MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I complete my first year as director of the Skalny Center, I find it remarkable how much has been accomplished. This would not have been possible without the support of the Skalny Foundation, a substantial infusion of support from the College, and the support of numerous other donors. Polish and Central European studies are thriving at the University of Rochester. I look forward to the year to come, with new visitors and new initiatives.

The Skalny Center has expanded and energized its programs over the last year in the cultural, educational and research dimensions. The Center currently sponsors a Polish film festival, a concert series of performances by Polish artists, instruction in Polish, grants for study in Poland, visits by Polish professors, an undergraduate Polish Club, and numerous one-time events. We look forward to developing these initiatives further. In addition, we have expanded our academic programs with the introduction of postdoctoral and graduate fellowships, which position the Center to train the next generation of scholars of the region. These visitors, furthermore, help the Skalny Center to play a key role in the development of a new undergraduate major in International Relations, which is being introduced in fall 2008. The commitment to research at the highest level enriches the undergraduate curriculum because excellence in teaching grows out of serious engagement with research.

The Center has hosted several dynamic visiting scholars in 2007-08.

- This spring, we were pleased to host Dr. Radoslaw Rybkowski, associate professor and vice-director of the Institute of America Studies and Polish Diaspora at the Jagiellonian University. Dr. Rybkowski, a specialist in American and European higher education policies, is also an expert in Polish current affairs and, as such, was appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to attend the Heads of State Summit in 2006. Professor Rybkowski taught a course on Polish history.

- Our postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Alexandra Hennessey, is researching pension reforms in the European Union. Dr. Hennessey traveled to Poland last fall to do research on Poland’s efforts to accommodate to the European Commission directive on pension reform, and this spring taught a course on the European Union. Dr. Hennessey will start next fall as an assistant professor at Clarkson University. In the 2008-09 academic year, the Skalny postdoctoral fellow will be Daniel Epstein, who is finishing his Ph.D. at Harvard this year.

- The 2007-08 graduate fellowship was granted to Tanya Bagashka, who is completing dissertation research on voting and elections in post-Communist countries. Ms. Bagashka taught a course this spring on the political economy of post-Communism. She will defend her dissertation in June, and will begin a tenure-track position as an assistant professor at the University of Houston next fall.

Continued on page 2

"Polish Review”
New Course of Polish Language

By Krzysztof Polakowski

Beginning in the spring semester of 2009, the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies will be offering a new course titled “Polish Review.” The main objective of this four-credit course is to refine the participant’s language skills and to familiarize them with Polish and cultural issues of contemporary Poland. The course will require a working knowledge of the Polish language necessary to discuss the content of source materials (e.g., articles and essays in the Polish press, recent Polish films). It will focus on group discussions based on source materials and prepared by its participants. This course will be particularly recommended for students who have attended summer courses in Polish language and culture at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow as well as for those who just want to brush up on their language skills.
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Continued from page 1

parliamentary policy, European Union single pension market, and Polish foreign policy after the 2007 elections. We also have continued our series of concerts by talented young Polish musicians. In December we hosted an exceptionally talented 15-year-old violinist, Alexander Styki, and in April we had a recital by a remarkable 21-year-old pianist from Tarnów, Poland, Igor Lipinski.

Thanks to a generous gift from Joseph Skalny, we were able to provide scholarships once again to a summer program in Kraków led by Professors Ewa Hausser and Radosław Rybkowski. Ten students participated in the program in 2006, five in 2007, and we again have two students who will go to Kraków in July 2008. During the four-week program, offered through the Jagiellonian University School of Polish Language and Culture, students will take a Polish language course and a course on Polish history, Polish literature, or politics, and receive credits from the University of Rochester.

It is a privilege and an honor to direct the Skalny Center, and I want to thank all of you who have made the work of our Center possible and who continue to share with us the attending our events.

Skalny Center News

1. Student grants recipients

- Fulbright Scholar Christine Kenison
  Christine Kenison is graduating this spring with a bachelor of arts degree in German and French (both with highest honors) and with a Certificate in Polish and Central European Studies. Christine does not have any Polish heritage, and yet she took all of the Polish studies classes offered at the University, went twice to Kraków to attend the Jagiellonian University Summer School in Polish Language and Culture, and has received a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to spend a year at the Jagiellonian University. Her engagement in the Polish community at the University of Rochester, her commitment to study Polish language and culture, and her ability to speak fluent Polish after four years of learning are remarkable. (See her essay in this issue.)

