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Hungarian foreign policy after 2010 – selected problems

Polityka zagraniczna Węgier po 2010 roku – wybrane aspekty

Summary:

The Hungarian parliamentary elections of April 2010 and 2014 were widely commented both in Hungary and abroad. In 2010 Fidesz led by Viktor Orbán, won the elections in a spectacular way winning together with the coalition partner Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) 67.88% of votes and 262 mandates in a 386 people parliament. Thus the new government won constitutional majority as well as the ability to carry out serious reforms in both the internal and foreign policies. The purpose of this article is to present the new directions in Hungarian foreign policy after 2010. Among the most important ones are strengthening of the relations with Russia as well as with other Asian countries as part of the „Eastern Opening” program. Another direction is to intensify the cooperation with the Visegrad Group members. The article also describes Budapest's relations with the European Union.

Keywords: Hungary, European Union, Russia, China, Visegrad Group

Streszczenie:

Wybory parlamentarne z kwietnia 2010 roku i 2014 roku były szeroko komentowane zarówno na Węgrzech, jak i zagranicą. W 2010 roku partia Fidesz, dowodzona przez Viktora Orbána, odniosła spektakularne zwycięstwo, uzyskując z koalicyjną Chrześcijańsko – Demokratyczną Partią Ludową (KDNP) 67,88% głosów i 262 mandaty w 386 osobowym parlamencie. Nowy rząd zdobył tym samym większość konstytucyjną oraz możliwość przeprowadzenia poważnych reform w polityce wewnętrznej i zagranicznej. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zaprezentowanie nowych kierunków w polityce zewnętrznej Węgier po 2010 roku. Do najważniejszych należy zacieśnienie współpracy z Rosją oraz innymi państwami Azji w ramach programu „otwarcie na Wschód”, a także wzmocnienie kooperacji z krajami tworzącymi Grupę Wyszehradzką. W artykule zostały również poddane analizie relacje z Unią Europejską.

Słowa kluczowe: Węgry, Unia Europejska, Rosja, Chiny, Grupa Wyszehradzka

1. Introduction

The Hungarian parliamentary elections of April 2010 and 2014 were widely commented both in Hungary and abroad. In 2010 Fidesz led by Viktor Orbán, won the elections in a spectacular way winning together with the coalition partner Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) 67.88% of votes and 262 mandates in a 386 people parliament¹. Thus the new government won constitutional majority as well as the ability to carry out serious reforms in both the internal and foreign policies. The important thing is that since the overthrow of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's rule twenty years ago no party has achieved such a spectacular result in general elections. Fidesz – KDNP coalition fully took advantage of the chance given them by the voters, deciding, among other things, on passing the new constitution bill in April 2011². In the next general elections of April 2014 Fidesz won 45% of votes which enabled Orbán's party to form an independent government³. Regarding foreign policy the new right – wing government focused primarily on expanding relations with Russia and China as part of the „Eastern Opening” program, strengthening of the relations with central European countries as well as intensifying relations with the Visegrad Group. Also since 2010 worsening of the relations between Hungary and the EU can be seen which to a great degree has been caused by the internal reforms carried out by Viktor Orbán.

2. Hungary's Eastern Policy

One of the main changes in Hungary's foreign policy after 2010 has been expanding communications with eastern countries. The „Eastern Opening” program involves mainly Russia, China, Azerbaijan, Japan and South Korea, as well as such countries as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. At first the new direction in the foreign policy was to serve forging commercial links and to encourage eastern businesses to invest in Hungary. With time „Eastern Opening” has also become an alternative to Budapest's worsening relations with the EU.

¹ A. Czyż, S. Kubas, *Doświadczenia węgierskiej transformacji ustrojowej – od Jánosa Kádára do Viktora Orbána*, Katowice 2011, s. 91.

² Zob. szerzej: G. Gulyás, *Proces konstytucyjny na Węgrzech*, [w:] *Węgry – co tam się dzieje*, red. R. Jankowski, Warszawa 2013, s. 129 – 142, A. Sadecki, M. Gniazdowski, *Konstytucja nowych Węgier – implikacje krajowe i regionalne*, „Komentarze OSW” 2011, nr 60.

