



STRATEGIC FILE

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Sixty Years of Poland–India Relations: Towards a Genuine Partnership?

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Relations between Poland and India are 60 years old, and have been traditionally described as “close and cordial.”¹ Their history can be broadly divided into two periods—one between 1954 and 1989, and the second after 1989. Whereas the first is sometimes regarded as a golden age in Polish–Indian ties, the latter is seen more as a time of mutual disengagement and negligence. However, during the last a few years, we have observed the beginning of a third era, with renewed efforts to revive stronger cooperation. Trade is again on a clear upward trend, and high-level meetings take place more often. In fact, for the first time, both countries are fully independent and strong enough to create a robust and genuine partnership.

India has made major progress over the last two decades, and is now the 10th largest economy (it is predicted that it will emerge as the third largest by 2032).² It is a rising global power with growing influence on global affairs, including the G20, security issues, trade talks and climate negotiations. Massive investment in Indian infrastructure, industry and human capital have attracted the interest of foreign companies, and may help not only to transform India, but also to provide a new stimulus for the global economy. Undoubtedly, India matters more in international affairs and economy than at any time before.

Poland, albeit the smaller partner, should feel no complexes in relations with India. Strategically located in Europe, it is now the sixth largest economy of the European Union, with increasing political influence in the EU and Central Europe. A member of NATO, Poland is also a strategic dialogue partner for both the United States and China. It is the 24th largest economy in the world, and the only one in the EU that did not fall into recession following the financial crisis of 2008, proving the solid foundations of its economic growth. With its robust economy, Poland too will matter more in the global affairs.

As both countries have made good use of the last two decades for domestic transformation and strengthening their international position, they seem to be ready for closer bilateral relations. The shape and character of these relations will depend on the ability of both governments to formulate anew the strategic premises for cooperation, and to dedicate extra effort to revive the traditional friendship. The current 60th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations offers an opportunity to take stock of the past cooperation and draw from this the best lessons for the future.

¹ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, “India–Poland Relations,” *Briefs on Foreign Relations*, updated August 2013, New Delhi, www.mea.gov.in.

² D. Wilson, R. Purushothaman, “Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050,” *Goldman Sachs Global Economics Paper*, no. 99, October 2003.

Friendship under the Soviet Shadow: 1954–1989

Although Polish–Indian contacts are much older, with a Polish Consulate in Bombay in British India functioning since 1933, official diplomatic relations were established only on 30 March 1954, when the Cold War, which impacted heavily on bilateral ties, was in full swing. India's gradual drift towards the USSR since the 1950s, despite its official policy of non-alignment, was eventually confirmed by the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1971, and provided conducive conditions for Polish–Indian relations to flourish under the umbrella of the USSR. As a member of the communist bloc, and with only limited options to engage with the West, Poland found India an important partner among developing countries. For India, Poland became an additional source of defence equipment, machinery, and industrial projects, especially in energy and mining.

Political dialogue kicked off with the first successful visit of an Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, to Warsaw in June 1955. By the end of the Cold War, two more Indian prime ministers had visited Poland (Indira Gandhi in October 1967, and Morarji Desai in June 1979), as well as two Indian presidents (Varahagiri Venkata Giri in June 1970, and Giani Zail Singh in November 1986). In the opposite direction, Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz twice travelled from Poland to India in 1957 and in 1960, Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz in 1973, Edward Gierek—first secretary of the PZPR (Polish United Workers Party) in 1977, and Prime Minister General Wojciech Jaruzelski in February 1985. During the first 30 years of relations, there were 11 top-level meetings, and many more ministerial and parliamentary exchanges.³ In 1973, both sides signed a declaration of friendship and cooperation, which set a framework of close cooperation based on principles of “peaceful coexistence of states with different socio-political systems.” It was also agreed that regular consultations would be held, “to exchange views on international problems of mutual concern,” and such meetings consequently took place, especially between ministers of foreign affairs at annual sessions of the UN General Assembly.⁴

Bilateral relations were free of problems and controversies, with open support on crucial national issues. Poland supported India's stance on conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir, and accepted the view that this problem should be resolved bilaterally; it recognised Indian accession of Goa from Portugal in 1961, and endorsed Indian intervention in East Pakistan in 1971, to “end a humanitarian crisis.” Additionally, Poland was the sixth country in the world to recognise an independent Bangladesh, on 12 January 1972. On the other side, India voiced a positive response to the Rapacki Plan of nuclear disarmament in Europe, suggested by the Polish foreign minister at the UN General Assembly in 1957, and the recognised Poland–Germany border on Oder and Neisse in 1961.

Poland and India cooperated quite actively at the multi-lateral level, and often lent mutual support at international forums. Poland acknowledged India's role in the Non-Aligned Movement, and both sides held “identical or very close” views on most of international challenges.⁵ They presented similar perspectives on the American war in Vietnam and conflict in the Middle East, criticised Western imperialism, called for decolonisation and universal disarmament, supported the United Nations, and condemned any forms of discrimination and racism. As calculated by one Polish author, for example, 127 out of 147 (86%) controversial resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly in 1984 saw Poland and India vote identically.⁶ Both countries cooperated as members of the international commissions on Korea (1953–1954) and Indochina (1954–1974).⁷ Polish and Indian personnel have served hand in hand on UN peacekeeping missions, including, in the Golan Heights (UNDOF), Liban (UNIFIL) and Cambodia (UNAMIC and UNTAC).⁸

³ W. Góralski, *Poland–India: Political, Economic and Cultural Problems*, Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, 1987, p. 14.

⁴ B. Wizimirska, J. Danielewski, “Indie jako polityczny i gospodarczy partner Polski” [‘India as a political and economic partner of Poland’], *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, nr 7/8, 1977, p. 12.