- Joseph Skalny grant for Study on Location in Kraków
  Five students have received scholarships for the summer study program in Kraków. They are:

Claudia Marosi, freshman, majoring in political science
Zachary Mazur, sophomore, majoring in linguistics
Katherine Parmington, sophomore, majoring in international relations
Kathryn Adrian Tucker, sophomore, majoring in political science, computer science, and English
Daniel Zabek, freshman, majoring in economics

- Louis & Nellie Skalny Scholarship for Polish Studies
  The scholarship of $4,000 is awarded annually to students pursuing Polish studies at universities in the United States who have completed at least two years of college work. This year, Zachary Mazur, a sophomore who already took two courses on the Polish language, a course on Polish history, and a course on the history of Germany under Hitler, is applying for the award.

2. Polish Student Club

The Polish Student Club is resuming its activity and gaining new members. The club includes, among others: screening of Polish and Central European films, which will be open to the University community, cooking of Polish-type dinners, searching for traces of the history of Polish immigration in Rochester and beyond, and cooperation with the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester and Polish Language Saturday School. The Skalny Center is providing guidance, films, recipes, and financial help, if needed.

3. Upcoming events in fall 2008

- Skalny Lecture by Professor Ogulian Hishow, Skalny Center Visiting Professor in fall 2008
  Professor Hishow is a senior researcher at the German Institute for International Affairs (SWP), Berlin. During his stay in Rochester, he will teach a course on Political Economy of Europe.

- Skalny Lecture by Professor Ewa Hausser, on Ukrainian collective memory and the politics of history
  Professor Hausser is the adjoint associate professor in the Department of Political Science at Rochester, and currently a senior Fulbright Fellow at Petro Mohyla Mykolaiv State Humanities University and at Lev Ivan Franko National Ukrainian University in Ukraine. She was the creator and the director of the Skalny Center from 1994 until 2007.

- Skalny Luncheon Seminar by Dr. Daniel Epstein, postdoctoral fellow

- Polish Film Festival, Nov 8-12, 2008

- Concert of Polish music, Dec 14, 2008
Researching Polish Pension Reforms at the Skalny Center

By Alexandra Hennessy

According to the philosopher Ernst Bloch, “conscious thinking” requires the ability to “see beyond the end of one’s nose.” I like to think that the generous postdoctoral fellowship I received from the Skalny Center during the academic year 2007-08 has enabled me to do exactly that.

My dissertation asked why the European Union (EU) member states were able to agree on European-wide pension market integration in 2003, but not in 1991. In my analysis, I focused on German and British preferences, for two reasons. First, Germany is the prototypical Bismarckian pension system (social insurance provided by the state for everyone), while Britain embodies the ideal type of a Beveridgean pension system (means-tested state pensions supplemented by private investments). Secondly, the ministers recorded in the European Parliament during the late nineties described the main conflicts over pension market integration revolved around minimum harmonization of investment and income policies in these two pension regimes. I found that the eight member states are more likely to get their preferences implemented in EU pension directives when they can credibly signal that only a limited set of outcomes are considered legitimate in their home state.

Given that my dissertation research was limited to EU-mandated pension reforms in Western Europe, it was a natural next step for me to extend my research to a comparative analysis of the Central and East European member states (CCEs) that formally joined the European Union in 2004. I expected that it would be highly difficult for all of the CCEs to comply with EU pension directives because they had not taken part in designing them. Secondly, all of the CCEs still struggled with the transition to democracy and market economy. Thirdly, I generally expected that the pooling of sovereignty would be more problematic for the Central and East European countries since patterns of party competition, interest representation, and public perceptions of the legitimacy of democracy had considerably less time to develop.

My research in Poland, which was generously sponsored by the Skalny Center, forced me to revise all of these hypotheses. Instead of finding a “single” compliance type, I realized that the new EU member states varied widely in their willingness and ability to comply with EU pension laws. Compliance was relatively easy for Poland, because the government had already introduced “open pension funds” in 1998. This reform made funding the so-called “second pillar” pension compulsory, thus offsetting Poland’s overstretched pay-as-you-go pension system on a more solid footing. As a result, Poland had only minor problems complying with EU pension laws. On the other hand, the partial privatization of Polish social security pensions led to a large transition cost deficit. This problem arose because the funded component of social security was no longer available to finance the pay-as-you-go pension of current beneficiaries. Because of the high transition cost deficit, Poland was in violation of the Stability and Growth Pact, which limits the size of EU member state budget deficits.