³ A. Sadecki, *Węgrzy znów postawili na Orbána*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-04-09/wegrzy-znow-postawili-na-orbana>, [dostęp: 4.08.2017].

Among countries included in the program, cooperation with the Russian Federation is the most progressive. What needs to be noted, though, is the fact that relations with Moscow were not a priority for the first Viktor Orbán government in the years 1998 – 2002⁴. Moreover, during the following years Fidesz strongly criticized Ferenc Gyurcsány's administration for joining the construction of the South Stream gas pipeline⁵. The stance of Fidesz's leader changed however after the won elections of April 2010 – then the first step of Orbán's government in an effort to strengthen the cooperation with Moscow was to join the expansion of South Stream. According to Gazprom's guidelines the construction of the pipeline was to commence in 2014 and Hungary was to become one of the transit countries. The degree of Budapest's involvement in Gazprom's project can be seen in the fact that in November 2014 Hungarian parliament passed a bill which gave the construction of the pipeline a green light while circumventing EU's law. The project of building the South Stream was eventually rejected by Russia in December 2014⁶.

The next confirmation of the revival of cooperation is the agreement which was reached during Viktor Orbán's visit in Moscow on January 14, 2014⁷. Even though contents of the contract have not been revealed, statements coming from both parties make it clear that Russians will grant Hungary a loan amounting to about 10 billion Euros (making up 80% of the whole) for the construction of two new blocks in the nuclear plant in Paks. The loan is supposed to be paid back within twenty – one years in two annual installments (on March 15 and November 15), and it's servicing has been taken care by the Russian National Bank Wnieszekonombank together with the Hungarian International Debt Service⁸. The Russian gasoline concern Rosatom has been chosen, without a tender, and the work is to commence most likely in 2018⁹. Hungary's prime minister when

⁴ A confirming fact can be the lack of Moscow's permission for delivering military equipment to Serbs fighting in Kosovo via the Hungarian territory.

⁵ A. Sadecki, *Państwo stanu wyższej konieczności. Jak Orbán zmienił Węgry*, Warszawa 2014, s. 36.

⁶ M. Szpala, *Europa Środkowa i Południowo – Wschodnia po wstrzymaniu budowy South Stream*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-12-17/europa-srodkowa-i-poludniowo-wschodnia-po-wstrzymaniu-budowy-south>, [dostęp: 30.04.2017].

⁷ A. Sadecki, *Węgry*, [w:] *Projekty jądrowe w Europie Środkowej i Południowo – Wschodniej. Stan i perspektywy*, red. M. Gniazdowski, Warszawa 2015, s. 42.

⁸ As Andrzej Sadecki points out, though the interest rate is not high and is variable (3.95% - 4.95%), the credit is to be paid back in Euros, which involves high servicing costs. Furthermore, the agreement stipulates late fees – which in the case of a delay up to 15 days are 150% of the installment. If, however the delay is more than 180 days, then Russia has the right to withdraw from the agreement, and Hungary will have to pay back the whole amount of the credit in one payment. *Ibidem*, s. 41-42.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

asked why a Russian company was chosen stated: „It is a nuclear plant built with Russian technology. That is why Russians will now modernize it”¹⁰.

Since the overtaking of power in Hungary by the coalition Fidesz – KDNP, meetings of Viktor Orbán with Vladimir Putin in the first half of the year became a tradition. One of the more important of those meetings was president Putin’s visit in Hungary’s capitol on February 17, 2015¹¹. During that visit five agreements were reached which pertained, among other things, to the opening of a new consulate in Kazan and conducting a training for the Hungarian employees of the nuclear plant in Paks¹². Another consequence of Russia’s president’s visit was Gazprom’s relinquishment of the „take – or – pay” stipulation, due to which Hungary were in possession of natural gas, which they did not completely use up within the gas agreement which expired in 2015. During the meeting Russia and Hungary’s leaders also addressed the sanctions imposed on Russia by the EU – Viktor Orbán stated then that Europe should cooperate with Moscow because it is an indispensable condition of energy security for the Old Continent. He also pointed out that Russia has always fulfilled its part of economical and energy agreements signed with Hungary¹³. Prime Minister Orbán talked about the necessity of relations between the Russian Federation and EU during his stay in Moscow in February 2016¹⁴. The leader of the Hungarian government said then: „We agree that our common goal [Hungary’s and Russia’s] is strengthening of Europe’s safety as well as normalization of relations between Russia and the EU”¹⁵. Moreover the leader of Fidesz emphasized how important for his country was the economical cooperation with Moscow: „Without good economical relations between Russia and Hungary Hungarian economy and Hungarian industry will simply not be able to function”¹⁶.

