EASTERN EUROPE AS A POLITICAL SPACE

Ireneusz Topolski

Zakład Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w Lublinie
Plac Litewski 3/209, 20-080 Lublin, ireneusz-topolski@tlen.pl

Abstract. The spatial extent of Europe has been redefined in the years after the Second World War. The most important event during this process was the transformation of political systems in the year 1989, which led to the dissolution of the whole Eastern Bloc and to the enlargement of the European Union in 2004. Defining the exact scope of Eastern Europe as a political space after the end of the Cold War provokes certain controversies. This stems from replacing the term 'Eastern Europe' with other terms, such as 'Central Europe' or 'Central Eastern Europe'. Another reason for this situation is the usage of different ways of defining Eastern Europe, for example, describing it as a Post-soviet territory, 'the space between Germany and Russia', in relation to the European Union, or as a Sub-region of Central Eastern Europe. Eastern Europes need to be understood and perceived as the area comprising three of post-soviet states – Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

Key words: Eastern Europe, political space, the space between Germany and Russia, Central Eastern Europe, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Eastern Europe' is used in various contexts in politology. It is quite problematic to define its spatial scope precisely, as it underwent changes in different historical periods. Since 1945, three events significantly affected the way Eastern Europe was defined and how its borders were shaped. These were: the creation of the bipolar system after World War II, the Autumn of Nations in 1989 and the enlargement of the European Union (EU, hereafter: the Union) through the accession of new member states in 2004.

This article identifies the most crucial issues concerned with defining the borders of Eastern Europe as a political space. Due to the extensive and complex nature of this subject, it presents only the opinions of Polish researchers. Historical conditions should also be mentioned, as they help to portray the specificity of the spatial scope of the term. The second part of the article presents different approaches for defining the term 'Eastern Europe'. The article aims to discuss whether Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova are perceived as countries of Eastern Europe understood as a political space.

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

The analysis of spatial scope of Eastern Europe raises questions concerning the time and the context in which this term actually emerged. Anglo-Saxon researchers should be consulted here. According to Norman Davies, the term 'Eastern Europe' is 'an intellectual construct' created during Ancient times and 'popularised' during the Enlightenment period. Larry Wollf claims that the term was 'invented' by Western European philosophers and intellectuals of that time to create the concepts of the East and the West. In the initial understanding of the term, starting from the moment of 'creation', Western and Eastern Europe were defined as 'terms' mutually complementing each other because of their differences and mutual attraction. Piotr S. Wandycz presents a slightly different view on this subject, arguing that the division between Western and Eastern Europe became visible in the XIX century, 'during the disputes between Slavophiles and Occidentalists'[1].

In the literature on the subject it is accepted that until 1945 Eastern Europe was usually identified with the Russian Empire/Soviet Union or 'the area separating the Teutonic and Romance nations from Euro-Asian Russia. The conflicts of that time, distinguishing Western and Eastern Europe had a rather 'conventional' character. This situation changed due to the Cold War confrontation. As a consequence, the differences visible in both term became real. The processes taking place in Western and Eastern Europe started to go into two dramatically different directions. At that time, ideological criteria played the most important role, and the term 'Eastern Europe' was considered to be equivalent to the terms 'worldwide communist system', 'communist regime' or 'the Eastern Bloc'. This situation contributed to the popularization of the term; it became one of the key and dominating terms during the Cold War period. Taking into account the spatial scope of Eastern Europe in the political sense, it included the Soviet Union and the countries which were under its influence, i.e.: People's Republic of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, People's Republic of Hungary, People's Republic of Bulgaria, People's Republic of Albania and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The dominance of the Soviet Union

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[1] N. Davies, *Europa. Rozprawa historyka z historią*, Kraków 2010, pp. 39–59; L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford, California 1994, Stanford University Press, pp. 356–374; G. Szondi, *Filary zarządzania reputacją: dyplomacja publiczna w Europie Wschodniej z perspektywy public relations*, in: *Dyplomacja publiczna*, B. Ociepka (ed.), Wrocław 2008, pp. 59–60; A. Nowak, *History and Geopolitics: A Contestfor Eastern Europe*, Warsaw 2008, p. 7; S. Otok, *Geografia polityczna. Geopolityka. Ekopolityka. Globalistyka*, Warszawa 2009, p. 185; P.S. Wandycz, *Cena wolności. Historia Europy Środkowowschodniej od średniowiecza do współczesności*, Kraków 2003, p. 12.

over the countries of this part of the continent contributed to the establishment and deepening the divisions between Western and Eastern Europe[2].