⁵ D. Fikus, *Polska–Indie: gospodarka, stosunki ekonomiczne* [‘Poland–India: economy and economic relations’], Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa, 1976, p. 183.

⁶ W. Góralski, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–28.

⁷ The International Repatriation Commission in Korea was formed in July 1953 with five members: Poland, India, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. The International Commission of Control and Supervision in Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam was formed in 1954 and was functioning until 1975 (with a break in 1959–1961).

⁸ For more details see: www.unmissions.org.

Friendly political relations soon paved the way for fruitful cooperation in the economic field, and the first economic cooperation agreement was signed in 1949. Polish trade missions were opened in Bombay and Calcutta in 1955, and these were subsequently upgraded to Consulates in 1960. Beginning from 1 January 1959, bilateral trade was based on bilateral clearing in non-convertible rupee. Poland also provided an economic assistance in the form of three government loans (in 1960, 1962, 1965), amounting to \$85 million, for the purchase of investment goods and equipment for several industrial plants.⁹ In January 1972 the Polish–Indian Mixed Commission for Economic, Technical and Scientific Cooperation (with four working groups on trade, mining and energy, industrial cooperation and scientific-technical cooperation), was established, and met almost annually until 1989 to oversee cooperation and plan its expansion into new areas.

As a result of these efforts, trade increased from abysmal 3.4 million Polish zloty (PLZ) in 1953 to 59.8 million PLZ (or US\$ 6.8 million) in 1956, and 200 million PLZ (US\$ 47 million) in 1965 (see Appendix: Table 1).¹⁰ Its value picked up in 1974 to 578.9 million PLZ (US\$ 165 million), then to 702.8 million PLZ (US\$ 233 million) in 1975. Between 1962 and 1975 India emerged as Poland's largest trade partner among all developing countries, responsible for one sixth of the all Polish trade with these states.¹¹ In 1974, India's share in Polish trade amounted to 0.7% of Polish exports and 0.9% of Polish imports. India was Poland's 20th largest trade partner in the world. For India, Poland was 11th as trade partner, and second, after the USSR, in the socialist block. Its share in India's exports was 2.1%, with 1.9% of imports.¹² Trade had decreased by the turn of the decades, due to internal problems in both countries, and a changing international context, but bounced back to 59.2 million PLZ, US\$ 187 million (1% of total Polish trade) in 1987.

Poland imported from India mostly raw materials and agricultural products such as raw jute, raw cotton, iron ore, groundnut oil, pepper, tea, and textiles. Major items exported to India differed across the decades, but most important were machinery, rolling stock and railway infrastructure, cement, steel, coal, sulphur and artificial fertilisers, equipment for the fuel, power and mining industries, and complete industrial plants. Poland built a sugar plant, steel construction factories, 13 coal mines in India, and provided equipment for 12 coal power plants, as well as delivering 16 ships and 50 ship engines.¹³ Cooperation also included transfer of technology and joint research in specific sectors. For instance, in 1962 the Indian firm Escorts was given a licence to produce Polish SHL-M11 motorcycles (under the name Rajdoot) and subsequently, Ursus tractors. Both countries also cooperated in shipping, sea fishing, navigation and nuclear energy.

Another important area of cooperation included the delivery of arms and armaments to India. Poland exported 300 T-54 MBT tanks, 100 SKOT armored transporters, and four landing craft.¹⁴ Following an exchange of visits by defence ministers—Admiral Jagjivan Ram visited Poland in July 1974, and Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski went to India in January 1975—major contracts were signed for deliveries of 50 Polish TS-11 Iskra training aircraft, and 196 WZT-2 armoured recovery vehicles. According to SIPRI data, Poland was the seventh largest supplier of arms to India in the Cold War period, with 1% share in the market.¹⁵ For Poland, India was the second biggest market, after the USSR, for the export of military equipment.

Good political and economic relations were further cemented by close cooperation in culture, and people-to-people contacts. By 1956, the first Poland–India Parliamentary Group had been constituted in the Polish Sejm, and exchange of parliamentarians became a regular exercise in bilateral ties. The first shipping line was inaugurated in 1951, and, following the air agreement in 1977, a direct flight connection was operated by LOT in the 1980s (first to Bombay, and, from 1985, to Delhi). The agreement for cultural

⁹ J. Danielewski, "Polsko-indyjskie stosunki gospodarcze" ["Polish-Indian economic relations"], *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 8, 1984, p. 119.

¹⁰ Statistical yearbooks, 1955–1989, Central Statistical Office.

¹¹ J. Danielewski, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

¹² D. Fikus, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹³ Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się, Ministerstwo Gospodarki, November 2004, www.mg.gov.pl, p. 22.

¹⁴ M. Tumulec, *Historia stosunków polsko-indyjskich XVI-XXI w.*, ["History of Polish–Indian relations 16th–21st centuries"], Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa, 2013, p. 158.

¹⁵ SIPRI Arms Transfer Database, Stockholm Institute of Peace Research Institute, www.sipri.org, data retrieved 4 February 2014.

cooperation from 1957 provided the basis for student, research and artist exchanges. Poland trained Indian engineers, sailors and pilots. Several friendship associations also provided important sources of knowledge in each country about the other. India was a quite exotic country, but appealed to many Poles. However, all this had come to an abrupt end by the end of the 1980s.

Lost in Transition: Post 1989

A systemic transformation, which started in Poland in 1989, has triggered a sequence of events that led eventually to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the Communist bloc in Europe, and the demise of the Soviet Union. The bipolar world order and the Cold War era were over, and the Non-Aligned Movement lost its relevance. Inevitably, this massive shift in the international system had a great impact on the foreign policies of both Poland and India, although in different ways.