The next visit from the president of Russian Federation in Hungary took place on February 2, 2017 and this time in the meeting participating were the ministers of industry and trade, the minister of foreign affairs, of health as well

¹⁰ Cyt. za.: *Premier Węgier zachwycony Rosją*, Studium Europy Wschodniej, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/Studium%20Europy%20Wschodniej%20-%20Uniwersytet%20Warszawski%20-%20Premier%20W%C4%99gier%20zachwycony%20Rosj%C4%85.htm>, [dostęp: 3.01.2015].

¹¹ A. Sadecki, *Putin w Budapeszcie: przelamywanie izolacji*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2015-02-18/putin-w-budapeszcie-przelamywanie-izolacji>, [dostęp: 16.04.2017].

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ „*Russia is not Hungary’s enemy, nut one of its partners*”, says PM Orbán in Moscow, <http://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-press-statement-following-his-talks-with-president-of-russia-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin/>, [dostęp:06.02.2018].

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

as the deputy minister of national security¹⁷. In the course of the meeting of Vladimir Putin and Viktor Orbán no agreement was reached and leaders of the countries addressed primarily the current international situation. The Hungarian Prime Minister again criticized the sanctions imposed on Russia and stated that as a result of them Hungary's economy lost 6.5 billion dollars¹⁸. Viktor Orbán also emphasized that maintaining good economical and political relations with the eastern partner will pay dividends and will facilitate the functioning of the Hungarian market when Moscow will cease to be isolated in the international arena. Fidesz's leader again did not criticize Russia for its armed attack on Ukraine and during the meeting only called for carrying out the

Minsk agreements as well as assured of Hungary's support of Ukraine stabilization¹⁹. It should be noted that since the beginning of the war in Donbas Hungary has very reluctantly spoken about it and has openly criticized the sanctions imposed on Russia. However at the European level they have always voted for maintaining them, and in 2014 under the EU's pressure, Budapest activated reverse connectors, which made it possible to deliver natural gas from Western Europe to Ukraine²⁰.

Equally intense has been the development of relations with China. A good example of that would be the Hungarian prime minister's two visits in Beijing: the first took place at the turn of October and November of 2010²¹, and the second in February 2014²². It should be noted, however, that it were Viktor Orbán's forerunners that had initiated steps toward livening of the mutual relations – in 2003 the Chinese capitol was visited by prime minister Péter Medgyessy (holding the office in the years 2002 – 2004) and it was the first visit by the leader of the Hungarian government since 1959, and Ferenc Gyurcsány (chairman of the Council of Ministers in the years 2004 – 2009) was invited to Beijing three times²³. In recent years Budapest saw the visits of the head of the People's

¹⁷ A. Sadecki, *Wizyta prezydenta Władimira Putina na Węgrzech*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2017-02-06/wizyta-prezydenta-wladimira-putina-na-wegrzech>, [dostęp: 16.04.2017].

¹⁸ *PM Orbán and President Putin focus on energy talks during Budapest meeting*, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/pm-orban-and-president-putin-focus-on-energy-talks-during-budapest-meeting/>, [dostęp: 12.02.2018].

¹⁹ A. Sadecki, *Wizyta prezydenta...*

²⁰ D. Kałan, *Mieć czy być: unijne sankcje wobec Rosji jako dylemat V4*, http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=18101, [dostęp: 16.04.2017].

²¹ *Węgry zabiegają o przychyłność Pekinu i chińskich inwestorów*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2010-11-04/wegry-zabiegaja-o-przychylnosc-pekinu-i-chinskih-inwestorow>, [dostęp: 5.08.2017].

²² D. Kałan, *Kto sieje wiatr... Węgierska polityka otwarcia na Wschód*, https://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=16890, [dostęp: 4.08.2017].