Poland’s violation of the Stability and Growth Pact was deemed capacity-driven—the ambiguous pension reform responsible for meeting the budget targets—the violation of EU pension directives by Hungary and the Czech Republic was seen as preference-driven because the latter had not implemented any form of pension privatization that aimed at alleviating the strain on social security pensions. Thus, it was interesting for me to learn that there is no one “Central European compliance type,” but a wide variation across the new member states.

My research greatly benefited from personal interviews with four officials at the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, as well as from one of the co-authors of the Polish pension reform of 1998, Professor Marek Sora, of the Warsaw School of Economists. Each of these individuals was extremely generous with his time, patiently explaining to me the Polish state pension system, the problems of incarcerating the fund, and the political negotiations in the read chamber of the Warsaw University Library. Situated near the Vistula riverbank, the library is a beautiful building with green glass walls and an indoor courtyard. I met them very modern and user-friendly. Getting onto the Internet for several months took me about three minutes and cost less than two dollars.

I further had the opportunity to participate in a four-day conference on the future of a European constitution in Krakow, organized by the Andrzej Pycz Modrzejewski University. The conference was held only a few days after the EU member states had adopted the 2007 Reform Treaty, thus sparking fruitful conversations among political scientists, lawyers, and economists from all European member states. The Polish academic Danuta Hubner, who is currently serving as European Commissioner for Regional Policy, addressed the conference participants via teleconference. As a young academic, I gained a valuable perspective on EU constitutional issues given that the majority of conference participants were law students. I appreciated the opportunity to expand my professional network and make new friends. Having the conference in the leading center of Polish scholarly, cultural, and artistic life was both a treat and a privilege. In 2008, the European Union named Krakow the European Capital of Culture.

The Skalny Center also gave me the opportunity to teach a class on the European Union in 2007. In light of current developments, it was an exciting time to teach European Union poli-
Why Do You Want to Study in Poland?
UR undergraduates looking ahead to study in Kraków

"Strangely enough, I feel a strong connection to this country that I have never been to," writes Zach Mazur. "Starting at a fairly young age, the idea of ethnic and cultural identity became important to me. In elementary school we were asked one day to provide the class with our cultural origins. Each child had to turn to tell us the many nationalities that make up this country, and when it was my turn I proudly announced that I was Polish, not that I had any idea what that really meant. My mere association by birth with Poland brought me to search for more, and what I discovered was a language and culture that I want to immerse myself in, and ultimately contribute to."

"The study of Poland has always been a personal interest and high priority in my life," writes Claudia Marcott. "All of my relatives reside in Poland and I constantly feel intrigued by their way of life—past, present, and future. More importantly, I truly desire to relate to the people of Poland in a deeper sense that I can achieve by living among them, while at the same time studying the Polish language, literature, and history. Though I have been blessed by parents who have always tried to instill in me a basic understanding of these areas of study, I believe that there is always room for the chance to improve one's abilities and, therefore, to expand one's horizons. I cannot imagine a better way to spend my summer—learning about the various facets of my heritage and developing an even greater appreciation for a nation, its language, culture, and society, that has had such a strong impact on the world at a prestigious institution that offers a warm and enlightening environment to each individual."

"From an early age," Katherine Parmson writes, "Polish culture has fascinated me. I spent my young years reading books in Polish and enjoying the lutes that my parents, my nanny, and I made together. I have an interest in re-learning Polish so that I can speak with Lucy and enjoy the culture I once knew, but that's not the only reason I want to go to Krakow. I have only recently discovered that what I really want to study is international relations and political science. This new area has really gotten me curious about other cultures in the world, and especially in Europe. I want to study international relations and truly understand other people and their histories."

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Reconstructing Polish Pension Reforms at the Skalny Center

By Alexandra Hennessy

Continued from page 3
does: in October 2007, the EU decided to adopt the previously contested constitution in the form the revised Reform Treaty, which will streamline and fundamentally transform EU decision making; in February 2008, Kocur's declaration of independence revived old controversies about immigration and a common foreign policy; in April 2008, the NATO summit in Romania breathed new life into the debate on the future of a European Security and Defense Policy, and the election of Nicolas Sarkozy as the president of France profoundly influenced ongoing accession negotiations with Turkey and the idea of a Mediterranean Union within the EU. It was very rewarding to discuss these and many other current events in light of historical developments and scholarly theories about conflicts and cooperation in the European Union. I can only hope that the talented students I worked with will remember our discussions as vividly as I do.