For Poland, it meant the beginning of the comprehensive double transition: economic, from a centrally planned socialist economy to one based on the free market, and political, from communism to democracy. It paved the way for a complete reorientation of basic principles of foreign policy. The imposed friendship with the Soviet Union was to be replaced by voluntary reintegration with the Western security, political and economic structures. In the 1990s, most efforts were dedicated to accession to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and to restructuring relations with neighbours in Europe. India, together with some 100 other distant countries, were relegated to a “far margin of interest of both politicians and general public.”¹⁶

For India, the demise of the USSR (its only powerful political ally), and the end of Cold War, called for a departure from traditional policies of non-alignment, and for re-engagement with the West. Additionally, the financial crisis in India at the end of the 1980s, and the break-up of old trade patterns, forced India to launch major economic liberalisation policies at home, and to open itself up more to global markets. During the 1990s, India pursued a more “modest and pragmatic foreign policy”¹⁷ and focused on troubled relations with its neighbours in South Asia, launching the “Look East policy” to revive cooperation with ASEAN countries and paying special attention to relations with major world powers.

Naturally, Poland–India ties were among the major victims of these changes. For the next 10–20 years both countries almost ceased to exist on each other’s political radars. The traditional glue of ideological anti-imperialism had evaporated, and there was nothing meaningful with which to replace it. It is a fruitless exercise to seek any reference to India in annual priorities of Polish foreign ministers or presidents’ meetings with ambassadors; similarly no mention of Poland can be found in important speeches of Indian prime ministers or presidents in that period. Annual reviews of Indian foreign policy in reports of the Ministry of External Affairs paid only lip service to “long-standing relations of friendship and cooperation based on trust and confidence,”¹⁸ but without much content. One issue that became crucial from the Indian perspective was Poland’s position towards India’s bid for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council. Poland’s strong re-engagement with the U.S. on the cusp of a new era, at a time when India was under harsh American pressure over the conflict in Kashmir, and alongside non-proliferation issues, pushed both partners further apart. Following the Indian nuclear tests in May 1998, the Polish parliament, for the first time in such an open and categorical manner, condemned India’s action in a special resolution on 4 June that year.¹⁹

Additionally, the end of state-planned trade and the termination of rupee clearing arrangements in the early 1990s dealt a major blow to economic cooperation. Transformation of the Polish economy led to the closure of many heavy industries (shipyards, coal mines, steel plants etc.) and reduced opportunities available for Indian partners. Bilateral trade virtually collapsed—from \$205 million in 1988 to \$120 million in 1991. India’s share in Poland’s trade shrunk from 1% in 1987 to 0.4% in 1991, and 0.3% in 1994. India, which had been receiving 1.2% of Polish exports in 1988, was the destination of only 0.3% a decade later. The importance of Poland as an economic partner of India decreased even further. Moreover, Poland

¹⁶ B. Wizimirska, “Polityka Polski wobec państw Azji, Afryki i Ameryki Łacińskiej,” [“Poland’s policy towards states from Africa, Asia and Latin America”], *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 1993, p. 201.

¹⁷ R.C. Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 269.

¹⁸ *Annual Report 1994–1995*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 1995, p. 55.

¹⁹ M. Tumulec, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

experienced a rising trade deficit with India. By 2004, bilateral trade stood at 1.46 billion PLN (\$394 million), which was only 0.2% of Polish trade, with a huge import surplus (1.14 billion PLN, or \$310 million, compared to exports of 311 million PLN, or \$84 million). Worryingly for Poland, the trade composition of commodities was the opposite of that during the Cold War. Although Poland still exported machinery, an important share consisted of raw materials (coal, steel, scrap metal), while imports came largely from the light industries (mostly textiles), with less focus on raw materials.

Polish–Indian disengagement also led to the discontinuation of many valuable initiatives. In the 1990s, direct flight connection between Warsaw and Delhi was cancelled, and the Polish–Indian Sailing Committee, which had overseen cooperation in sea transport for the last 30 years, was dissolved; the Polish–Indian Friendship Society, which made an important contribution to the popularisation of India in Poland ceased functioning due to financial constraints; and the Polish government scrapped state scholarships for Indian students.²⁰ The Agreement on Scientific and Technical cooperation, signed in 1993, remained mostly on paper, and contacts between both nations become more problematic.

Political dialogue continued in the 1990s, aimed at the revival of economic exchange, but failed to give a real impetus to bilateral cooperation. In March 1994, the Polish president, Lech Wałęsa, visited India with a large delegation of Polish entrepreneurs.²¹ In October 1996, the Indian president, Shankar Dayal Sharma, visited Poland, and the agreements on Foreign Office consultations, and on Investment Protection were signed. In January 1998, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski went to India (he was also there, albeit in transit to other Asian countries, in 1999 and 2004). Then, in February 2003, prime minister Leszek Miller paid an important visit to India, during which three bilateral agreements were signed, on defence cooperation, cooperation, antiterrorism and tackling organised crime, and the extradition treaty. Poland tried to retain its position in India in traditional sectors—mining, energy and defence—with some successes. It engaged in the modernisation of post-Soviet equipment and signed new deals to sell 20 more Iskra TS-11 training aircraft (1999) and 228WZT-3 armoured recovery vehicles (2004).²² In 2004, both countries established a Joint Committee for Defence Cooperation, to explore further opportunities in this area.

