



CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CATHOLIC
CHURCH IN POLAND
BEFORE THE EU ACCESSION REFERENDUM

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Abstract

The Catholic Church in Poland has not only spread the system of Christian values — it has been placed in Polish national structure. Because of this the Church has been one of the most important actors in the Polish socio-political life and it has always exerted a substantial influence on different fields of Pole's life. The integration with the EU has been one of the most important burning issues in Poland recently. The so-called Poland's return to Europe became one of the biggest challenges for the Polish Roman Catholic Church. It is worth adding that the Polish government was afraid of the possible result of the accession referendum and because of that long before the vote, this post-communist government started to seek for the Church's backing for the idea of integration. In this context the paper describes the roll of the Catholic Church during the negotiation process and in the accession referendum.

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The Roman-Catholic Church in Poland has been a national institution for ages. The Catholic Church in Poland has not only spread the system of Christian values — it has been placed in Polish national structure. In this way, it has become the fundament of Polish tradition and cultural values. Because of this the Church has been one of the most important actors in the Polish socio-political life and it has always exerted a substantial influence on different fields of Poles' life. So, the Church has taken its stand on many topics, which have been in the centre of societal interest.

After the collapse of communist system in the Central-Eastern Europe the Catholic Church in Poland, like Polish society, faced new difficulties. The integration with the EU has been one of the most important burning issues in Poland recently. The so-called *Poland's return to Europe* became one of the biggest challenges for the Polish Roman Catholic Church. The debate within the Church intensified especially after the first visit of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland to the European Union's institutions in Brussels in 1997. Since that time, in general, one can speak of two different attitudes towards Polish accession to the European Union. One of them was sceptical about this development and not willing to face this challenge at all. The second one, expressed in the official documents issued by the Polish Episcopate was a symptom of the Church's openness for the process of the European integration. The problem was that the first option had a considerable support from Radio 'Maryja'. Radio 'Maryja', the most influential catholic radio station in Poland, directed by father Tadeusz Rydzyk presented many sceptical arguments and called on Polish Catholics not to support the integration with the EU.

It is worth adding that the Polish government was afraid of the possible result of the accession referendum and because of that long before the vote, this post-communist government started to seek for the Church's backing for the idea of integration. The Church and state dialogue acquired the highest level of intensity at the turn of 2002 and 2003. At that time there were two very important subjects of this debate: abortion and the problem of references to Christian values in the future constitution of the European Union. The Polish Church expected post-communist government to prepare a special declaration, which would

guarantee the superiority of Polish legislation above law of EU in the field of morality. In addition, Polish bishops expected Polish representatives to European Convent to give their support for the proposal of reference to Christian heritage in the preamble of the EU constitution. Those expectations were very challenging for left-wing government, what made the discussion very hard.

However already in 2002 there were much more meetings concerning the problems of the European integration between the state officials and the Church's representatives than ever before. The Polish Bishops expected the government to give them its support for the amendments to the constitution of the European Union. As other Roman-Catholic Churches in the West, the Church in Poland, began to exert pressure in favour of placing Christian references in the Constitution of EU. On the other hand, the Polish government took care of a good relationships with Church in the sphere of European integration. The Polish authorities became more and more aware of the great influence the Church could have on the citizens' opinion before the forthcoming referendum. What is more, the government could hope that the Episcopate would restrain the catholic Euro-sceptics, especially those from Radio Maryja. Some of Polish mass media expressed such conjectures¹. The others spread the opinion that Polish government achieved a kind of unofficial agreement with the Church. According to it, government was to refrain from liberalising abortion law and in exchange Church would support the government's efforts to join the EU. Such an assumption was to some extent confirmed by the so-called 'hundred women letter'. In February 2002 The 8th of March Women Association (Porozumienie Kobiet 8 Marca) and the foundation National Women's Information Centre (Ośrodek Informacji Środowisk Kobietych – OŚKa) prepared a special open-letter addressed to the European Parliament. It was signed by almost a hundred well-known Polish women. The authors of this letter implied that the government reached an agreement with the Church. As to some of them: "the Church will support integration with Europe, if the government does not raise the problem of modification of the abortion law"². But neither government nor Church representatives confirmed the information about this kind of accord. Undoubtedly both government and Church made much effort to influence the societal opinion on the issue of European integration.