In 1989, the Autumn of Nations contributed to the initiation of the transformational processes in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. These events resulted in the complete fall of the Eastern Bloc together with the breakup of the Soviet Union. This situation led to the re-evaluation of the term 'Eastern Europe'. Simultaneously, there were many voices criticizing the division of Europe into Eastern and Western parts at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s of the twentieth century, The artificial and transitional nature of the term was the most important argument against it[3].

Pope John Paul II expressed his opinion on this issue: he thought that there was 'quite a mechanical division into the West and the East' applied during the Cold War. He claimed that the artificial nature of this division was mainly due to political and military interests, and that the issue of the history of nations was totally neglected during the designation of borders. Andrzej Czarnocki presents very similar views, as he also thinks that the division into the West and the East by the two superpowers during the Cold War period was artificial and did not take into account the geographical and civilization and cultural realities of that time[4].

The second problem in relation to the temporary nature of the term 'Eastern Europe' was raised by Zbigniew Brzezinski. According to Brzezinski, the term 'Eastern Europe', created as a result of the division of Europe in 1945, has a transitory character and is also 'a political concept' heavily settled in the realities of the Cold War period. To define the countries located in this part of the

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[2] N. Davies, *Europa, op. cit.*, pp. 39–59; L. Wolff, *Inventing, op. cit.*, pp. 356–374; G. Szondi, *Filary, op. cit.*, pp. 59–60; A. Nowak, *History, op. cit.*, p. 7; O. Halecki, *Historia Europy – jej granice i podziały*, Lublin 2000, pp. 105–120; P.S. Wandycz, *Cena, op. cit.*, pp. 12–13; J. Kukułka, *Historia współczesnych stosunków międzynarodowych 1945–1996*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 39–53, 77–89, 121–133, 147–159, 207–233, 300–330, 417–444; P. Kennedy, *Mocarstwa świata. Narodziny. Rozkwit. Upadek. Przemiany gospodarcze i konflikty zbrojne w latach 1500-2000*, Warszawa 1994, pp. 365-427; A. Czarnocki, *Europa jako region współistnienia Wschód-Zachód w latach 1972–1989*, Lublin 1991, p. 16 and next; B. Geremek, *Europa wielu ojczyzn*, in: *Przeszłość dla przyszłości. Historycy o Polsce w Europie*, J. Kłoczowski (ed.), Lublin 2010, s. 111–112; J. Krasuski, *Europa między Rosją i światem islamu*, Toruń 2005, pp. 118–129; B. Piskorska, *Wschodni wymiar polityki Unii Europejskiej*, Toruń 2008, pp. 38–39; T. Kisielewski, *Europa Środkowa – zakres pojęcia*, Lublin 1992, pp. 3–16, 31–33; A. Ajnenkiel, *Konstytucje europejskie a życie polityczne XX wieku*, in: *Cywilizacja europejska. Wykłady i eseje*, M. Koźmiński (ed.), Warszawa 2005, pp. 327–330; I. Kobrinskaja, *Długi koniec zimnej wojny. Rosja i Europa Środkowa 1991–1996*, Warszawa 1998, p. 20; Z. Brzeziński, *Plan gry. USA – ZSRR*, Warszawa 1990, p. 6 and next; A.D. Rotfeld, *Dokąd zmierza świat? Determinanty zmian w systemie międzynarodowym*, in: *Dokąd zmierza świat?*, A.D. Rotfeld (ed.), Warszawa 2008, pp. 14–19.

[3] T. Kisielewski, *Europa, op. cit.*, pp. 3–16, 31–33; A. Ajnenkiel, *Konstytucje, op. cit.*, pp. 330–332.

