

## ETHNIC POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND AFTER 1989. DETERMINANTS AND SPECIFICS

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**Summary.** The article is an attempt to discuss the character of the ethnic policy of the Polish state after 1989, i.e. during the system transformation. The author's analysis on the specifics and ethnic policy as a specific policy of the state begins with the scientific proper paradigm proper for political science research. The analyses concern both theoretical and practical problems including the institutions/entities that restrain them, stages, main concepts, the scope of implementation and the balance. The author concludes that ethnic policy of the Polish state which was implemented during the transformation period deserves a positive evaluation because of both its character and effectiveness. He states that Poland worked out and conducted the policy which was, on the one side, directed to form frames of the democratic state and on the other on positive solution of problems that arose in the ethnic sphere. These conclusions are based on the author's own long-term studies, numerous documents and the literature on the subject.

**Key words:** Poland, system transformation, politics, ethnic policy, national minorities, human rights

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The literature of the subject defines policy towards national minorities as ethnic policy, minority policy, ethnopolitics or national policy. From the point of view of the paradigm of political science research, 'ethnic policy' is the most accurate expression. It touches the essence of the issue because it points to its basic entities, the state and its organs, and the policy's object – national minorities.

The author of this study accepts that the ethnic policy of the is accepted and implemented by the decision-making centre (by public authority represented by legally determined entities) and a group of actions determined by internal and external (international) factors which tend to the effective solution of problems of national minorities and issues connected with them. In short, this policy is a group of actions, accepted and accomplished by the state and its organs, undertaken to solve problems connected with the existence of national minorities in the state.

An essentially similar definition described as national policy was accepted by K. Wasiak. According to him, its essence is

programming and applying determined political solutions to national minorities which live within the state which tend to form the desired position of those minorities in accordance with social and system interests of the given state<sup>1</sup>.

According to the Wasiak, the category „national policy” is a wider notion with respect to national minorities, because it comprises a wider spectrum of issues, including the question of a majority nation. Numerous definitions of national policy point to this differentiation. According to Centrum Edukacji Międzyetnicznej (ETNOSFERA) [Center of Interethnic Cooperation] national policy is a system of state actions directed to taking into consideration, adjusting and accomplishing national interests<sup>2</sup>. O. Majobroda, a Ukrainian scientist, regards „relations of the state with particular ethnic groups and also relations of particular ethnic groups among themselves” as ethnic policy<sup>3</sup>. W. Jewtuch describes ethnic policy as an „entirety of political actions in the field of national development and interethnic relations implemented by both the state (through its organs) and other social structures e.g. political parties, organizations of ethnic communities”<sup>4</sup>.

From the above considerations it may be concluded that ethnic policy is one of the fields of general policy of a state and its specialized organs and institutions. In democratic states the aim of this activity is, on the one hand, a determination of assumptions, aims and principles, and on the other, meeting the current and future needs of national minorities in accordance with social and political system interests of a given state<sup>5</sup>.

The definition of national minority is the second category which needs to be defined. The author of the article assumes that this is a group of citizens of the state distinguished by ethnic, language, or religious features who are in minority in relation to the other part of the population and who do not have a dominant position; the group strives to keep its own cultural distinctiveness and has aspiration described in state’s categories<sup>6</sup>. The author assumes that the groups which possess their own home state or have a programme of fighting for it are called national minorities<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Wasiak, *Mniejszości narodowe i polityka państw*, „Biuletyn Naukowy Zakładu Stosunków Międzynarodowych Instytutu Śląskiego w Opolu” 1973 no. 3, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> See: A. Wierzbicki, *Etnopolityka w Azji Centralnej. Między wspólnotą etniczną a obywatelską*, Warszawa 2008, p. 42 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> O. Majobroda, *Etnopolityka*, in: *Mala encyklopedia etnoderżawoznawstwa*, (ed.) J. Rymarenko, Kyjiw 1996, p. 488.