To some extent, the conference between Polish prime minister, Leszek Miller and the Primate of Poland, cardinal Jozef Glemp, may be treated as a confirmation of such a thesis. This meeting (7th of January, 2002) was held in the Primate's residence in Warsaw, but it was

¹ See e.g.: Jacek Moskwa, *Sam autorytet nie wystarczy*, „Rzeczpospolita” no 17 (21 I 2002 r.)

² *List stu kobiet*, Warszawa 4 lutego 2002 r., <http://www.oska.org.pl/oska/liststu.html>

Leszek Miller who insisted on it. Moreover, it was the first official meeting with the Primate, since Miller had become the head of Polish government. Among other things they touched upon the problem of European integration. Leszek Miller and cardinal Józef Glemp also discussed the revitalisation of the Government and Episcopate Joint Commission and the Concordat Commission. After the meeting Leszek Miller told the press that: “the voice of the Church will be very important during the accession referendum”, whereas cardinal Glemp said: “the Church has warmly referred to the integration with the European Union”³.

The conference of the Government–Episcopate Joint Commission took place on 18th of March. One of the topics was the problem of European integration. After the meeting the prime minister was asked if the Government expected the Church to support the integration. Miller replied that he would not imply what opinion the Church should express about the integration, nevertheless he highlighted that the Pope’s view is in this case very clear what showed the Church’s approval towards the European integration. On the other hand, cardinal Józef Glemp noticed that “the Church focuses on the sphere of ideas and values, while the government should be interested in economic and financial matters”. Furthermore the Primate stated that the Roman-Catholic Church could be helpful in constructing united Europe, because “by bringing closer the spirituality of Europe the Church could accompany the efforts made by economists and financiers in favour of the European integration”. Cardinal Józef Glemp referred also to the alleged agreement between government and Church. He assured that he knew nothing about it and called it as “a myth and press facts”. The prime minister Leszek Miller denied the existence of such an agreement as well⁴.

Two days after this meeting, the 316th plenary session of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland started. This session was of great importance because the Polish bishops adopted the first official document on European integration process called “The Polish Bishops towards the European Integration”. This document may be interpreted as a gentle support for integration process.

³ bł, jw, *Prymas Polski spotkał się z premierem Millerem*,

<http://www.kai.pl/nawyserwis/newsroom.xml?r=ogolny%2Barchiwum&id=87482> The Government–Episcopate Joint Commission works on the basis of the Act of Relationships between the Government and the Roman-Catholic Church (art. 4th). However the Concordat Commissions (on behalf of government and church) were bring into being in 1998 to put the decisions of the Concordat into effect.

⁴ bł, awo, *Papieska pielgrzymka, UE i wolontariat tematami Komisji Wspólnej Rządu i Episkopatu*,

<http://www.kai.pl/nawyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=90532> The Episcopate was represented by: cardinal Józef Glemp, Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski (vice-president of the Commission), Archbishop Zygmunt Kamiński (metropolitan of Szczecin and Kamień), Archbishop Józef Życiński (metropolitan of Lublin), Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek (president of the Concordat Commission), Bishop Piotr Libera (General Secretary of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland) and Bishop Alojzy Orszulik (bishop in Łowicz).