The best things about the Skalny Center were the people I met there. Special thanks go to the director of the Skalny Center, Randall Stone, for extremely helpful advice, detailed comments on my work, and for always being generous with his time. I am grateful to Krzysztof Polakowski for teaching me enough Polish to survive my three-week stay in Poland. I am furthermore indebted to Radek Krykowska for giving two guest lectures in my class on very short notice when I attended conferences. I thank my office mate Tanya Beaginha for useful discussions and friendship during my stay. Last but not least, I am grateful to Ewa Sołowska for outstanding administrative assistance, both in Rochester and in Poland, and for creating a delightful work atmosphere throughout.

In sum, I am thankful that the Skalny fellowship enabled me to extend my research to Central and Eastern Europe, thus allowing me to "see beyond the end of my own nose" in many ways. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to study Europeanization in Poland, because adjustment processes in new member states are likely to remain among the most controversial issues for years to come. After all, the prospect for future successful enlargement rounds will depend greatly on the way in which the Central and East European member states are able to find their place in the European Union."
Return to Kraków

By Christine Kenison

I have always been interested in learning about the world beyond my own backyard. As a child, I used to trace maps for fun, and I would constantly ask my Dad, who had taken German in high school, to teach me new words. In high school, I was able to channel this enthusiasm in an academic direction and took as many foreign language classes as I could (including three years of German) and engaging in independent study to fit in the equivalent of five years of French in three years.

The seeds for my future fascination with Poland were also sown during high school, when I took pre-calculus with Mrs. Koch, a Polish immigrant and one of the most dedicated teachers I had ever had. She taught me my first Polish words and sparked my interest in her homeland. However, I was not able to start learning Polish formally until college. As a freshman, I received a Skalny scholarship to study at the Jagiellonian University Summer School. I spent July 2006 in Kraków learning Polish and attending lectures on Polish history. My first visit to Poland was something of a cultural downloading. I knew exactly seven words, and the language barrier was overwhelming at first. I was determined to explore the city alone for the simple reason that I could not pronounce the name of my tram stop (Akademia Pedagogiczna). However, four weeks and many flashcards later, I could pronounce Akademia Pedagogiczna and had come to love Poland. I was granted the Skalny scholarship to attend the Jagiellonian Summer School again in 2007. When I went to Kraków for the second time that July, I felt much more at home there.

At the University of Rochester, I have completed coursework in Polish language, literature, history, and politics, which have provided me with a solid foundation in Polish studies. I have been preparing for my Fulbright project during the current academic year by taking an advanced Polish language independent study and a course on European history after 1945. I have just learned that I have been accepted by the Fulbright commission and will spend the 2008-2009 academic year in Kraków as a Fulbright scholar. It will be an incredible experience to be able to study Polish national and cultural identity at the Jagiellonian University, one of the foremost centers of Polish literary and cultural studies. I intend to affiliate with the Department of International Political Studies (IPS) at the Jagiellonian University. Professor Mariusz Paweł Markowski, the department chair, has graciously agreed to supervise my work.

I plan to study the confrontation of Polish literature between Socialist Realism and its literary critique in the form of satirical and grotesque literature. I will examine works by such authors as Leszek Kolakowski and Stanisław Mrożek, whose use of the modern fairy tale as a means of literary satire interests me. I plan to prepare for this project by reading traditional Polish fairy tales to understand what this ancient literary genre could offer Kolakowski and Mrożek as modern writers.

Unlike many students of Polish studies, I cannot lay claim to any Polish ancestry. It is unfortunate that Poland and Polish culture, which have played such a dynamic role in European and world history, are too little understood in the United States among those who have no ethnic connection to Poland. This is one of the reasons why I plan to pursue graduate work in cultural and literary studies, with a comparative emphasis on German and Polish literature. I hope to encourage the study of Polish language and culture in the United States.

Struggling with Europe: Polish Foreign Policy After the 2007 Election

By Radosław Rybkowski

The Polish transformation after 1989 resulted in substantial changes in the Polish political system. One of the results of the Round Table agreement was the restoration of the office of the President of Poland. Under the communist regime, the formal head of state was the Head of the Council of State of the Republic of Poland, but it was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party that enjoyed real political power. The Round Table agreement stated that the President should be elected by the National Assembly (both chambers of Polish Parliament: Sejm and Senate), notably by the popular vote. Wacław Jaruzelski was elected the first President after the transformation. He was simultaneously First Secretary of the Party and Prime Minister and was the one who imposed martial law to cope with the Solidarity movement. In fact, the office of the President was reestablished without clear legislation concerning its power and autonomy. He was to designate the Prime Minister and to be the commander-in-chief of the Polish military forces, but his actual executive power was not defined.