[4] Jan Paweł II, *Pamięć i tożsamość. Rozmowy na przełomie tysiącleci*, Kraków 2005, pp. 105–150; S. Sowiński, R. Zenderowski, *Europa drogą Kościoła. Jan Paweł II o Europie i europejczykach*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 2003, pp. 25–30; A. Czarnocki, *Europa Środkowa. Europa Środkowowschodnia. Geopolityczne a historyczno-kulturowe rozumienie pojęć*, „Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska", Sectio K Politologia, 1994, Vol. I, 2., pp. 23–35.

continent, the suggested terms 'East-Central Europe' or 'Central Europe'. He emphasized that in this situation, the pursuits of Central Europe were concentrated mainly on actions that would enable it to 'become itself' again, that means Central or East-Central Europe[5].

The breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991 led to a change on the political map of Europe. Yet 'another' definition of the concept 'Eastern Europe' constituted an important problem in a new geopolitical situation and directly contributed to the need to state its spatial scope. The issue of new divisions in Europe arose as soon as the rivalry between the East and the West ended. They related mostly to the identification of the location of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine as well as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia contrasted with that of the other countries of East-Central Europe. Irina Kobrinskaya has the opinion that it was an important challenge, especially for Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, because their designation as 'belonging to former Eastern Europe was already a kind of a psychological burden'[6]. This situation caused Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to become 'an independent political space' in contrast to other East-Central and Baltic countries. Moreover, the distinctiveness of existing political systems and economic models as well as cultural and civilizational differences were becoming clearly visible in the post-soviet republics.

THE TERM 'EASTERN EUROPE'

Defining the term 'Eastern Europe' after the end of the Cold War causes some problems. The first one is related to the use of the terminology. In the literature on the subject, the term 'Eastern Europe' was gradually replaced by the terms 'Central Europe', 'East-Central Europe' and 'Central and Eastern Europe'. These terms were used interchangeably in different contexts, but they were (and are) not always treated as synonymous. However, the term 'East--Central Europe' seems to capture the essence of the issue[7].

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[5] Z. Brzeziński, *O Polsce, Europie i Świecie 1988–2001*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 36–45, 46–49.

[6] O. Halecki, *Historia, op. cit.* pp. 105–120; M. Koźmiński, *Szkice, op. cit.*, pp. 452–461; I. Kobrinskaja, *Dług,i op. cit.*, p. 20.

[7] A. Czarnocki, *Europa Środkowa, op. cit.*, pp. 23–35; K. Wóycicki, A. Balcer, *Orientacje polskiej polityki zagranicznej*, „Debata" – Materiały Społecznego Zespołu Ekspertów przy Przewodniczącym Sejmowej Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych, 2010, nr 3, p. 2 and next, URL <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/opinie6.nsf/nazwa /sza_deb245/$file/sza_deb245.pdf> (07.04.2010); A. Czarnocki, *Region Europy*, in: *Międzynarodowe stosunki polityczne*, M. Pietraś (ed.), Lublin 2007, pp. 243–248; B. Piskorska, *Wschodn,i op. cit.*, pp. 37–42; *O nowy kształt Europy. XX-wieczne koncepcje federalistyczne w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej i ich implikacje dla dyskusji o przyszłości Europy*, J. Kłoczowski, S. Łukasiewicz (ed.), Lublin 2003; *East-Central Europe in European History. Themes & Debates*, J. Kłoczowski, H. Łaszkiewicz (ed.), Lublin 2009; *Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*. Tom 1 i 2, J. Kłoczowski (ed.), Lublin 2000; *Polityka bez strategii. Bez-*

Krzysztof Brzechczyn raises another issue: using geographical terms (such as Eastern, Western and Central Europe) to determine social systems or in the geopolitical sense. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a given term refers only to a geographical area or to a broader context that includes political, economic, military, social, historical, civilizational or cultural spheres. It should be emphasized that the spatial scope of Eastern Europe may vary from term to term[8].