On the 7th of May 2002 another very important meeting was held. In Namiestnikowski Palace in Warsaw the president of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski received the cardinal Józef Glemp. Apart from Polish representatives to European Convention, there was Archbishop Henryk Muszyński, Bishop Piotr Libera and father Adam Szulz – the spokesman for the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland – who participated in this gathering. After two-hour meeting the President's Chancellery issued a special announcement which emphasised that European integration should not only be understood as a political and economic development but also as a spiritual process⁵. On behalf of Episcopate father Szulz said during the press conference that there was an important effect of the meeting in the Presidential Palace. According to him, there was agreed that the Polish representatives to the European Convention would support *Invocatio Dei* in the EU Constitution. As he put it: “the church representatives understood it in this manner anyway”. Minister Dariusz Szymczycha standing for the Presidential Chancellery reported that Aleksander Kwaśniewski had given two arguments for ethic, moral and religious references in the EU Constitution. Firstly, according to him, the Catholic Church has been present in Europe for ages and it has been one of the most important European institution. Secondly, in Kwaśniewski's opinion, *Invocatio Dei* included in Polish Constitution from 1997 serves as a good argument for it. Szymczycha was also asked if the Polish representatives to European Convention would opt for Christian references in the future EU Constitution. His answer was very ambiguous: “Polish representatives to the European Convention will present these arguments”⁶. Meanwhile Archbishop Henryk Muszyński confirmed father Szulz's reports and stated that Polish delegates “would postulate to put *Invocatio Dei* in the EU Constitution and would propose the same character of the preamble as present in the Polish Constitution”⁷.

The Church's support for integration was probably touched upon during the meeting with Aleksander Kwasniewski as well. However, Archbishop Muszyński noticed that “the Church is not to support anything and the tasks of Church and state are complementary”⁸. Anyway, the meeting in the Presidential Palace may be treated as a sign of a considerable

⁵ im, *Spotkanie prezydenta RP z Prymasem Polski w sprawie przyszłości Europy - komunikat Kancelarii Prezydenta RP*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevnewsroom.xml?r=ogolny%2Barchiwum&id=92750>

⁶ bl, *Polscy delegaci do Konwentu UE zgodzili się promować invocatio Dei w konstytucji europejskiej*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=92754>

⁷ “We, the Polish Nation - all citizens of the Republic, Both those who believe in God as the source of truth, justice, good and beauty, As well as those not sharing such faith but respecting those universal values as arising from other sources...”

⁸ Bogumił Łoziński, *Abp Muszyński: Nie "klerykalizujemy" Konwentu lecz szukamy wspólnych wartości*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=92765>

interest presented by the Polish government in co-operating with Church before EU referendum.

One month after, on 5th of June, 2002 the Catholic Press Agency organised a special conference devoted to *Invocatio Dei* in the EU Constitution. The leaders of catholic media and associations as well as the Polish delegates to European Convention took part in this debate. One of them, senator Edmund Wittbrodt, expressed an interesting opinion on the issue. According to him, there was a chance of implementing the invocation including God in the EU Constitution but it would not be an easy undertaking. Yet, contrary to the comments articulated after the meeting held in May in the Presidential Palace, he had many doubts about the standpoints Józef Oleksy and Danuta Hübner would take in European Convention in relation to *Invocatio Dei*. Wittbrodt said he would support the invocation, but he also noticed: “It seems that Minister for European Affairs Danuta Hübner will take favourable stance, yet it is difficult to say anything about Józef Oleksy”⁹.

Apart from those fundamental dilemmas mentioned above, a several days after a new conflict between government and Episcopate appeared based on different grounds. At the beginning of July 2002 the meeting of the so-called Youth’s Convention was to take place in Brussels. Young people aged 18 to 25 deriving from EU member states and the candidate countries were due to participate in it. During the meeting in the Namiestnikowski Palace both the Episcopate and the President decided that Poland would be represented by young people present of Christian outlook. On the 3rd of June cardinal Glemp and bishop Libera sent to Danuta Hübner the list of the Church’s candidates to the convention (3 women and 3 men). Yet surprisingly none of these persons were enumerated on the official list published by the government on the 11th of June. According to the authorities, the Church’s delegates were proposed to late because the deadline passed on the 30th of May. However, in bishop Libera’s view, who referred to the information from Nunciature of Brussels, the deadline was set on the 5th of June. He was deeply discontented with this situation and added that “the further co-operation between Episcopate of Poland and the representatives to the European Convention was called into question”. A few days after some of the Polish mass media reported on one clerical person allegedly included by the Church in the list of candidates for the Youth’s Convention. Bishop Libera categorically denied this information¹⁰.

