic tensions are fueling crises, while Europeans seem unable to address the proliferation of security threats ranging from migration flows to terrorism activities. These crises significantly impact European security, especially in Southern European countries. Fifteen years after the Arab Spring, the situation is now chaotic in several countries with ongoing civil wars (Libya, Syria) increasing numbers of states experiencing coups d'état (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger) and deterioration of

democratic and governance standards in most of the countries from these regions. France, historically a significant actor in the region, is seeing its presence diminish, particularly in the Sahel, where it has been involved for a long time in security cooperation and counter-terrorism operations but is now being pushed back amidst spreading anti-French and, to some extent, anti-Western sentiments. Poland, although less engaged in the region, has the potential for a more strategic role, opening possibilities for cooperation on regional issues beyond the Eastern Neighborhood. The presence of Russia in these regions also help to bring strategic convergence between France and Poland on the necessity to cooperate in the Southern neighborhood. What are the level and nature of engagement in Southern neighborhood of France and Poland? What are the perspectives for the Sahel region following France's withdrawal, and what are the implications for the region and Europe? What is the reality of Russia's threat in Southern neighborhood, in particular in Sahel? How can France and Poland stimulate a European strategy towards the MENA region and Africa?

Inputs: Karolina Zielińska, PhD, Lecturer, Vistula University (12 mins)
Fiona Schnell, Directrice générale, Institut International des Droits de l'Homme et de la Paix (12 mins)

Moderation: Aurélien Duchêne, Research Fellow, Euro Créative

11:45-12:15 **Conclusions**

12:30-13:30 **Lunch**

13:30 **Participants' departure**