The third problem relates to whether the country's elites and public as well as the international community accept or deny whether a given country belongs to Eastern Europe. Jerzy Wyrozumski presents this issue in a very engaging way, as he claims that the spatial scope of Eastern and Central Europe changes depending on the perspective. He presents this issue with the example of four countries: France, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. From France's perspective, Poland is classified as an Eastern European country rather than a Central European country. For Poland, Ukraine and Belarus are undoubtedly Eastern European countries. Ukraine and Belarus, however, see themselves as Central European countries. This situation therefore shows three different possibilities of perceiving and defining Eastern Europe, which also sheds light on 'the transitivity of civilizational and cultural features of this area'. The difficulties connected with defining the spatial scope of Eastern Europe are also presented by Adam Daniel Rotfeld, who takes Poland as an example. During the interwar period, the Second Republic of Poland was perceived as an Eastern European country. After the end of the World War II, the borders of Poland were shifted 200 km to the west, however, People's Republic of Poland was seen as a part of Eastern Europe. Another re-definition of the country's location took place after the end of the Cold War, when the Third Republic of Poland became a country located in East-Central Europe. Rotfield also thinks that Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine perceive themselves as Central European countries[9]. This again proves, that defining the location of a given country is not only dependent on objective con-

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pi*eczeństwo Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej i Polski w perspektywie ładu globalnego*, A.Z. Kamiński (ed.), Warszawa 2008, pp. 15–31; *Central Europe. Two Decadea After*, R. Riedel (ed.), Warszawa 2010, p. 5 and next; S. Otok, *Geografia, op. cit.*, pp. 55–58, 186–188; M. Koźmiński, *Szkice do wykładu o granicach Europy i granicach europejskich,* in: *Cywilizacja europejska. Wykłady i eseje*, M. Koźmiński (ed.), Warszawa 2005, pp. 452–463; P. Eberhardt, *Między Rosją a Niemcami. Przemiany narodowościowe w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w XX w.*, Warszawa 1996, p. 9 and next.

[8] K. Brzechczyn, *Historyczne źródła tożsamości Europy Środkowej*, in: *Stary kontynent w nowym tysiącleciu*, Z. Drozdowicz (ed.), Poznań 2002, pp. 197–198.

[9] J. Wyrozumski*, Miejsc i rola Polski w Europie. Refleksje historyka*, in: *Przeszłość dla przyszłości. Historycy o Polsce w Europie*, J. Kłoczowski (ed.), Lublin 2010, p. 67; I. Kobrinskaja, *Dług,i op. cit.*, p. 20; A. D. Rotfeld, *Czy Europa potrzebuje nowej architektury bezpieczeństwa*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Wyzwania i zagrożenia XXI wieku*, P. Olszewski, T. Kapuśniak, W. Lizak (ed.), Radom 2009, pp. 47–49.

ditions, but also to a big extent on subjective ones, and in this case political considerations were always more important than geographical ones.

There are various approaches trying to define the term 'Eastern Europe' in the Polish literature on the subject. Accepting a specific classification criteria at the same time affects its spatial scope. It seems reasonable to distinguish four main groups defining the term 'Eastern Europe'. The first includes only the former Soviet countries excluding Baltic countries: Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. In a broader context, it related to all twelve post-soviet republics, and in a more narrow context it includes only three or four European countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS, later: the Commonwealth). The second group includes the area 'located between Germany and Russia', in a broader version it also takes into account Balkan and South Caucasus countries. The third group is the broadest, as it related to the EU. It can also be divided into a set of subgroups. i.e. the states located between EU and Russia, the area stretching to the east from the EU's borders, and European Neighbourhood Policy. The fourth group defines the Eastern Europe as a sub-region of East-Central Europe. More detail on these groups is presented in the following paragraphs.

1. Eastern Europe identified with the **post-soviet region** in its broadest sense included **twelve countries**, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russian Federation, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. This approach was presented by Tadeusz Kisielewski and Stanisław Otok. It aimed to distinguish Central European countries of that time from the newly established post-socialist countries[10]. Such an approach was also proposed by the editors of a bimonthly 'New Eastern Europe', published by Jan Nowak-Jezioranski Eastern Europe College in Wroclaw[11]. A narrower context included only **European post-soviet countries or CIS states.** Walenty Baluk claims that the spatial scope of Eastern Europe includes four post-socialist countries, **Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus and Republic of Moldova**[12]. This view is shared by some of the authors of the Stefan Batory Foundation[13] and also by the scholars of Eastern Europe Depart-

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[10] T. Kisielewski, *Europa, op. cit.*, pp. 3–16, 31–33; S. Otok, *Geografia, op. cit.*, pp. 56, 186–188.