⁹ Bogumił Łoziński, *Sen. Wittbrodt: są szansę na invocatio Dei w przyszłej konstytucji UE*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?r=ogolny&id=94100>

¹⁰ f.g., *Szóstka plus ksiądz*, „Rzeczpospolita” nr 138 z 15 VI 2002 r., bł, mp, *Bp Libera zdziwiony i rozgoryczony decyzjami w sprawie delegatów do europejskiego Konwentu Młodych*,

The matter of exclusion the Church's candidates from the Youth's Convention was also discussed on 318th plenary session of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland (13th of June 2002). As to some Polish bishops it was the confirmation of concerns that "the Church may be treated manipulatively and parenthetically in constructing Europe". During this session the Polish Episcopate emphasised the necessity of including *Invocatio Dei* to the EU Constitution. Bishop Libera stressed that "Polish bishops will not accept the situation, in which in fundamental document of the future Europe there will not be any reference to God". He also added that "it would be difficult for the Polish bishops to support the activities, which are discriminating for believers"¹¹.

It seems that bishop Libera's opinion showed the determination of the Church in integration matters. Moreover, the possible result of the Church's engagement in the final shape of the EU Constitution would show if the Catholic Church in Poland could play an active role in the process of the European integration.

On the other hand, the Polish government took advantage of any opportunity to gain backing from the Church. The example of the December audience, which Pope granted the prime minister Leszek Miller demonstrated it very clearly. It was held on the 5th of December 2002. It is worth noticing that it happened only one week before the final closure of the negotiations concerning the conditions of accession which was due to take place in Copenhagen. The meeting with John Paul II had not been planned before nevertheless on the 2nd of December the Polish government decided to pay Silvio Berlusconi a visit in Rome. The question whether the Pope would receive the Polish prime minister was sent to the Holy See. In Miller's opinion the positive reply arrived "nearly immediately". During the audience, (which was rather brief – it lasted only 15 min.) Leszek Miller discussed with John Paul II the problem of the European integration. Afterwards, the Polish prime minister announced that "during the meeting he expressed the opinion that the support for the idea of integration presented by the Holy See was very essential in the final stage of negotiations and undoubtedly it helps the Polish government as well as our Polish negotiators in negotiating the best conditions"¹².

Other representatives of the authorities were ready to make concessions to the Church's expectations. At the beginning of December, Józef Oleksy affirmed that he opted

<http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevnewsroom.xml?r=ogolny&id=94347>, b1, *Bp Libera: Kościół nie proponował księdza do Konwentu Młodych UE*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=94553>

¹¹ b1, *Bp Libera: Polscy biskupi nie wyobrażają sobie konstytucji europejskiej bez odniesienia do Boga*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevnewsroom.xml?r=ogolny&id=94444>

for using the Polish version of *Invocatio* and statement about Christian origins of Europe in the European Constitution. Nevertheless Oleksy declared that such an attitude contradicted the standards shared by the European social democrats¹³.

Just before the beginning of the Copenhagen summit, which was due to take place between 12th and 13th of December, the Polish government informed the Episcopate about the official standpoint it would take. On the 12th of December Danuta Hübner, Minister for European Affairs met bishop Piotr Libera in order to pass him on an official information. After this meeting, the Episcopate's press agency announced that "in the process of integration the Church pays attention as to co-operation in the political and economic field as to the wider context of uniting Europe i.e. to the social, cultural and spiritual dimension"¹⁴.

After the Copenhagen summit, the Polish Episcopate did not take an official stance on the occasion of the closure of the accession negotiations. Certainly some bishops expressed their comments on the issue however they could be treated as only private opinions¹⁵. The Episcopate paid attention first of all to the spiritual dimension of the European integration what was not the point of negotiation.