²³ D. Kałan, *Relacje o specjalnym znaczeniu? Chiny w polityce zagranicznej Węgier w okresie rządów Viktora Orbána (2010 – 2012)*, „Biuletyn Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej – Puls Regionu”, Numer 1, s. 3.

Republic of China Hu Jintao (2004), of the vice-president Xi- Jinping (2009), as well as of the Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, who in June 2001 his visit to Europe started with a meeting with the Hungarian government²⁴.

The intensification of relations with Asian countries (especially Chinese – Hungarian relations) for Budapest has become especially important in light of the country's economical crisis as well as in view of the worsening relations with the EU. For that reason Victor Orban's government decided to open international trading companies (in the case of China they were established in Shanghai and Ningbo) as well as to issue 5 years long national bonds of 250 thousand Euros each, the purchase of which gave foreigners the right to relocate to Hungary²⁵. Also, it's worth noting, that out of the Asian countries the best relations have been with Beijing – in recent years Hungary has become the leader in the region of Central Europe in regards to the size of Chinese investments – currently their value is estimated to amount to about 900 million Euros). This situation could not even be changed by the fact that in 2016 of all investments which China designated to Central Europe only 6% reached the Hungarian market – comparatively in 2011 they amounted to as much as 89%²⁶. Hungary can also boast a consistent increase of sales, the value of which has been estimated at around 6 billion Euros as well as an increasing export to China – in the years 2010-2016 its value was doubled and currently amounts to about 2 billion Euros²⁷.

An important step towards deepening mutual relations was the decision on the part of the Middle Kingdom of May 2017 about raising the relations with Hungary to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership – higher can only be special relations which Beijing maintains, for example, with Germany and Russia. It should be noted, though, that the decision to raise the level of mutual relations obligates both sides to increase the work on reconstruction of the Hungarian section of the fast railroad between Budapest and Belgrade. Bank loan for the expansion of the Hungarian section of the railroad amounting to 1.65 billion USD (85% of the investment's value) was proposed by Exim

²⁴ Ibidem, s. 3, 7.

²⁵ As pointed out by Veronika Józwiak, such law has only been taken advantage of by China. It is estimated that there are around 35 thousand Chinese people living on Hungarian territory, V. Józwiak, *Rola Chin w polityce zagranicznej Węgier*, <http://www.pism.pl/publikacje/biuletyn/nr-71-1513#>, [dostęp: 4.08.2017].

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Ibidem.

Bank of China, but the contract between the Hungarian and Chinese governments is currently being verified by the European Council²⁸.

Also worth emphasize is the fact that Budapest, like Russia, avoids criticizing Beijing for its policy towards Tibet. Moreover the Hungarian government often praises Chinese economical policy, as well as supports their stance on the international arena – in 2016 Hungary together with Croatia and Greece contributed to the easing of EU's stance on the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. The good relations between these countries are also testified by the fact that in 2014 Hungary opened a training center for the Confucius Institute for teachers of Chinese in Central and Eastern Europe, and in 2017 opened the first European Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences²⁹.

3. Policy towards the Visegrad Group

The Visegrad Group plays an important role in Hungary's political and energy cooperation. As Veronika Józwiak points out, Visegrad has become especially important in Budapest's foreign policy after 2010 when the prime minister became Viktor Orbán: „Following Fidesz's win in the general elections of 2010 the cooperation in Central Europe became pivotal for Hungary (...). Hungary's Prime Minister sets economically and politically sluggish „West” represented also by EU's institutions, in opposition to Eastern Europe and the Visegrad Group which he sets up as a political example and guideline on the way to regaining global political prominence”³⁰. Instrumental in the increase of interest in the Visegrad Four was also the criticism to which Viktor Orbán's government was subjected and which was directed from the EU as well as the leaders of Western European countries regarding the changes in Hungary's internal and foreign policy. According to Viktoria Józwiak, quoted before, the intensification of cooperation was also boosted by the migration crisis as well as by winning the Polish general elections of 2015 by the pro- Visegrad Law and Justice³¹. After the 2015 elections Poland and Hungary have often expressed the same views on the current political events. Both Budapest and Warsaw are against the system of immigrant relocation. They emphasize the necessity of keeping the Schengen Zone and they set forth the same vision of Europe being made up of national states. It is also worth

²⁸ The credit has been granted for twenty years, and the rate of interest is supposed to be 2.5% per annum. *Ibidem*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ V. Józwiak, *Grupa Wyszehradzka z perspektywy Węgier*, https://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=22649, [dostęp: 28.05.2017].