[11] URL <http://www.new.org.pl/> (23.03.2011).

[12] W. Baluk, *Transformacja systemu politycznego Ukrainy, Mołdowy i Białorusi*, in: *Białoruś, Mołdawia i Ukraina wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata*, T. Kapuśniak, K. Fedorowicz, M. Gołoś, Lublin 2009, pp. 15–17.

[13] *Europe Divided. Then and Now*, O. Wasilienko (ed.), Warszawa 2009, p. 6 and next, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/Europe_divided_January_2010.pdf> (12.03.2011); *Zmiany w polityce wizowej państw UE. Raport z monitoringu*, Warszawa 2009, p. 7 and next, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/Zmiany_w_polityce_wizowej_panstw_UE_wrzesien_2009.pdf> (12.03.2011); *What to do with visas for the Eastern Europeans? Recommendations from the perspective off Visegrád countries*, June 2009, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/Recommendations_v4.pdf> (12.03.2011); O. Wasilewska, *Analysis of the visa policies of the Visegrad countries Relative openness. Polish visa policy towards Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine*, May 2009, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/Poland_visas.pdf> (12.03.2011); *Monitoring polityki wizowej krajów Unii Europejskiej. Raport*, Warszawa 2006,

ment at the International Studies Institute of the University of Wroclaw[14]. How-ever, another approach relating to this issue mentions only **three countries**. Michał Dobraczyński in this case uses the term 'a proper Easter Europe lying beyond the river Bug' to emphasize the distinctiveness of **Belarus, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova** from the Euro-Asian character of Russia and also from the countries of East-Central Europe[15]. Erhard Cziomer and Marek Czaj-kowski also define three post-soviet republics as Eastern European CIS countries[16].

2. The countries located between Germany and Russia are regarded by An-drzej Czarnocki as belonging to West Europe, but he does not define them clear-ly. However, a direct interpretation of his approach would include Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova. Stanislaw Otok presents a different ap-proach, broadening the area by adding South Caucasus and Balkan countries. In such context, the following countries are also to be included into Eastern Europe Area: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Yugoslavia (now Serbia and Montenegro), Macedonia, Slovenia, Greece, Belarus (The Union State), Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia[17].

3. Defining the content of the term 'Eastern Europe' and its borders has gained a new meaning in the 21st century. According to Jerzy Kłoczowski, the accession of new EU members (especially of former Eastern Bloc) has raised the issue of the **three countries located between EU and Russia**. A fundamen-tal issue relates to the choice and definition of foreign policy by the ruling elites of Belarus, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. In practice, there have been two alternative directions to follow: either co-operate with the EU or with the Russian Federation[18]. Tadeusz Kapuśniak has claimed that the expansion of the EU in 2004 and 2007 had lead to the creation of a strategic area defined as 'the New Eastern Europe'. This term includes Belarus, Republic of Moldova and

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p. 7 and next, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/monitoring-polityki-wizowej-ue-raport.pdf> (12.03.2011); *Raport. Monitoring wschodnich granic Polski*, Warszawa 2003, URL <http://www.ba-tory.org.pl/ftp/program/forum/monitoring_granic.pdf> (12.03.2011).

[14] *Europa Wschodnia – dekada transformacji. Ukraina*, B.J. Albin, W. Baluk (ed.), Wrocław 2002; *Europa Wschodnia – dekada transformacji. Rosja*, B.J. Albin, W. Baluk (ed.), Wrocław 2003; *Europa Wschodnia – dekada transformacji. Białoruś*, B.J. Albin, W. Baluk (ed.), Wrocław 2004; *Ustroje polityczne krajów Wspólnoty Niepodległych Państw*, W. Baluk, A. Czajowski (ed.), Wrocław 2007, pp. 10, 39–141.