Meanwhile, on the 19th of December cardinal Józef Glemp met prime minister Leszek Miller. There was at least one interesting effect of this conference because the Primate of Poland announced that the Catholic clergy would not campaign against the integration with European Union. He also stated that the Catholic Church in Poland desired to act in favour of integration in the sphere of morality "by real, genuine and reliable information"¹⁶.

The very same day a new important element of co-operation between the state and Church appeared. In "Rzeczpospolita" (one of the most significant Polish newspaper) Marek Dyduch, the General Secretary of Alliance of Democratic Left (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej - SLD) revealed a shocking statement. Dyduch announced that after the EU referendum SLD would liberalise the abortion law in Poland. It is not hard to predict that the

¹² ml, kg, *Papież i premier rozmawiali o integracji europejskiej i udziale Polski w UE*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?r=ogolny%2Barchiwum&id=101386>

¹³ mp, *Oleksy: opowiadam się za Europą, która posiada wymiar duchowy*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?r=ogolny%2Barchiwum&id=101383>

¹⁴ teka, *Min. Hübner rozmawiała z sekretarzem Episkopatu o Polsce w UE*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=101621>

¹⁵ See e.g.: awo, *Bp Pieronek: otwiera się perspektywa rozwoju*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?r=ogolny&id=101693>, d, *Abp Zimoń: miejmy odwagę głosić Chrystusa w UE*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=101715>, jbł, *Abp Michalik po szczycie w Kopenhadze: Kościół od wieków dąży do jedności*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?r=ogolny&id=101740> Prymas: *po Kopenhadze mamy warunki, aby kształtować lepszą przyszłość*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=101701>

¹⁶ pb, *Spotkanie Prymasa Polski z Premierem*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=101920>

catholic associations strongly criticised and condemned the Dyduch's statement. Reacting to the Dyduch's unfortunate declaration some of the Polish bishops announced that the Catholic Church in Poland would demand from the government a special annex in the Poland's accession agreement guaranteeing the sanctity of Polish law protecting human life. Archbishop Henryk Muszyński came even to a conclusion that the threat for human life was not situated in the European Union but first of all in Poland. He also added – what should have been very embarrassing for the government – that the question of abortion “could have a significant influence on the citizens' standpoint before the accession referendum”¹⁷. The statement of the metropolitan of Gniezno was of critical sense: if the Polish government supports the amendments in the abortion law, the Church will not be able to back the Poland's integration with the European Union.

At the beginning of 2003 the Leszek Millers' government became less and less popular within the Poles, so the prime minister could have treated the possible good result of the referendum as a political pawn. In this light, the Church seemed to be a powerful institution which had a considerable impact on the voters' convictions what could provide the success of the ballot. Hence, when on the 7th of January 2003, the Institute of Public Affairs published the results of a survey entitled “Perish Clergy towards European Integration” all Polish media started to scrutinise them very deeply. In general, the survey demonstrated that the Catholic clergy in Poland presented a favourable attitude towards Poland's integration with European Union. On the other hand, the support was much smaller than in 1998¹⁸. In 2002, 59 per cent of respondents wanted to vote ‘yes’ in the accession referendum. In 1997, 84% of the Polish clergy declared the support for the integration. Although the results of the 2002 survey might have been considered as optimistic, there arose many doubts about the possible outcome of the accession referendum as the number of opponents increased from 6% in 1997 to 20% in 2002 and the number of irresolute respondents augmented from 10% to 21%¹⁹.

A few days after, the Speaker of Sejm, Marek Borowski, revealed to the Polish Press Agency that the abortion law in Poland should be liberalized. Moreover, he proposed the citizens to decide it in general election. Certainly his statement was strongly criticized,

¹⁷ bł, *Abp Muszyński: w umowie akcesyjnej Polski z UE musi być klauzula chroniąca życie*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=101940>

¹⁸ At the turn of 1997 and 1998 the Institute of Public Affairs carried out the first survey. See: Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Jacek Kucharczyk, Beata Roguska, Elżbieta Firlit, *Duchowieństwo polskie wobec perspektywy integracji europejskiej*, (in:) Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (ed.), *Polska eurodebata*, Warszawa 1999.