³¹ *Ibidem*.

noting, that in 2010 and 2014 Warsaw was chosen as destination for Viktor Orbán's first international visit³². For Hungary cooperation with the other countries of the region is also important (especially with countries of the Western Balkans) in the formula „V4+”. In the area of cooperating with countries of the Western Balkans Budapest especially emphasizes the development of connections pertaining to road and energy infrastructure³³.

4. Relations with the European Union

2010 was a breaking point not only in Hungary's foreign policy but also in the country's relations with the EU. From April 2010 we have observed the worsening of relations between Budapest and Brussels, which was mainly influenced by the internal reforms carried out by Viktor Orbán's government.

The first problems on the line Budapest – Brussels transpired in the end of December 2010, the day before Hungary assumed the presidency over the European Union Council. The disputed issue then was the new media law which, among other things, introduced the Media Council of the National Office for Media and Communications as well as stipulating high fines for not respecting the law. Many EU representatives criticized the mode in which the new members of the Council were being installed (they were chosen by the parliament), saying that such would lead to making this government too political. Equally harshly commented on was the stipulation, which allowed for the revealing by a journalist of the source of information, if the case concerned an important interest of the country – as a consequence of harsh criticism the government quickly decided to revoke this regulation. Adversely viewed was also the regulation allowing for fining the non-observance of the law's regulations, because, according to the opposition, the government by doing so is limiting the freedom of the word³⁴. More tensions came to the surface in 2011 when in April of the same year the Hungarian parliament passed a new constitutional law³⁵.

³² Premier Węgier z pierwszą wizytą przybył do Polski, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,7963807,Premier_Wegier_z_pierwsza_wizyta_przybyl_do_Polski.html, [dostęp: 5.08.2017].

³³ A. Sadecki, *Państwo stanu wyższej...*, s. 32.

³⁴ I. Bencze, *Společné tlo narodzin nových regulací medialnych na Węgrzech*, [w:] *Węgry – co tam się dzieje...*, s. 195.

³⁵ The new constitution changed, among other things, the official name of the country from „The Republic of Hungary” to „Hungary”, to a small degree increased parliament's prerogatives, which gained the right to elect the chairman of the Constitutional Court as well as widened the president's authority, who can dissolve Parliament in case it does not adopt a new budget by March 31 of a given year. The constitution also introduced many changes in regards to the functioning of the Constitutional Court – such as extending the number of judges from 11 to 15 as well as extending their tenures from 9 to 12 years. Hungarian citizens were taken away the possibility of enquiring the Court as to the compliance of a given law with the constitution. Furthermore the Budgeting

Opinion in the matter was expressed by members of the Venice Commission, who in June 2011 issued their opinion on the new constitution. Members of the Commission stated that a constitution is based on democratic principles, on division of power, and on the rule of law. Appreciation was expressed for the Hungarian government's efforts to adjust regulations pertaining to fundamental freedoms to the European Convention of Human Rights and to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Council's representatives, however, charged the Hungarian government with too much haste in preparing of the new constitution as well as lack of adequate dialogue with the opposition and consultations with the people. Criticized also was the limitation of the Constitutional Tribunal's competences in matters pertaining to the budget, introducing the requirement of reaching 2/3 of votes in laws pertaining to cultural, religious, financial and socio – economic policies. Negatively was judged the increase of competences of the Financial Council (mainly the granting it of the rule of veto in regards to the budget law) and the stipulation concerning the care of Hungarians residing abroad. According to the Council's representatives the document may lead to the worsening of Budapest's relations with neighboring countries³⁶. On the whole during the first term of Viktor Orbán's government, in the European Parliament three debates on the reforms carried out by the Fidesz – KDNP coalition took place.