<sup>4</sup> W. Jewtuch, *Etnopolityka w Ukraini: prawny i kulturolologiczny aspekt*, Kyjiw 1997, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> See: E. Pogorzała, *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w polityce oświatowej państwa polskiego w latach 1944–1966*, Zamość 2009, p. 8 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce 1918–1995*, Lublin 2000, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

Among Poland's 38.5 million citizens, about one million (2.6% of the citizens) belong to national minorities. The most numerous are: Germans – about 360 000, Ukrainians – about 300 000, Byelorussians – about 240 000. Other groups: Gypsies – about 25 000, Lithuanians – about 20 000, Slovaks – about 18 000, Russians – about 17 000, Jews – about 10 000, Armenians – about 8000, Tatars – about 5000, Greeks and Macedonians – about 5000, Czechs – about 3000, Karaite – 200<sup>8</sup>.

#### DETERMINANTS OF ETHNIC POLICY OF THE POLISH STATE

Some scientific disciplines distinguish between determinants and factors of a given specific policy e.g. ethnic policy or in other words, the policy towards national minorities. Determinants, for example, in education science, are understood as definite, objective situations, facts and circumstances in which the issues are formed<sup>9</sup>. Entities of such policies do not influence the conditionings but they must or should take them into account in a decision-making process. Demographic and sociolinguistic determinants are highlighted in the group of policy factors towards national minorities.

Factors of a specific policy are understood as conscious and deliberate interaction on the totality and the essence of a given policy. As far as the factors of a state's policy towards national minorities are concerned, system-political factors are stressed. Within these factors a policy implements – with the use of entities who have power – a determined system of values and aims, including, accepted by the policy-makers, model of a given policy. In the case of the policy which interests us, it is aimed at promoting and accomplishing specific political, legal and organizational solutions which tend to form the desired situation of a national minority, in accordance with the state's interests<sup>10</sup>.

In terms of political science, the conditionings are often connected with the factors of the policy. Pragmatism is the decisive element in this juncture; it allows the scientists to avoid controversies concerning what a conditioning and what a conditioning factor is. The author of the article suggests that, in this context, the expression „determinants” should be used. Determinants should be understood as the whole of both the conditionings and factors determining the

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<sup>8</sup> See: H. Chałupczak, *Liczba mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce w świetle powszechnego spisu ludności z roku 2002 oraz badań szacunkowych*, in: *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w procesach transformacji i integracji*, ed. H. Chałupczak i E. Michalik, Lublin 2007, pp. 263–271; H. Chałupczak: *Statystyczny obraz mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych we współczesnej Polsce*, in: *Kultura pogranicza – pogranicze kultur*, (ed.) A. Bobryk, Pułtusk 2008, pp. 99–109. Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań, wg stanu na 31 marca 2011 roku see.: [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl).

<sup>9</sup> E. Pogorzała, *op. cit.*, p. 16 et seq.

<sup>10</sup> K. Wasiak, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

essence of the policy. This is justified because the state occupies the main place as an elementary entity; it uses particular entities which implement the policy that has been decided by the state.

A political-scientist does not have any doubts that the ethnic policy of the Polish state during the transformation period is shaped by many determinants. The author suggests that the following determinants be regarded basic, even classical. The author also made a gradation as far as Poland is concerned:

- a) political system – democratic legal state, system of institutions and organs of a democratic state, territorial political system of a state;
- b) ideological – political thought of particular political formations and parties which participate in implementing and creating the state's policy, including national minorities;
- c) political – stability and specifics of a political system, the relation of minorities towards the Polish state, character of state's policy;
- d) geopolitical – the importance of minority policy in international relations, the relations of Poland with the home states of the minorities, and respect to national interests of Polish minorities living in neighbouring states;
- e) legal – system of international and internal law, international standards in this respect;
- f) historical – historical legacy which determines the perception of the specifics of the minority problems, stereotypes of nations and ethnic groups, legacies that charge historical memory and which impinge on contemporary attitudes, genesis of minorities clusters;
- g) demographic – size and degree of organization and aspiration of particular minorities.