Having achieved its strategic aims of accession to NATO and the EU, Poland started, although still modestly, looking beyond Europe to reach out to old partners. The rising global position of India by the late 1990s, rapprochement with the U.S. since early 2000s, and support for the “war on terror” helped Poland–India relations to recover. In November 2004, the Polish government approved “Poland’s strategy towards non-European developing countries,” in which India was considered as one of the priority partner countries in Asia.²³ Poland’s accession to the EU in 2004 added an important dimension to bilateral ties, although this factor has not yet been exploited enough for the elevation of the partnership. In 2006, an agreement on economic cooperation was signed, which re-established a joint commission on economic cooperation.²⁴ Poland eventually (and reluctantly) supported India’s bid for a permanent seat at the reformed UN Security Council in 2005,²⁵ and voted at the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2008 to granting India a clean waiver from its existing rules, which de facto recognised India as a nuclear state outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Both countries were, however, far from the model of close coordination at international forums that had been visible in the Cold War years.

Rediscovery of India

The two recent high-level visits can be seen as the symbolic start of a new era in bilateral relations: India’s president, Pratibha Patil, visited Poland in April 2009, and Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk, went to India in September 2010. During the visit to Warsaw, both sides signed two agreements on cooperation in the

²⁰ Poland used to offer around 15 scholarships every year. For instance, in 1986, 63 students from India were studying in Poland, including 33 undergraduate and 30 graduate students. See: W. Góralski, *op. cit.*, p. 53. In 1994, there were 57 Indian students on Polish state scholarships studying in Poland—J. Rowiński, “Stosunki z Indiami” (‘Relations with India’), *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 1995, p. 161.

²¹ J. Rowiński, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

²² Smaller contracts for 44 and 80 WZT-3 were signed earlier, in 1999 and 2002 respectively.

²³ *Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się*, *op. cit.*

²⁴ It has met three times since then: in May 2008, May 2011 and the last one on 7–10 October 2013.

²⁵ M. Tumulec, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

areas of tourism, and health care and medical science. The state visit to Delhi was focused on economic cooperation, and it set a new goal, to double trade by 2015. Radosław Sikorski, Poland's foreign minister, visited Delhi in July 2011 and attended an ASEM meeting in Delhi in November 2013. Poland's most recent guests from India include Beni Prasad Verma, minister of steel, on 28 October 2013; Preneet Kaur, deputy minister for external affairs, on 29 January 2013; Ambika Soni, minister of information and broadcasting, in July 2012; and Sriprakash Jaiswal, minister of coal, in June 2011. In February 2013, Poland's deputy minister for foreign affairs, Katarzyna Kacperczyk, led a large business delegation from the mining and energy sector to the Poland–India Energy Summit in Delhi and the fifth Asian Mining Congress in Kolkata, underlining long-held cooperation in this area.

The recent interactions suggest, however, that Poland is more pro-active and interested in the revival of traditional ties than India. It is enough to stress that, despite repeated invitations, the Indian prime minister has not been to Poland for the last 35 years (since 1979), and even the minister for external affairs has not been to Poland since the Cold War. The Polish proposal of elevating bilateral ties to the level of a strategic partnership has been received rather coldly by Indians.²⁶ Interestingly, India's foreign minister, Salman Kurshid, chose Budapest, not Warsaw, for his important trip to Central Europe in July 2013, which was organised to signal India's renewed engagement in this part of Europe.²⁷ While Polish interest in India is driven mostly by rising economic opportunities, Poland does not have what India needs the most at the moment—mineral resources (oil and nuclear fuel), a large amount of capital for investments and advanced technologies, or a decisive say at major international forums (such as the UNSC).

Therefore, economic considerations have become the major force behind renewed cooperation. Trade, reaching its nadir in 2002, started to rise steadily (Table 2). It increased four-fold since 2004, and the crossed \$1.9 billion line in 2012. Although progress is quite remarkable, it is still substantially below its true potential. The Indian market is rather difficult, protected by tariff and non-tariff barriers, and Polish companies know too little about opportunities for doing business there.²⁸ After transition, Poland lost its position on the Indian market and Polish products face tough competition from many Western companies. For Poland, India is now 29th partner in exports and 26th in imports, responsible for 0.4% of Polish exports (\$665 million) and 0.6% of its imports (\$1.24 billion).²⁹ However, India is Poland's sixth largest trade partner from outside Europe (after China, the United States, Turkey, South Korea, and Japan), and the fourth largest export destination outside Europe (after the United States, Turkey, and China). According to the Indian Export–Import Bank data, which differ slightly from Polish statistics, total trade in 2012–2013 was \$1.67 billion, and Poland ranked as 59th largest trade partner (and ninth in the EU), responsible for 0.3% of India's exports and 0.2% of its imports.³⁰ This is apparently a much weaker position than in the 1970s, when both partners were among the 20 biggest trade partners for each other, each with a share in trade of over 1% with the other side.

The last decade also witnessed increased flow of direct investments. The first major examples of successful joint ventures and Polish investments in India include TZMO, Can-Pack Poland and Geofizyka Toruń. And there are already more than a dozen Indian companies operating in Poland, especially in the IT and BPO sectors (Infosys, HCL, and Wipro) but also in pharmaceuticals (Strides Arcolab, and Ranbaxy), agricultural machinery (Escorts), packaging (Uflex, and Essel Propack) and electronics (Videocon). Indian investors seem to be interested in acquiring a coal mine in Poland,³¹ but any deal has so far been dismissed by the Polish side.³²

²⁶ P. Kugiel (ed.), *India and Poland—Vistas for Future Partnership*, PISM Report, 3 August 2012, Warsaw, www.pism.pl/Publications/Reports/India-and-Poland-Vistas-for-Future.

²⁷ A. Mohan, *India and Central Europe: A Road Less Travelled*, In Focus, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 16 July 2013, www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?21946/India+and+Central+Europe+a+road+less+travelled.

²⁸ P. Kugiel, "Business Opportunities in India: State of Play and Prospects," *Bulletin PISM*, no. 29 (482), 20 March 2013, www.pism.pl/publications/bulletin/no-29-482.