especially by several catholic groups like the Polish Federation of Life Defence's Movements (Polska Federacja Ruchów Obrony Życia – PFROŻ)²⁰. It is possible to presume that politicians from SLD returned to the abortion matters because they wanted to protect themselves from their own electorate's criticism. On 20th of January, two days after Borowski's statement, the session of the Government–Episcopate Joint Commission took place. The Church representatives expected the government to put into the accession treaty a special clause, which would protect life, family and marriage²¹. The announcement prepared by the press office of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland comprised the following opinions:

At the same time, the Episcopate pointed out the need and advisability to put into the accession document the records, which would guarantee the protection of fundamental values in accordance with the Polish Constitution such as: the protection of life from conception to natural death, the protection of marriage as a connection of man and woman and the protection of family²².

As one can perceive, the Episcopate aimed at achieving far-reaching goals. The Church did not only demand a written assurance that Polish law would not be subordinate to the legislation of the European Union in the matters connected to morality. The announcement quoted above confirmed that the Church expected the government to introduce to the accession treaty a general reference, which would guarantee the protection of life, marriage and family. The difference was fundamental: it consisted in the fact that the Church did not expect the government to admit the superiority of Polish law concerning moral issues, because the Episcopate realized that the Polish regulation could also change. The statements of some SLD's leaders mentioned above illustrated such implications. Apparently, the Church representatives hoped that if a general declaration guaranteeing the protection of life, marriage and family had been added to the accession treaty, it would have become superior to the norms included in the Polish legislation.

¹⁹ Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (ed.), *Duchowieństwa parafialne a integracja europejska*, Warszawa 2003, p. 27; Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Jacek Kucharczyk, Beata Roguska, Elżbieta Firlit op. cit., (in:) Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 46

²⁰ im, *Czy będzie referendum w sprawie liberalizacji ustawy antyaborcyjnej?*,

<http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevnewsroom.xml?id=102899>

²¹ mp, *Ochrona wartości w procesie integracji z UE, tematem Komisji Wspólnej Rządu i Episkopatu*,

<http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevnewsroom.xml?id=102906>

²² as, *Biuro Prasowe Episkopatu: Komunikat z posiedzenia Komisji Wspólnej*,

<http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevnewsroom.xml?id=102987>

The government was aware that it had to do something in this matter in order to gain the Church's support for the integration with the European Union. The Episcopate could take an unfriendly attitude towards the idea of integration just before the accession referendum, if that condition had not been carried out. The Episcopate did not have to wait long for the authorities' response. On the 28th of January, the government sent a special declaration to the European Union's negotiators, which was to be included to the accession treaty of 2003. The text was in fact brief:

*The government of the Republic of Poland understands that none of the rulings of the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty establishing the European Community, as well as rulings of the Treaties modifying or completing these Treaties, do interfere the Republic of Poland with managing matters of moral significance and relating to the protection of human life*²³.

The content of this declaration had extremely conciliatory character. It could satisfy neither the left-wing SLD's electorate (because it was published), nor the Church (because it did not meet the Catholics' expectations). Initially the Church's hierarchy had ambiguous opinion of this document. Archbishop Henryk Muszyński stated outright that as every compromise this declaration could not satisfy anybody however it was good it had been formed. He added the bishops would be satisfied "if all the postulates would be specified in the text of this declaration"²⁴. The Primate of Poland, cardinal Józef Glemp pointed out that apart from some doubts, this document "unquestionably makes up a formal back up"²⁵.

Nonetheless, catholic associations kept on directly expressing their dissatisfaction. On 5th of February, the Polish Federation of Life Defence's Movements (PFROŻ) prepared an open-letter addressed to Leszek Miller. The signatories expected the declaration "to have a character of multilateral protocol, written precisely and unambiguously"²⁶.