These determinants determine not only the basic principles of national policy of democratic states but also constitute a touchstone of interethnic relations in those states.

#### THE SPECIFICS OF THE POLISH STATE'S ETHNIC POLICY

The abovementioned determinants impinged on the character of the policy of the Polish state towards national minorities after 1989. The essence of the policy was constant; only its specifics and determination underwent modification in actions of particular ruling parties. These were reflected to a small extent in the strategy of actions; they were seen, to a larger extent, those entities which implemented those strategies and in specific projects.

Taking all these into consideration an attempt to present a characteristic specificity of the policy can be undertaken. Its most important elements can be seen in both the sphere of concept, implementation, and in the social and political reception, including national minorities.

The author perceives the specifics of Polish ethnic policy after 1989 in the following elements:

1) full and quick acceptance and adaptation of international standards of policy towards national minorities, including the protection of their individuality and laws;

2) far reaching agreement of Polish political scene and Polish public opinion concerning principles, aims and instruments of this policy;

3) relatively low political ranking to minority problems, resulting from limited polarization and antagonism on both of sides of ethnic policy;

4) clear participation of important factors from the point of view of the state image, especially in international and foreign policy context;

5) soothing influence of home-state governments on behaviour of some of the minorities living in Poland, especially during the first years after 1989;

6) formation of comprehensive system of entities to implement ethnic policy;

7) focusing of the state's actions and of the relations with minorities in legal, cultural, educational, and religious spheres and not on the political sphere;

8) task and object support, including financing of national activity (resignation from entity financing of minority structures);

9) positive reception of ethnic policy by minorities, expressed by, among others, the lack of essential controversies and participation of minorities in social-political life of the state (including parliamentary and local elections).

The most important element of Polish state's ethnic policy after 1989 was the general change in its philosophy i.e. the change of principles, priorities, instruments and forms of implementation. The acceptance and adaptation of international standards was the decisive issue. The most important of these were:

1) the acceptance of the idea of a democratic legal state, including the equality of rights and freedoms of all citizens, regardless their ethnic origin, race, faith and language;

2) acceptance of the multiethnic composition of society and its multiculturalism as an important state value;

3) granting ethnic groups the right for keeping their own, separate identities and the ban on any form of forced assimilation;

4) the acceptance of the right to individual choice of membership in a particular national community;

5) the ban on discrimination against people who belong to national minorities;

6) the right to equal participation in national life;

7) freedom of political and religious beliefs;

8) the right to preserve, present and develop their own cultural identity, including the right to use their own language and also freedom of religion;

9) the right to create their own social organizations and participation in International Non-governmental Organizations.

The acceptance by the Polish state of such principles at the beginning of the 1990s was the first part of the process of rebuilding a democratic Poland and of its implementation of aspiration to integrate with European structures. The important goal was then (and it is now) to upkeep and establish cultural identity of national minorities. Counteraction against ethnic discrimination and the dissemination of attitudes of openness and tolerance within society were also important. The basis for achieving these goals should be compliance, in cooperation with government and local government administration, with the rule „nothing about us without us”<sup>11</sup>. The basic assumption of this policy was the loyalty of members of national minorities to the state of settlement<sup>12</sup>.

The process of creating a legal basis for implementation of national aspirations of particular ethnic groups was another important element which had an effect on the specifics of ethnic policy after 1989. At first, it was done through attaching to already created Acts or ministerial regulations articles which guaranteed the right of national minorities (e.g. the Education Act of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1991 or Law on the Radio and Television Broadcasting of 29<sup>th</sup> December 1991).

The records concerning national minorities' rights were also introduced to bilateral treaties with neighbouring states. The Treaty between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany on Good Neighbourship and Friendly Cooperation of 17<sup>th</sup> June 1991 was of importance. It was the first one and, apart the treaties with Byelorussia and Lithuania, contained the most far-reaching provisions. It did not settle for general indication for the need of compliance with resolutions resulting from many UN various documents or from Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) or Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The Treaty specified the solutions which were in accordance with international law and at the same time gave the provisions of the Council of Europe and OSCE the rank of legal international obligations.