²⁹ *Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego* ['The Yearbook of Foreign Trade Statistics 2013'], Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa, 2013, p. 121.

³⁰ *Ministry of Commerce & Industry*, Department of Commerce, Export Import Data Bank, <http://commerce.nic.in>.

³¹ "ICVL close to buying Poland mine for Rs 3500 crore in maiden deal," *The Economic Times*, 19 January 2014.

³² "Piechociński: nie ma tematu sprzedaży kopalni firmie z Indii," 20 January 2014, *WNP*, www.wnp.pl.

On a positive note, one can point to a significant increase in direct contacts between both nations. From around 2,000 Poles travelling to India in 1984, the number had increased to over 10,000 by 2005 and 25,000 by 2010.³³ Also, the number of Indian visitors to Poland crossed the 10,000 mark in 2007 (see table 3 and 4 in Appendix). As more mobility was allowed post-1989, a small (around 3,000 strong) but increasingly visible and prosperous Indian diaspora emerged in Poland, which has slowly evolved as a natural bridge between both countries. Indians living in Poland have also formed more formal structures (such as the Indo-Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry), to invigorate and strengthen business links.

To supplement official relations, some local authorities and non-governmental institutions have formed partnerships in different fields (i.e., between the Małopolska region and Andhra Pradesh state; the Polish Agency of Information and Foreign Investments (PAIIZ) and the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII); the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) and the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)). In an important milestone in cultural cooperation, Poland finally opened its Institute of Culture in Delhi in June 2011, to enhance its visibility in India.³⁴ Two Polish Studies Centres, at Universities in Kolkata and Manipal, were formed in early 2013, with a mission to deepen and broaden knowledge about Poland in India. Important work on improving understanding of India in Poland is played by the EU funded Centre of Contemporary Indian Studies, established in 2009 at Warsaw University, and at traditional Indian Studies departments at three Polish Universities (in Kraków, Warsaw and Wrocław). Hence, Polish–Indian relations, although not deep enough, have been broadened and expanded into new areas in recent years.

Lessons Learned and the Way Forward

For the last 60 years, Poland and India have built up a multi-faceted relationship, free of bilateral problems and controversies. They developed a comprehensive legal and structural framework for cooperation, but following end of Cold War, some of those mechanisms and ties were dissolved, intensity of contacts slowed down, and level of cooperation was downgraded. This should be seen, however, as a temporary brake, caused by wider global processes and crucial internal reforms in both countries. As was shown here, an era of re-engagement has already begun, and one can expect a revival of intensive cooperation in the years to come. However, as both countries are looking to the future and preparing themselves to cope with contemporary challenges, several lessons can be drawn from the history of Polish–Indian relations, to help to set realistic goals for cooperation.

First, it must be admitted that Poland and India never considered each other as a top priority partner in politics or economy, and this is unlikely to change in the future. What is important, however, is that both saw each other as major partner in a given region or political group, Poland in Central Europe and in socialist block, India in Asia and among developing countries. This perspective is still true today, although in a different context, for Poland has the potential to become India's major partner in Central Europe, and its fourth strategic partner (after the UK, Germany and France) in the EU, while India can be Poland's vital partner in Asia (along with China).

Second, a regular exchange of visits at the highest level, and frequent consultation between ministries of foreign affairs, used to play a fundamental role in building a positive atmosphere in bilateral relations and facilitating closer coordination at multi-lateral forums. In this sense, a return to the practice of regular meetings of prime ministers and bilateral ministerial consultation, including on the sidelines of international summits (UNGA, EU-India Summits, ASEM, and climate summits) is essential if a serious Poland–India dialogue is expected to restart.

Third, Poland and India have often shared views on crucial international problems, and supported each other at multi-lateral forums. The world has changed since the end of the Cold War, and new global challenges have emerged, but both states still have converging views on many international issues, such as terrorism, climate change, non-proliferation, and UN reform. This offers untapped potential, which, if used properly, could add a truly strategic dimension to bilateral relations. However, both countries need to examine whether they can speak with the same voice and propose sound initiatives on important international issues. As the last two decades brought some crucial changes in their foreign strategies, each

³³ India Tourism Statistics 2012, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

³⁴ See more: P. Kugiel, "What Does India Think about Poland?," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 15 (63), June 2013, www.pism.pl/Publications/PISM-Policy-Paper-no-63.

should offer open explanations of their current positions on more controversial questions, about which their views are likely to be different. Such issues may include the principle of non-intervention versus the promotion of democracy, and nuclear disarmament.

Fourth, Polish–Indian friendship is based on historical similarities—both states struggled for a long time against colonialism and foreign occupation, gained experience of socialism and state controlled economy in the Cold War era, and have undergone major economic transitions since 1991. All of these factors not only constitute a positive background for better and deeper understanding, but are also conducive to similar perspectives on modern challenges. For instance, Poland and India are coal-based economies, having similar concerns in climate change negotiations and seeking new solutions to solve the dilemma between having cost-effective and sustainable energy. These similarities can form a backbone of a new Poland–India partnership.

Fifth, the current level of trade is much lower than it was in the past, and does not reflect the actual potential of either economy. This suggests room for further improvements. Poland has built a good reputation as provider of goods and services in traditional sectors, such as energy, mining and defence, and still has the capacity to continue successful cooperation in the future. At the same time, more opportunities have emerged in new areas, such as biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, green technologies, and food processing. India is a great market with an increasingly affluent middle class and demand for consumer goods, which should offer an opportunity for Poland to balance its trade deficit. Moreover, new opportunities may arise once the EU-India Free Trade Area, which has been under negotiation for eight years, is eventually concluded. Poland should support the early conclusion of this deal more actively.