Another problem which arose for Orbán's administration was the relations with the European Council. In 2010 members of the Council did not grant the permission to raise the budget deficit in Hungary, which in the government's opinion contributed to the economic growth. As a result of the motion's rejection the Hungarian government gave up on the last credit tranche from the International Monetary Fund and from EU. Consequently such action gave the Hungarians freedom to make economical decisions and exempted them from the obligation to implement reforms proposed by those organizations. In reply the European Council decided to freeze part of the funds designated for Budapest out of the Cohesion Fund. As was soon realized, Hungary had to implement savings which kept them from incurring sanctions³⁷.

A recurring worsening of relations between the EU and Budapest could again be observed following the 2015 outburst of the migration crisis. The

Committee received greater competences which gained the ability to veto an adopted budget. Also a constitutional record has been made that Forint is Hungary's official monetary currency, A. Sadecki, M. Gniazdowski, *Konstytucja nowych Węgier...*

³⁶ Ibidem.

³⁷ A. Sadecki, *Polityka zagraniczna Węgier po 2010 roku*, [w:] *Węgry Orbána – wzór czy przestroga*, red. L. Skiba, M. Rapkiewicz, M. Kędzierski, Warszawa 2014, s. 131.

Hungarian government along with other members of the Visegrad Group has objected to the policy pushed by Brussels of forced refugee relocation. The Budapest many times emphasized that they cannot agree to accept refugees of a great number of immigrants from Ukraine, who since 2010 have been relocating to Hungary. Another argument has also been the cultural difference of the people coming to Europe which according to Hungary's Prime Minister makes it impossible for those people to get assimilated. Viktor Orbán thinks that one of the ways to fight the crisis is strengthening of the outer borders of the EU. The Prime Minister also pointed out the necessity to grant material and financial aid to countries in which there are large numbers of refugees (mainly Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon), transit countries (including Hungary) and immigrant camps. Hungarian government has a different stance on the need to reform EU which has become an actual necessity after the UK left the Union. As has been noted by a political scientist Kazimierz Kik, Budapest does not agree to the building of the proposed „supernational federal Europe”³⁸. Such stance is perfectly confirmed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán who during a debate with Jarosław Kaczyński organized at the time of the Economic Forum in Krynica in September 2016 stated: „The European elite, policymakers, media leaders have persuaded themselves that the right direction for the advancement of humanity is to eradicate our identities. That it is not modern enough to be a Pole, a Czech, a Hungarian. It is not modern enough to be a Christian. In place of that there has evolved a new identity – the European identity (...). Counter cultural revolution is possible. There is no such thing as a European identity. There are the Poles and there are the Hungarians”³⁹. The proposed „counter cultural revolution” involved limiting of competences of European institutions as well as modifying international agreements which would eventually give more power to the member countries⁴⁰.

5. Conclusion

The year 2010 was a breaking point in Hungary's internal and foreign policies. Winning constitutional majority in the parliament gave Viktor Orbán's government a chance to carry out deep reforms among which the most import-

³⁸ K. Kik, *Kik: Iluzje Wyszehradu*, <http://www.rp.pl/Publicystyka/310099946-Kik-Iluzje-Wyszehradu.html#ap-1>, [dostęp: 6.05.2017].

³⁹ Cyt. za.: P. Lisicki, *Wyklęte słowo „kontrrewolucja”*, <https://dorzeczy.pl/opinie/10336/Wyklęte-slowo-kontrrewolucja.html>, [dostęp: 23.05.2017].

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

ant one was enacting of the new constitution in April of 2011. Fidesz – KDNP coalition's actions raised many controversies on the international arena and led to a significant worsening of cooperation with the EU – among disputed issues were some constitutional stipulations, the hasty mode of its implementation, and regulations introduced by the Media Act. And it was the deteriorating relations with Western Europe, as well as the serious economical crisis in Hungary that caused Budapest to redirect its foreign policy. It continued the policy of livening relations with China which was started by former governments and it strongly focused on intensifying the cooperation with Russia. Confirmations of such livening of the cooperation with Moscow have been regular meetings between representatives of the two countries as well as the cooperation in energy security. Since 2010 we have also been able to observe Hungary's heightened interest in developing cooperation with countries of Central Europe, and especially within the Visegrad Group.

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