Parallel to obligations resulting from bilateral agreements, Poland also accepted many obligations resulting from international agreements on of human rights and the protection of minorities that were created within the frames of the United Nations or the Council of Europe.

The introduction of some rights for persons belonging to national minorities to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1997 was a very important step in the creation of the legal status of national and ethnic minorities. Passing the Act on national and ethnic minorities and on regional languages on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2005 was the last stage in this process<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> S. Łodziński, *Równość i różnica. Mniejszości narodowe w porządku demokratycznym w Polsce po 1989 roku*, Warszawa 2005, p. 177.

<sup>12</sup> See: M. Judyta-Budzyńska, *Mniejszości narodowe – bogactwo czy problem. Instytucjonalizacja mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w latach 1989–2002*, Warszawa 2003, p. 64 et seq.

<sup>13</sup> Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] 2005, no 17, item 141.

In practice, during the transformation period, frameworks were created which guaranteed national minorities, living in Poland: equality before the law and equal legal protection; freedom of choice of minority membership; language and cultural rights and the right to education; freedom of associations and freedom in expressing opinion; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of participation in public matters; the right to free, international contacts.

The creation of opportunities for active participation by minorities in political life was the essence and specificity of ethnic policy. The electoral law of 1991 provided preferences in procedures for submitting district and all-Polish lists of candidates for deputies by national minorities' election committees. The electoral law of 1993 waived the obligation to exceed the electoral threshold for election committees of national minorities<sup>14</sup>. Due to this, German minority has its own representatives in the Polish parliament. At first, on the basis of election law from 1991, it had a group of seven deputies and one senator; in 1993 there were five of them (four deputies and one senator) in subsequent elections (until 2005), German minority was represented by two deputies. After the last elections in 2007 and 2010 only one deputy remained. The participation of representatives of national minorities in local government institutions was better; national minorities have had many representatives and even in some communes they exercise authority<sup>15</sup>. In practice, only Germans can make use of this privilege because the other minorities have been either too dispersed or too small.

Maintenance and development of national identity (ethnicity) of minorities was one of the main aims of ethnic policy of the Polish state during transformation period. Thus, the Polish government financially supported national minorities. At the end of 1989 the state stopped financial support for national minorities as it had previously. Instead, it introduced entity financing which took the form of grants for specific goals. Within this financial aid, minorities started publishing papers, organizing artistic assemblies or cultural education, promoting knowledge about themselves and organizing various types of festivals<sup>16</sup>. The issue of education for national minorities played an important role in ethnic policy. According to the Act of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1991 on the education system, the teaching of mother language for national minorities can be conducted at schools and kindergartens: with native language teaching, bilingual schools with additional classes of minority's language, or in interschool groups. Teaching at schools with minority's language is conducted in the language of the minority

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> Opole Province is the best example where German minority has co-ruled since the elections in 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Scientific conference: Rights of national and ethnic minorities In practice", 28th June 2006 „Biuletyn Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich. Materiały", 2007, no. 54, pp. 29–30.

except for Polish and Polish literature. The graduates receive school certificate in both languages<sup>17</sup>.