Although more economic liberalisation and decentralisation has limited the power of governments in designing economic cooperation, there is still room for the state to facilitate stronger ties. Poland can restart some of the old and well-tested instruments and mechanisms (such as trade missions in more Indian cities, attractive export loans for the purchase of Polish goods, government scholarships for Indian students, etc.) to strengthen economic ties. Both governments should establish a Polish-Indian Technology Fund to stimulate scientific collaboration and joint research in priority areas (clean energy, shale gas, atomic energy, etc.). Poland can be more pro-active and consider India as a top priority export market, for instance, by creating a “GO-India” information campaign for entrepreneurs, along the lines of the Go-China or Go-Africa programmes run by the Ministry of Economy. Moreover, the omission of India from a promotional programme for prospective markets is a grave mistake, which should be rectified. On the other hand, the Indian government can also take some measures to help balance trade with Poland, as Poland so often did in the other direction in the past.

Finally, in the current era of liberalised and people-centric modern systems, both states should do more to unleash the potential of individuals to communicate, design and develop new ideas and initiatives. To this end, further easing of the visa regime, promotion of tourism and education, cultural cooperation, and the re-establishment of a direct flight connection should be supported. An important role can once again be played by an exchange of parliamentarians, journalists, scientists, and artists, by cooperation between cultural associations, and between business organisations. A rising Indian diaspora in Poland is a new asset that should also be better employed for the promotion and strengthening of bilateral ties.

Conclusions: Time for a Genuine Partnership

Sixty years after diplomatic ties were established, Poland and India face the opportunity to bring their relations to a higher level and form a genuine partnership, based not on the compulsions of the international context but on the independent and well-informed decisions of both governments. In fact, the golden era of cooperation between Poland and India during the Cold War was a side effect of both countries' close relations with the USSR and the shared ideology of socialism and anti-imperialism. This is not true today, and a new strategic vision is awaited. Therefore a new declaration of friendship and cooperation is necessary, in order to write a set of mutually accepted principles and rules and new strategic framework for cooperation in the 21st century. Although economy is to play a leading role, there is also a need for clear political and strategic elements. This time, the new partnership can be grounded in common values and shared interests.

Although Poland seems more willing for stronger engagement, the problem lies in creating the same level of commitment in Delhi. Despite immense discrepancy in size and potential, Poland has many assets that would make it an attractive partner for India. It is up to Polish leaders to convince their Indian counterparts about Poland's strategic value, by suggesting new initiatives and voicing more clearly its position on matters crucial for India, such as UN reform, EU-India relations, terrorism, climate change, and so on. Prioritisation of cooperation with India will also require a real increase in material resources for the implementation of different schemes supporting economic, cultural and people-to-people ties. In short, Poland should start treating India as a global power.

Although a rising India feels no shortage of strategic partners, it will need more trusted friends if it is to accelerate its ascendance on the global stage and develop its economy further. Poland can be a helpful partner in both those tasks. The next Indian government, which will be formed after the general election in May, will need to review its relations with Poland and new prime minister seriously consider a long-overdue visit to Warsaw. If history is any teacher, past experiences in Polish-Indian relations prove that both countries can be real and valuable partners, both for the facilitation of their economic development, and in tackling global challenges.

Appendix

Table 1. Poland–India Trade: 1953–1984 (source: GUS, UN Trade Statistics)

YEAR	Poland's Imports			Poland's Exports			Total Trade		
	milion PLZ	mIn US \$	Share (%)	milion PLZ	mIn US \$	Share (%)	million PLZ	million US \$	Share in total (%)
1953	0.4	-	0	3.4	-	0.1	3.8		0.1
1955	3.6	-	0.1	4	-	0.1	7.6		0.1
1956	8.7	2.2	0.2	51.1	4.6	1.3	59.8	6.8	0.7
1957	11.8	2.4	0.2	29.6	10.2	0.8	41.4	12.6	0.5
1958	7.6	1.9	0.2	27.1	4.7	0.6	34.7	6.6	0.4
1959	25.5	7.5	0.4	23.1	8.4	0.5	48.6	15.9	0.5
1960	32.7	7.0	0.5	24.7	6.2	0.5	57.4	13.2	0.5
1961	29.2	8.8	0.4	65.8	17.8	1.1	95	24.6	0.7
1962	76.2	23.6	1	80	17.8	1.2	156.2	41.6	1.1
1963	79.4	19.6	1	82.4	19.0	1.2	161.8	38.6	1.1
1964	91.7	23.6	1.1	122.1	33.0	1.5	213.8	56.6	1.3
1965	72.1	18.3	0.8	128.4	28.9	1.4	200.5	47.2	1.1
1966	82.1	20.6	0.8	138.3	25.2	1.5	220.4	45.8	1.2
1967	94	24.6	0.9	143.5	32.9	1.4	237.5	57.5	1.1
1968	148	34.5	1.3	111.9	29.3	1	259.9	63.8	1.1
1969	117.8	29.7	0.9	153.3	29.5	1.2	271.1	59.2	1.1
1970	133.2	27.8	0.9	124.9	34.6	0.9	258.1	62.4	0.9
1971	118	24.4	0.7	171.6	61.7	1.1	289.6	86.3	0.9
1972	187.9	50.8	1	132.9	48.3	0.7	320.8	99.1	0.8
1973	208.5	60.6	0.8	152.3	52.7	0.7	360.8	113.3	0.8
1974	266.5	85.1	0.8	311.8	79.9	1.1	578.3	165	0.9
1975	344.7	106.0	0.8	358.2	127.0	1	702.9	233	0.9
1976	383.1	106.0	0.8	113.3	43.0	0.3	496.4	149	0.6
1977	411.2	102	0.8	177.5	57.0	0.4	588.7	159	0.7
1978	216.8	73.0	0.4	171.3	66.0	0.4	388.1	139	0.4
1979	222.4	65.0	0.4	230.1	63.0	0.5	452.5	128	0.4