During the transition period, 1989-990, the weak President was not a bad option for Poland, especially considering that the President was Jaruzelski and that the Sejm (lower chamber of Parliament and part of the National Assembly) had not been elected in a fully democratic way (60% of the seats were restricted to the Party). The situation changed after the 1990 presidential election. Lech Walesa was elected by popular vote, and his authority as President was legitimized. Walesa tried to secure executive power for himself, especially in the field of foreign and defense policy. His advisor, Lech Palandzyński, a professor of constitutional law, helped him to struggle with the Parliament and the Government. The term “presidential ministries” (of foreign policy, defense, and of internal affairs) was coined mostly due to Palandzyński’s work; using cases in Polish law, he could argue that these ministries had to be co-nominated by the President. The Small Constitution of 1992, which amended the previous communist constitution of Poland, mostly defined the division of powers between the President and Prime Minister and Parliament.

The Small Constitution was valid until a complete new Constitution was adopted in a public referendum on May 25, 1997. The Constitution of Poland is the key document that regulates the division of powers between the President and the Government, which consists of the Prime Minister and the cabinet. In the field of foreign policy, the Constitution remains unclear. Article 133 states that the President is “the representative of the State in foreign affairs” and that he or she “shall cooperate with the Prime Minister and the appropriate minister in respect of foreign policy,” but the procedures for this cooperation are not defined. Article 136 referring to the Government, holds that “The Council of Ministers shall conduct the internal affairs and foreign policy of the Republic of Poland and therefore shall exercise general...
Greetings from Mykolayiv, Lviv and Mykolayiv

By Ewa Hauser

This will be the longest time I have been away from the United States since I emigrated from Poland in the early 1970s. I am now finishing my third semester in Ukraine, a country that has always interested me, partially because of the fact that my father was born and grew up in Bydgoszcz, north of Łódź, before coming to Poland in 1920. I have always had a secret desire to see what is the “steppe” he (as well as Adam Mickiewicz) described. These were the “kresy” of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth written about by many Polish writers. So I am very glad that I could experience it after any uncertainty between the two states and the subsequent resumption of cultural exchanges.

After I finished my first spring semester in Mykolayiv in 2007 as part of my extended Fulbright grant, I was invited to present a lecture at a conference on the history of the city at the University of Mykolayiv. The conference included a special session dedicated to the history of the city, sponsored by the Polish Ministry of Higher Education. Together with my colleague from the University of Rochester, we presented a paper on the Polish diaspora. The conference was scheduled to be repeated every five years.

I spent fall 2007 teaching at the Department of Cultural Studies at the Lviv National Ivan Franko University. I worked with very good graduate students who have become my friends, and we have exchanged correspondence frequently since. Although Lviv was under the influence of the Ukrainian national liberation movement, perhaps because of the long association with Poland. Thanks to my students, I discovered new restaurants in Lviv that are modeled on the Ukrainian Parish Army “Kryška” (today’s). To enter you have to know where the restaurant is and know the password! I have more stories to share in the fall presentation I am planning at the Skalny Center.

Right now, after another semester of teaching in Mykolayiv, which I love, I am finishing a paper on the Ukrainian National Narrative. I will present it at another international conference on nationalism at the University of Warsaw. I also will chair a panel at this conference discussing Polish versions of nationalism. The conference is being held in Warsaw and because of our past close collaboration from 2003 to 2008, I will visit old friends and colleagues.

The Rise and Fall of Democracy in Russia

By Tanya Bagashka

Institutional choices in young democracies have lasting consequences. Decisions on issues such as the distribution of power between the executive and the legislature, or electoral rules can both define the advantages of the political actors that created them and allow them to consolidate power. Despite their enduring consequences, institutional choices in young democracies were often made under great uncertainty due to the absence of established parties, electoral records, and rapidly changing conditions. Russia and the introduction of a presidential system with a mixed electoral system is a case in point.

In my dissertation, I investigate the effects of institutional incentives, namely, the electoral rules and the distribution of power between the president and the legislature on the development of the party system in the Russian Duma. I identify empirically the structure of legislative voting coalitions in the 1995-1999 Dumas, without assuming that follow party lines. I find that non-nominal affiliation of the parties that legislators said they belonged to provide a very weak basis for the support of each party competing in the party list elections, which would make it very difficult to measure electoral preferences. I find that legislative elections were not only determined by the number of votes, which the voters were most likely to be able to monitor.