The system of entities which implement a state's ethnic policy determines the essence and specifics of that policy. In Poland a new policy towards national minorities was started by Komisja Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych (Commission on National and Ethnic Minorities), appointed by the Sejm in August 1989. The shift of a department which took care of national minorities from Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych (Ministry of Interior) to Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki [MKiSz] (Ministry of Culture and Arts) was another symptom of changes. This change was symbolic because it was supposed to show a new attitude by government to this group of citizens. Thus, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, which was associated with the function of a supervisor and a controller was replaced with Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki which was supposed to play the role of a patron which supports minorities' cultural and social initiatives<sup>18</sup>. Zespół do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych (Team for National Minorities) was responsible for contacts with minorities in MKiSz since 28<sup>th</sup> September 1990; in 1992 it was renamed into Biuro do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych (Bureau for National Minorities) and had the status of a department. The bureau cooperated with foreign institutions dealing with national minorities, kept in touch with and cooperated with organizations of various national minorities in Poland, and financed their cultural activity. The bureau was also responsible for monitoring and interventions in cases of violations of rights of national minorities<sup>19</sup>. In 1995 the office changed its name into Biuro do Spraw Kultury Mniejszości Narodowych (Bureau for National Minorities Culture) which, with the entry into force of the new regulation of Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki of 25<sup>th</sup> February 1998, was again renamed as Departament Kultury Mniejszości Narodowych (Department of the Culture of Ethnic Minorities)<sup>20</sup>.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji (Ministry of the Interior and Administration) has taken over the issues of national minorities<sup>21</sup>. Wydział Mniejszości Narodowych (Department of National Minorities), established in 2000, was the office which took care of the issues connected with national minorities<sup>22</sup>. It was responsible for developing, with cooperation from other ministries, proposals for the state's policy towards na-

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<sup>17</sup> Dz. U. 1992, no. 34, item 150.

<sup>18</sup> B. Berdychowska, *Wobec mniejszości*, „Społeczeństwo Otwarte” 1995, no. 4, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> S. Pawlak, *Ochrona mniejszości narodowych w Europie*, Warszawa 2001, p. 135.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p.137.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> M. Sora, *Ochrona mniejszości narodowych z perspektywy administracji rządowej*, in: *Status prawny mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w świetle Konwencji Ramowej o Ochronie Mniejszości Narodowych. Materiały z konferencji. Warszawa 23–24.10.2000 r.*, (ed.) S. Łodziński, Warszawa 2001, p. 136; *Mniejszości narodowe*, [www.mswia.gov.pl/mn\\_narod\\_1a.html](http://www.mswia.gov.pl/mn_narod_1a.html), from 29 września 2003 r.



tional minorities. The agency cooperated with government administrative organs for taking into consideration the needs of local minorities. It also helped national organizations to implement their statutory aims and took actions to solve problems, disputes and conflicts connected with national minorities.

In December 2011 the issues of national minorities were moved to a newly created Ministerstwo Administracji i Cyfryzacji (Ministry of Administration and Digitization)<sup>23</sup>. It should be stressed that this decision was undertaken without prior consultation with minority milieus; in this case the need for development of cooperation of minority milieus with public administration – including those at the territorial local government level prevailed in this case.

The ethnic policy of the Polish state is also implemented by other central organs and offices. Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu (Ministry of Education and Sport) and its education offices help in organization and running schools for minorities. Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) takes part in international actions on the protection of national minorities' rights in bilateral treaties, monitors their compliance and initiates legislative changes to adjust Polish law to European standards. Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości (Ministry of Justice) provides the conditions and administrative supervision over the process of registration of national minority organizations and associations of national minorities and their cooperation in the legislative process on issues of minority languages in legal actions. Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) prepares projects and conducts negotiations concerning bilateral agreements with other states as far as social security is concerned.

In Poland after 1989 the institutions which coordinated the ethnic policy of the state were changing. First, by a resolution of the Council of Ministers of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1990 the Komisja do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych (Commission of National Minorities) was appointed as an opinion-advisory organ of the Council of Ministers. It consisted of representatives of ministries which dealt with national minorities' issues, a representative of Komitet do Spraw Radia i Telewizji (Committee of Radio and Television) and voivodes (governors) of territories where national minorities live<sup>24</sup>. This structure lasted till October 1991<sup>25</sup>. After a few years, at the end of June 1997 the Prime Minister set up Międzyresortowy Zespół do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych (Inter-ministerial Group on National Minorities)<sup>26</sup> which, since 6<sup>th</sup> February 2002 changed its name into Zespół do

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<sup>23</sup> Prime Minister's decree no. of 8th December.2011, „Monitor Polski”, 2011, no. 107, item 1089.