1980	212.1	54.0	0.4	221.4	46.0	0.4	433.5	100	0.4
1981	223.8	54.0	0.4	125.5	46.0	0.3	349.3	100	0.4
1982*	6381	49.0	0.7	4589	41.0	0.5	10970	100	0.6
1983	5636	59.0	0.6	4461	47.0	0.4	10097	106	0.5
1984	9206	80.9	0.8	6157	54.1	0.5	15363	135	0.6
1985	9051	61.5	0.6	7625	51.8	0.5	16676	113.3	0.5
1986	10637	53.8	0.5	15177	76.8	0.7	25814	130.6	0.6
1987	40236	127.5	1.4	18965	60.1	0.6	59201	187.6	1.0
1988	62989	146.3	1.2	25422	59.0	0.4	88411	205.3	0.8
1989	106068	73.3	0.7	119969	82.9	0.6	226037	156.2	0.7

*Since 1982 amounts in Polish zloty, PZL (before then, in Polish convertible zloty)

Table 2. Poland–India Trade: 1990–2012 (source: GUS, UN Trade Statistics)

YEAR	Poland's Imports			Poland's Exports			Total Trade		
	million zł	million US \$	Share (%)	million zł	million US \$	Share (%)	million zł	million US \$	Share in total (%)
1990	371833	39.1	0.5	866634	91.2	0.7	1238467	130.3	0.5
1991	754078	68.8	0.5	551111	50.3	0.3	1305189	119.1	0.4
1992*	867	94.2	0.4	715	52.4	0.4	1582	146.6	0.4
1993	1385	75.5	0.4	757	42.4	0.3	2142	117.9	0.4
1994	2009	88.0	0.4	933	41.3	0.2	2942	129.3	0.3
1995**	262.3	108.1	0.4	198.3	80.2	0.4	4606	188.3	0.4
1996	375	139.9	0.4	136.5	51.4	0.2	511.5	191.3	0.3
1997	454.5	138.9	0.3	200.1	60.1	0.2	654.6	199	0.3
1998	546.6	156.5	0.3	159.3	45.3	0.2	705.9	201.8	0.3
1999	662.7	157.2	0.4	308.4	94.4	0.3	971.1	251.6	0.3
2000	608.7	149.0	0.3	209	48.0	0.2	817.7	197	0.2
2001	644.7	157.2	0.3	389.7	94.4	0.3	1034.4	251.6	0.3
2002	746.1	182.9	0.3	140.1	34.3	0.1	886.2	217.2	0.2
2003	878.7	225.2	0.3	316.1	81.1	0.2	1194.8	306.3	0.3
2004	1148.9	310.4	0.4	311.2	84.3	0.1	1460.1	394.3	0.2
2005	1186.4	367.4	0.4	648.6	202.8	0.2	1835	570.2	0.3

2006	1484.2	473.4	0.4	626.9	202.4	0.2	2111	675.7	0.28
2007	1951.3	701.2	0.4	449.3	162.1	0.1	2401	863.2	0.28
2008	2334.9	983.4	0.5	714.2	298.4	0.2	3048	1281.8	0.33
2009	2511.1	803.6	0.5	1047.1	337.4	0.2	3558	1141.0	0.39
2010	2986.2	987.5	0.6	1022.1	333.9	0.2	4008	1321.4	0.39
2011	3961.4	1354.3	0.6	1548.5	523.6	0.3	5509	1877.9	0.46
2012	4067.2	1244.7	0.6	2169	665.8	0.4	6236	1910.5	0.5

* Since 1992—amounts in billions of Polish zloty (PLZ)

** After redenomination—amounts in millions of new Polish zloty (PLN)

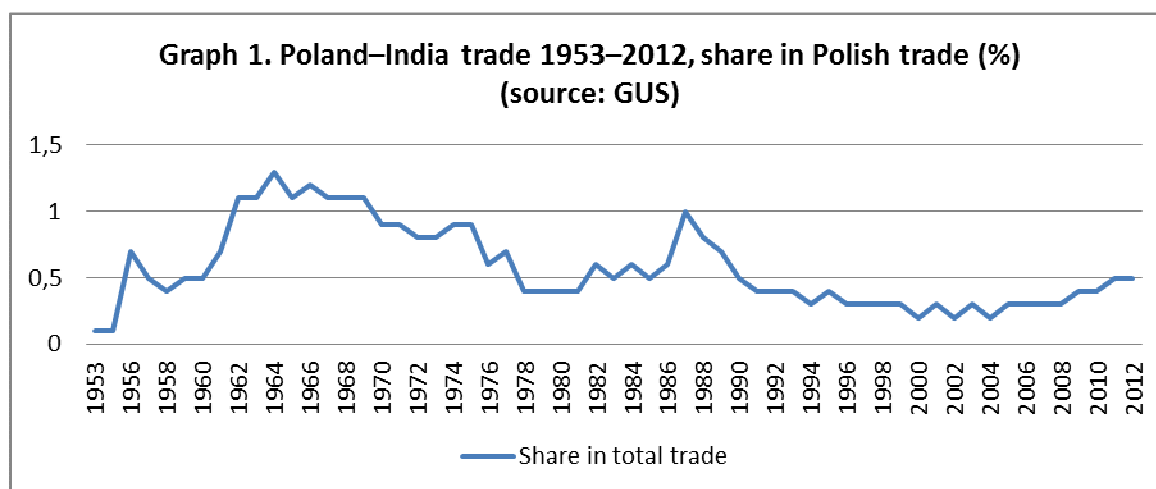


Table 3. Polish Tourist Arrivals in India 2002–2012

YEAR	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No. of people	4468	6336	8445	10983	14808	20166	23418	19656	25424	28499	25030
Share in total tourists arrivals in India (%)	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,33	0,4	0,44	0,38	0,44	0,45	0,38