In the third chapter, I extend the analysis of legislative voting coalitions to the 1999-2003 Dumas. I find that the existence of strong legislative parties was achieved by the presidential approach toward majority building, which relied on building cross-party coalitions by offering support to individual deputies through patronage, and the ability of legislative parties that lacked strong labels and cohesive platforms. In contrast, Putin’s unambiguous commitment to a strong presidential party and a stable government has weakened the legislative parties in the presidential coalition.

In addition, I found that pressure originating in local constituencies could drive legislative parties, but only when the presidential strategy did not rely on party-based coalitions. There is strong evidence that constituency pressures affected key votes on economic reform by using survey responses. In addition, I take advantage of the fact that party-list elections were won at the same time as district elections to use the support of each party competing in the party list elections, which would make it very difficult to measure electoral preferences.
Struggling with Europe: Polish Foreign Policy After the 2007 Election

By Radosław Rybkowski

Continued from page 5

control on the field of relations with other States and international organisations.” and “conclude international agreements requiring ratification as well as accept and renounce foreign international agreements.” The division of authority between the President, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, according to the Constitution, is unclear, and therefore conflicts between the President and the Government are quite possible and predictable.

The situation was stable after the 2005 elections, when the President and the Government represented the same party. Law and Justice (PiS) and the Kaczyński twin brothers, Lech and Jarosław, held the offices of the President and the Prime Minister, respectively. It changed substantially after the parliamentary elections of 2007. Lech Kaczyński remained the President (the presidential term in Poland is five years) but Law and Justice lost to Civic Platform (Platform Obywatelska). Civic Platform won 41.52% of the popular support and accounted for 209 seats in the Sejm (out of 460), while Law and Justice’s support was 22.13% and 150 seats. Donald Tusk, the leader of the Civic Platform party, created a coalition with the Peasants Party (31 seats in the Parliament) and was designated the Prime Minister by Lech Kaczyński. This very first moment proved that the cooperation between the President and the Prime Minister would be rather difficult. The official “ceremony” in the presidential palace lasted less than one minute.

Just after the designation, the President stated that he would not accept Radosław Sikorski, the obvious and long-time declared candidate of the Civic Platform, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Lech Kaczyński publicly announced that, according to documents in his possession, Sikorski was absolutely unacceptable. A subsequent meeting with Donald Tusk did not change the position of the Civic Plat-

and Polish foreign policy.

The President stated that Radosław Sikorski, while a Minister of Defense during the Law and Justice government, had behaved in a “very, very unprofessional” way during the negotiations over the American anti-missile defense system in Poland. The President never explained the nature of this “unprofessional” behavior, but eventually accepted Sikorski’s candidacy. President Lech Kaczyński’s personal biases make Polish foreign policy an arena of struggle, especially with

Continued on page 8
Struggling with Europe: Polish Foreign Policy After the 2007 Election

By Radosław Rybowski

Continued from page 7

respecto Russia and Germany. His comments about Russian policy do not facilitate the work of the government. For example, during the NATO summit in Bucharest (April 24, 2008), Kaczyński stated that Poland would veto EU-Russian economic negotiations if Russia acted against Ukrainian and Georgian NATO membership.

The most important issue since the end of 2007 in the field of EU-Polish relations is the Treaty of Lisbon—the document preparing substantial reforms of EU institutions, to transform the EU into a more effective and efficient organization. The treaty was negotiated during the Law and Justice government and then declared to be an important Polish victory, but after several months had passed, Lech Kaczyński threatened to veto the treaty that he himself had negotiated. The President's declaration astonished not only Civic Platform politicians but many Polish media commentators. The President recently declared that he would not sign the act of the Parliament accepting the treaty unless a new regulation concerning the authority of the President and the Prime Minister in the field of EU-Polish relations was passed.

The lack of clear rules regarding the division of power is not only a problem for Polish internal policy, but also for international relations. Le Figaro, the French newspaper, wrote this April that President Nicolas Sarkozy had postponed his visit to Poland because he was not sure who he should have talked with: the President or the Prime Minister. Therefore, Poland needs a clear division of authority to prevent similar situations from arising in the future.

If the regulation concerning this problem is passed, it will probably be the only positive outcome of the struggles and quarrels between the President and the Prime Minister.