<sup>24</sup> „Monitor Polski” 1990, no. 34, item 274.

<sup>25</sup> S. Łodziński, *Przekroczyć własny cień. Prawne, instytucjonalne oraz społeczne aspekty polityki państwa polskiego wobec mniejszości narodowych w latach 1989–1997*, in: *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce. Praktyka po 1989 roku*, (ed.) B. Berdychowska, Warszawa 1998, p. 52.

<sup>26</sup> The team included representatives of Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki, Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicz-

Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych (Group for National Minorities). Prime Minister's decree of 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008 closed its activity<sup>27</sup>.

Today's Komisja Wspólna Rządu i Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych (Joint Commission of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities), formed on the basis of a decree of 6th January 2005 concerning national and ethnic minorities and regional language, is a coordinating – advisory organ. The Commission prepares opinions concerning law and the needs of minorities, gives opinions which serve to create conditions which favour the maintenance and development of cultural identity of minorities and provided draft legislation concerning minorities. It also takes actions against discrimination against people who belong to minorities and it expresses opinions on the amount and principles of division of measures for supporting the cultural actions of minorities assigned in the state's budget. Komisja Wspólna (Joint Commission) is composed of representatives of government administrative organs and representatives of national minorities and also representatives of a community that uses regional languages (Kashubian)<sup>28</sup>. At a province level, governors' plenipotentiaries or consultants for national minorities' issues deal with the problems concerning national minorities<sup>29</sup>.

The specifics of ethnic policy of the Polish state consists also in its effectiveness, including an ability to solve problems. You cannot abstract from good relations of the Polish state with home states of minorities. It does not mean that after 1989 there were no problems which needed action, Therefore, at the beginning of the transformation period the problem of German minority occupied a special place in the ethnic policy of the Polish government. This issue became an important element in relations with Federal Republic of Germany. Only after the signing of the treaty of good neighbourhood and bilateral cooperation in Bonn on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1991, were nationalistic attitudes on the part of the members of this minority eliminated. However, the policy of FRG government had a decisive influence on the character of contacts between German minority and Polish majority, including Polish authorities. Showing constant interest in the fate of its countrymen who lived abroad, FRG government opted for keeping relations with Poland as good as possible, supported the residence of people of German descent in the Republic of Poland and tried to solve contentious issues in the

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nych and Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości. Since May 2000 the representatives of Ministerstwo Finansów oraz Pracy i Polityki Społecznej joined the team. *Sprawozdanie z działalności Międzyresortowego Zespołu do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych w roku 2000*, [www.mswia.gov.pl/spr-o-by-mn-spr.html](http://www.mswia.gov.pl/spr-o-by-mn-spr.html) (29 września 2003 r.).

<sup>27</sup> *Zespół do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych*, [www.mswia.gov.pl/porta1.php?serwis=-pl&dzial=114&id=5...](http://www.mswia.gov.pl/porta1.php?serwis=-pl&dzial=114&id=5...) (16 października 2009 r.).

<sup>28</sup> *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce*, [http://mswia.gov.pl/porta1/pl/61/38/Podstawowe\\_prawa.html](http://mswia.gov.pl/porta1/pl/61/38/Podstawowe_prawa.html) (16 października 2009 r.).

<sup>29</sup> *Osoby odpowiedzialne za sprawy mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w województwach*, <http://mswia.gov.pl/porta1.php?serwis=pl&dzial=61&id=277&poz...> (16 października 2009 r.).

spirit of friendship and on the basis of standards worked out by the Council of Europe and OSCE/CSCE.

There were also misunderstandings between Polish authorities and representatives of the Ukrainian minority during the transformation period. They concerned, among other things, the forms of commemorations of resting places of Ukrainian militants (including militants of Ukrainian Insurgent Army), the return of Ukrainian property assets (including Orthodox churches), compensation for the harm during „Operation Vistula” [deportation of Ukrainian population from newly created borders of post-war Poland]. The conflict concerning the church in Przemyśl was of special character; Neither state nor church authorities (including the Vatican) were able to solve it. Other controversies concerned the teaching of religion in public schools and some property issues. There were also disagreements with Gypsies, Lithuanians and Slovaks.