Source: India Tourism Statistics 2003–2012, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Table 4. Indian Tourist Arrivals in Poland 1996–2012 (in thousands)

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No	3,9	4,5	4,2	4,3	4,8	5,0	5,3	6,1	7,9	8,7	9,9	13,1	5,9	3,9	3,8	6,0	6,1

Source: *Turystyka (Tourism)* 2004, 2008, 2010, 2012, Central Statistics Office, <https://www.stat.gov.pl>

Exchange of Important Visits 1955–2012:

- 23–26 June 1955 – Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Poland
- 10–15 June 1956 – Indian Vice-President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan visited Poland
- 24 March–2 April 1957 – Polish Premier Józef Cyrankiewicz in India
- 20–27 September 1960 – Polish Premier Józef Cyrankiewicz in India
- 11–14 October 1961 – Polish President of the Council of State Aleksander Zawadzki in India
- 19–25 January 1963 – Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs Adam Rapacki in India
- 8–11 October 1967 – Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Poland
- 16–19 June 1970 – Indian President Varahagiri Venkata Giri visited Poland
- 6–9 July 1972 – Indian Minister for Foreign Affairs Sardar Swaran Singh visited Poland
- 10–18 January 1973 – Polish Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz in India
- 11–15 March 1974 – Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs Stefan Olszowski in India
- 2–6 July 1974 – Indian Minister of Defence Jagjivan Ram visited Poland
- 14–21 February 1975 – Polish Minister of National Defence Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski in India
- 24–27 January 1977 – First Secretary of PZPR Central Committee Edward Gierek in India
- 14–16 June 1979 – Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai visited Poland
- 10–13 November 1982 – Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs Stefan Olszowski in India
- 1 December 1983 – Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs Stefan Olszowski in India
- May 1984 – Indian Minister of Defence Ramaswamy Ayer Venkataraman visited Poland
- 3–6 November 1984 – President of the Council of State Henryk Jabłoński in India
- 11–16 February 1985 – Polish Premier, First Secretary of PZPR General Wojciech Jaruzelski in India
- 1–2 April 1986 – Polish Minister of National Defence General Florian Siwicki in India
- 6–8 November 1986 – Indian President Giani Zail Singh visited Poland
- October 1996 – Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma visited Poland
- April 2009 – Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil visited Poland
- March 1994 – President Lech Wałęsa in India
- January 1998 – President Aleksander Kwaśniewski in India
- March 1999 – President Aleksander Kwaśniewski (in transit) in India
- February 2003 – Prime Minister Leszek Miller in India

- February 2004 – President Aleksander Kwaśniewski (in transit) in India
- September 2010 – Prime Minister Donald Tusk in India
- 11–12 July 2011 – Foreign Affairs Minister of Poland Radosław Sikorski visited India
- 20–22 June 2011 – Minister of Coal Shri Sriprakash Jaiswal visited Poland
- November 2011 – Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Beata Stelmach visited India
- June 2012 – Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Jerzy Pomianowski visited India
- 2–4 July 2012 – Minister of Information & Broadcasting Ambika Soni visited Poland
- January 2013 – Vice-Minister of State for External Affairs, Preneet Kaur, visited Poland
- 10–14 November 2013 – Foreign Affairs Minister of Poland Radosław Sikorski visited India
- February 2014 – Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Katarzyna Kacperczyk in India

List of Major Bilateral Agreements Signed between 1955–2013

- 3 April 1956 – Long-term agreement on trade and payments
- 16 May 1956 – Agreement on cooperation in shipping
- 29 September 1956 – Agreement on telecommunications traffic
- March 1957 – Agreement on Cultural Cooperation and subsequent Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP)
- 1958 – Agreement on cooperation in the field of nuclear energy
- 2 November 1959 – Long-term agreement on trade and payments
- 6 May 1960 – Agreement on economic cooperation and credits
- 1960 – Agreement on cooperation in shipping
- February 1970 – Protocol on cooperation in the field of navigation
- April 1973 – Five-year agreement on cooperation in sea fishing
- 16 November 1962 – Second agreement economic cooperation and credits
- 16 December 1963 – Long-term agreement on trade and payments
- 25 January 1965 – Third agreement on economic cooperation and on credits
- 31 October 1968 – Long-term agreement on trade and payments
- 14 January 1972 – Protocol on setting up a Polish–Indian Mixed Commission for Economic, Technical and Scientific Cooperation
- January 1973 – Declaration of friendship and cooperation
- March 1974 – Agreement on cooperation in the field of science and technology

- 12 December 1974 – Agreement on trade and payments
- January 1977 – Agreement on economic, industrial and technical cooperation
- January 1977 – Agreement on air transport
- January 1977 – Agreement on cooperation in the field of nuclear energy
- 16 November 1978 – Agreement on trade and payments
- June 1979 – Agreement on cooperation in the field of health protection
- 16 January 1981 – Long-term agreement on trade and payments
- 21 June 1981 – Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation
- February 1985 – Agreement on cooperation in the field of radio and television
- 22 February 1986 – Long-term agreement on trade and payments
- 12 January 1993 – Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology
- 7 October 1996 – Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments
- 1996 – Protocol on Foreign Office Consultation
- February 2003 – Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Organised Crime and International Terrorism
- February 2003 – Agreement on Defence Cooperation
- February 2003 – Extradition Treaty
- 19 May 2006 – Agreement on Economic Cooperation between India and Poland
- April 2009 – Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Health Care and Medical Science
- April 2009 – Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Tourism
- July 2012 – Agreement on Audio-Visual Co-production