[15] *Europa Wschodnia w obliczu integracji i globalizacji*, M. Dobroczyński (ed.), Warszawa 2001, p. 7.

[16] *Polityka Federacji Rosyjskiej wobec państw członkowskich WNP*, E. Cziomer, M. Czajkow-ski (ed.), Kraków 2006, pp. 11, 43–80.

[17] A. Czarnocki, *Europa Środkowa, op. cit.*, pp. 23–35; S. Otok, *Geografia op. cit.*, pp. 56, 186–188.

[18] J. Kłoczowski, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia i jej miejsce w Europie*, „Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej", 2007, nr 5, pp. 15–16.

Ukraine. In the new geopolitical situation, these three countries have found themselves in 'the zone between' EU and Russia. This view is also present in some of the publications of the Stefan Batory Foundation[19]. However, according to the authors of a study '*Politics without strategies. The safety of East-Central Europe and Poland in the global order's perspective*', the Eastern expansion of NATO and EU has caused 'the Europe in between', specified as Belarus and Ukraine, to become a target enabling the political control over both the East and the West[20]. Ryszard Stemplowski proposes a different view, where Eastern Europe should be considered as **the area stretching to the east of EU borders**. Poland would therefore be included into the area of Central Europe, whereas Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and the Russian Federation should be seen as Eastern European states[21]. The third view defines the term 'Eastern Europe' in the context of the **European Neighbourhood Policy**. This view, too, includes various approaches aiming to define the borders. Beata Piskorska includes four countries directly bordering on the EU as belonging to Eastern Europe, i.e. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Republic of Moldova. Beata Jagiełło, on the contrary, limits the scope of Eastern Europe to Belarus, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova[22].

4. Hanna Dumala and Krzysztof Iwanczuk define Eastern Europe as one of four subregions of East-Central Europe. Other subregions are Northern, Central and Southern Europe. Eastern Europe includes three post-soviet republics: Belarus, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine[23].

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[19] T. Kapuśniak, *Białoruś, Mołdawia i Ukraina – wprowadzenie*, in: *Białoruś, Mołdawia i Ukraina wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata*, T. Kapuśniak, K. Fedorowicz, M. Gołoś (ed.), Lublin 2009, pp. 9–11; T. Kapuśniak, *Ewolucja polityki Federacji Rosyjskiej wobec Ukrainy, Białorusi i Mołdawii*, in: *Białoruś, Mołdawia i Ukraina wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata*, T. Kapuśniak, K. Fedorowicz, M. Gołoś (ed.), Lublin 2009, pp. 185–202; T. Kapuśniak, T. Olejarz, *Ewolucja zjawiska bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego na obszarze Europy Wschodniej*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Wyzwania i zagrożenia XXI wieku*, P. Olszewski, T. Kapuśniak, W. Lizak (ed.), Radom 2009, pp. 205–211; T. Kapuśniak, *Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in the International Order After the Cold War,* in: *Central Europe. Two Decadea After*, R. Riedel (ed.), Warszawa 2010, pp. 291–298; G. Gromadzki, W. Konończuk, *Energetyczna gra. Ukraina, Mołdawia i Białoruś między Unią a Rosją*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 7–38, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/energetyczna_gra_pl.pdf> (12.03.2011); G. Gromadzki, *Pięć tez o Europejskiej Polityce Sąsiedztwa*, Analiza Fundacji Batorego, Warszawa 2008, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/Raport_EPS_pl.pdf> (12.03.2011); I. Krastew, M. Leonard, *Widmo Europy wielobiegunowej*, Londyn – Warszawa 2011, URL <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/Widmo_Europy1.pdf> (12.03.2011).

[20] *Polityka bez, op. cit.*, pp. 19–24.

[21] R. Stemplowski, *Wprowadzenie do analizy polityki zagranicznej RP*, Tom I, Warszawa 2007, pp. 111–112, 120–121, 137.