The Polish Bishops adopted an official standpoint concerning the government's declaration on 18th of February during the session of the Standing Council of the Conference

²³ *Deklaracja Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w związku z Traktatem Akcesyjnym, dotycząca spraw o znaczeniu moralnym i ochrony życia ludzkiego*, (in:) *Komunikat po Radzie Ministrów*, Warszawa, 28 stycznia 2003 r., http://www.kprm.gov.pl/1937_8324.htm

²⁴ pb, *Abp Muszyński: rządowa deklaracja to wynik kompromisu*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?id=103294>

²⁵ im, *Prymas o deklaracji rządu do traktatu akcesyjnego*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?id=103347>

²⁶ aw, *P. Wosicki o deklaracji w sprawie moralności i ochrony życia: rząd chowa głowę w piasek*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?id=103318>, tk, *List otwarty do premiera o dokument w sprawie ochrony praw w UE*

of the Episcopate of Poland. It was much more disapproving than some bishops' earlier statements. According to the Standing Council the content of the declaration was too general and did not "constitute a sufficient protection of the issues it is due to concern". In addition, the Episcopate decided to invite Danuta Hübner to the next session of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland²⁷.

What could be surprising was the fact that not more than three weeks after publishing the declaration the bishops changed their minds and considered it as unsatisfactory although directly after its redaction the Episcopate was rather positive about it. One can point out two answers to this problem. Firstly, the decisive activities of the lay Catholic associations, which strongly criticized the government's proposal, could influence the Episcopate's decision. Secondly, at the very beginning the Catholic Church realized that a very general declaration was the maximal concession the Leszek Miller's left wing government could make — at the same time, it was maximum the Church may have reached in this field. It was not worth struggling for something, which was not achievable especially in the view of the fact that likely failure of the Episcopate's actions would erode the authority of the Church. On the other hand, it would be dangerous to take a standpoint too favourable towards the government's declaration while the Catholic associations were strongly opposed to it.

During the 321st session of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland (11th – 12th of March) the bishops discussed the issue of the European integration with the Minister for European Affairs Danuta Hübner. After the meeting the journalists asked her how the government was going to dispel doubts concerning the declaration. As she replied:

*"The declaration is so general and although it concerns the questions connected to morality and protection of life, it allows interpretations close to everyone. The Episcopate is fully entitled to interpret this declaration: if and in what way it fulfils the Church's teaching"*²⁸.

One may conclude that the Episcopate realised that it was not possible to implement more precise points to the declaration. On the other hand, the government understood that the Episcopate had right to interpret this very general text in the way characteristic of the Catholic Church.

²⁷ bl, *Episkopat Polski: rządowa deklaracja w sprawie moralności niewystarczająca*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/anevroom.xml?id=103992>

²⁸ mp, pb, tk, *Integracja europejska głównym tematem dzisiejszych obrad Episkopatu*, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=104770>, mp, Min. Hübner: rozmowa z Episkopatem dotyczyła bardziej przyszłości Europy niż referendum, <http://www.kai.pl/nowyserwis/newsroom.xml?id=104767>

Yet, it was the Sejm, which contributed to the compromise relating to possible results of the accession to the European Union on legislation concerning morality. On 11th of April, the Sejm adopted a special resolution. It was European and Culture and Media Committee, which prepared this statement:

Heading towards integration with other European countries within the confines of European Union; in the face of forthcoming accession referendum on Poland's accession into the European Union, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland states that Polish legislation is not limited by any international regulations within the domain of: moral order of social life, dignity of family, marriage and education, as well as protection of human life²⁹.

As many as 374 deputies voted for the resolution, only 25 voted against it. The adoption of it put an end to the debate on the problem of abortion in the context of the European integration. The Church representatives were aware that in fact it was not of great significance. Nevertheless, the Sejm resolution was adopted warmly than the government declaration.

Although neither the declaration proposed by the government nor the Sejm regulation was of grater legislative importance, they undeniably influenced the Episcopate's standpoint before the accession referendum. Besides, the fact that two branches of government dominated by left-wing politicians, whose attitude was probably much closer to the lay part of the European Union than to Catholic majority in Poland can be treated as the Church's success.