The main demands of national minorities in Poland after 1989 concerned the permission, in the mixed, bilingual areas, to write the names of towns and villages in both languages, to allow the citizens to use the language of the minority in offices, to write their surnames in original spelling, and to recompense past injustice. The representatives of particular minorities, at the same time, criticized the system of financing for their national activity, paid attention to too small financial measures. They also pointed to the deficiencies resulting from little understanding of the needs of minorities by local authorities.

The majority of these problems were solved or discussed within the framework of ethnic policy.

#### FINAL REMARKS

The ethnic policy of Poland state after 1989 deserves a positive opinion. Poland, as a state with a rather homogenous ethnic structure and few important national conflicts worked out and conducted a positive policy in this field which was dedicated, on the one hand, to the creation of the framework of a democratic state and, on the other, on responding to the problems. During transformation period there was a general change in the philosophy, principles, aims, and forms of implementation of ethnic policy. The authorities opted out of an assimilation policy and of differentiation of actions to particular minorities. They recognized, not only verbally, the rights of all minorities to cultivate their own separateness which were included in the Constitution and special acts; at the same time Poland signed and ratified all important acts of international law concerning the rights of minorities. Very far reaching was the creation of legal rules that enabled the representatives of minorities to participate in the works of the parliament. Due to the preferences resulting from the electoral system, the representatives of minorities took seats in the parliament as deputies.

Changes also occurred in the policy on religious communities and churches which included members of national minorities. The Act of 1989 guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion guaranteed the freedom to implement the religious functions and equality of all religious communities. The same basis concerned the relations of the state with Polski Autokefaliczny Kościół Prawosławny (the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church) and Kościół Ewangelicko-Augsburski (Evangelic-Augsburg Church).

At the same time a system of financing of the cultural, editorial, and social initiatives, especially important for the life of particular national minorities, was created. It played an important role in the national life of particular minorities. The minorities, taking into account their own interests and the interests of the state where they reside, managed to make a proper use of the possibilities they received<sup>30</sup>.

#### POLITYKA ETNICZNA PAŃSTWA POLSKIEGO PO 1989 ROKU. UWARUNKOWANIA I SPECYFIKA

**Streszczenie.** Istotą artykułu jest próba pogłębionej refleksji na temat charakteru polityki etnicznej państwa polskiego po roku 1989, a więc w okresie transformacji ustrojowej. Punktem wyjścia rozważań są autorskie odniesienia do specyfiki i istoty polityki etnicznej jako polityki szczegółowej państwa, przede wszystkim w świetle paradygmatu badawczego właściwego badaniom politologicznym. Analizy dotyczą tak zagadnień teoretycznych, jak i praktycznych, w tym determinantów badanej polityki, instytucji/podmiotów ją kreujących, etapów, głównych koncepcji, zakresu realizacji oraz bilansu. Autor konkluduje, że realizowana w okresie transformacji polityka etniczna państwa polskiego zasługuje na pozytywną ocenę, tak w kontekście jej charakteru, jak i skuteczności. Stwierdza, że Polska wypracowała i prowadziła wtedy politykę nastawioną z jednej strony na tworzenie ram państwa demokratycznego, z drugiej pozytywne rozwiązywanie ujawniających się problemów w sferze etnicznej. Zaprezentowane rozważania bazują na wieloletnich badaniach własnych autora, licznych dokumentach oraz literaturze przedmiotu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Polska, transformacja ustrojowa, polityka, polityka etniczna, mniejszości narodowe, prawa człowieka

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<sup>30</sup> See: *Konferencja naukowa: „Prawa mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w praktyce”*, 28 czerwca 2006, „Biuletyn Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich. Materiały”, 2007, no. 54, part II: Dyskusja, pp. 25–71; S. Łodziński, *Równość...*, pp. 216–221.