As the government's declaration as the Sejm regulation demonstrated the authorities' will to make concessions in favour of the Church. Yet, the Church more and more concerned about the European Convention's proposals concerning the European Union constitution. The probable lack of *Invocatio Dei* and references to Christianity in the draft of constitution were of special concern. According to the previous arrangements, Polish representatives insisted on using the invocation contained in the Polish Constitution from 1997. However, this option did not gain the support of the majority of Convention members.

In this way just before the accession referendum the Roman-Catholic Church in Poland achieved concessions assuring that the Polish legislative would not be restricted by any external authority. Yet the government still expected the Episcopate to clearly express the support for Poland's integration with the European Union. The 322nd session of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland, which took place between 30th of April and 2nd of

²⁹ „Monitor Polski” Nr 19, poz. 290 z 2003 r.

May in Warsaw was the very last occasion for giving any unequivocal document concerning this problem. The “Word of Bishops Relating to Poland’s Accession to European Union” – the document, which evoked many reservation among the Episcopate – was the effect of this conference. The “Word of Bishops...” was due to be read in every church in Poland on 1st of June – exactly one week before the accession referendum. This fact might prove that the Episcopate strove to take more decisive attitude towards the integration with European Union. Nevertheless, this document did not contain any clear encouragement to vote for Poland’s accession into European Union. Having read the “Word of Bishops” either the opponents or the supporters of the accession could justify their views, what made this document still very vague. In this context the document adopted by bishops on 322nd session of Conference of the Episcopate of Poland did not solve the problems. One cannot also perceive any new elements, which this document introduced in relation to the previous texts issued by the Episcopate such as the pastoral letter “Polish Bishops towards European Integration” (21st of March 2002) and the standpoint expressed in the announcement from 321st plenary session of Episcopate (12th of March 2003). After publishing the “Word of Bishops ...”, one of the Italian newspapers implied that unofficially the Catholic Church in Poland opted for refraining from voting during the accession referendum³⁰. Nevertheless, the „Word of Bishops...” was very significant because the Episcopate called on citizens to participate in referendum whereas insufficient turnout was the biggest concern of the Polish government.

John Paul II dispelled all doubts relating to the standpoint of the Catholic Church in Poland towards Poland’s accession to European Union. Addressing Polish pilgrims on 19th of May 2003 he expressed his opinion on the problem of integration in a very gentle but also unambiguous way. He declared:

Poland has always constituted an important part of Europe and today Poland cannot exclude from this community, from the community, which in fact suffers crises in different fields, but which constitutes one family of nations based on common Christian tradition. Accession to the structures of the European Union, on equal conditions with other countries, for our Nation as well as for kindred Slavic nations is an expression of a historic justice, on the other hand it can enrich Europe. Europe needs Poland. The Church in Europe needs the Poles’ Testimony of faith. Poland needs Europe³¹.

³⁰ ml, „Corriere della Sera” przeinacza stanowisko Kościoła w Polsce w sprawie referendum, <http://www.kai.pl/nawyserwis/anevnewsroom.xml?r=ogolny%2Barchiwum&id=106949>

³¹ Jan Paweł II, Przemówienie do uczestników Narodowej Pielgrzymki do Rzymu, Watykan, 19 V 2003 r., <http://www.kai.pl/nawyserwits/anevnewsroom.xml?r=ogolny&id=107330>

Therefore, the Pope's statement was much more obvious than the Episcopate's standpoint presented above. In some sense, John Paul II proved that the Church's voice on integration was not loud enough. The Episcopate indirectly admitted it because on 28th of May it decided that the "Word of Bishops..." would be presented together with Pope's speech. In this way, the Polish government obtained a solid backing for Poland's accession to the European Union.

There appeared some comments after the vote, which emphasized that the Pope's statement exerted a positive influence on the turnout during the accession referendum. Certainly, it is difficult to verify such an idea. In any case, the co-operation between the government and Roman-Catholic Church brought measurable results.