[22] B. Piskorska, *Wschodni, op. cit.*, p 42; B. Jagiełło, *Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa jako instrument budowania bezpieczeństwa Europy i Unii Europejskiej*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Wyzwania i zagrożenia XXI wieku*, P. Olszewski, T. Kapuśniak, W. Lizak (ed.), Radom 2009, pp. 341–343.

[23] H. Dumała, K. Iwańczuk, *Political Map of East-Central Europe*, in: *The Future of East-Central Europe*, A. Dumała, Z. J. Pietraś (ed.), Lublin 1996, pp. 150–156.

Two other opinions are worth mentioning. In a publication of the International Affairs Commission, Kazimierz Wóycicki and Adam Balcer treat Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, among others, as Eastern European countries. It is therefore reasonable to complete its spatial scope by adding two remainig South Caucasus countries: Armenia and Azerbaijan[24]. Malgorzata J. Willaume presents this issue differently, as she defines Eastern Europe through the prism of East-Central Europe. This approach defines East-Central Europe as the countries located to the west of the borders of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria. Willaume lists Belarus and Ukraine as East-Central Europe[25]. Applied in practice, however, this classification complies with the division presented by Ryszard Stemplowski.

The literature on the subject has problems developing one common definition of 'Eastern Europe', mostly due to the difficulties in the choice of the appropriate classification of political criteria. The approach defining the scope of Eastern Europe as a political area that includes all post-soviet republics should also be considered too broad. The inclusion of Central Asian countries and South Caucasus states is also controversial. Moreover, the approach defining Eastern Europe as 'the area between Germany and Russia' becomes to some extent debatable in light of a new international reality, especially after the accession of former East Bloc countries to the new EU. The approach defining 'Eastern Europe' as the area located between EU and the Russian Federation is the most appropriate one. This area (Belarus, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova) therefore becomes an object of rivalry between the EU and Russia. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the distinctiveness of Euro-Asian Russia compared to three European CIS countries. It also shows the political dynamics of the spatial scope of Eastern Europe as it changes since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Defining the location of Eastern Europe in contrast with Western and East-Central Europe is yet another issue. Oskar Halecki claims that before attempting to define the borders of Eastern Europe, first the borders of Western Europe have to be defined clearly. The spatial scope of Western Europe region in the political sense in the 21st century is presented in the following approaches: a) a narrower approach includes the countries of the 'old' EU (15 members) and European Free Trade Association and b) a broader approach is identified with the European Economic Area, Switzerland and the ministates[26]. An appropriate presentation of the relations between Eastern Europe and East-Central Europe also constitutes an im-

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[24] K. Wóycicki, A. Balcer, *Orientacje, op. cit.*, pp. 7–37.

[25] M. J. Willaume, *Książki, konferencje i debaty Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w latach 2004–2010*, „Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2010, Rok 8, Zeszyt 1, pp. 100–105.

[26] T. Kapuśniak, *Region Europy Zachodniej*, in: *Regiony w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, I. Topolski, H. Dumała, A. Dumała (ed.), Lublin 2009, pp. 33–53.

portant research issue. Therefore, it would be reasonable to consider whether Eastern Europe 'constitutes an independent region' or is rather a part of East--Central Europe[27]. The assumption that it does not constitute a wholly formed and distinct region, or even a sub-region, seems legitimate. The usage of the term 'area' is therefore appropriate in this case, because these countries lack any interregional connections (apart from functioning within Soviet Union or in its zone of influence) that would build strong relations with one another.

Another issue is related to the fact that these countries actually avoid identifying themselves as Eastern European. The political elites of former socialist and soviet countries aimed to 'detach from' the term 'Eastern' and identify their countries with the term 'East-Central European'. At the same time, the citizens of these countries identified their countries as European (with the exception of Belarus). It was reflected in the attempts to adapt the integration structures of Western Europe. It is also interesting to try to understand why these countries are so reluctant to be considered Eastern European. The first context is psychological: the term 'Eastern European' is associated with 'poverty', 'the lack of any perspectives', 'communism' or 'the Eastern Bloc' by both the ruling elites and the societies of these states. The last two expressions meant being under Soviet Union's rules. The second issue related to the striving of these countries to detach themselves from the past and Russian 'influence' and to define their identity as Central- or East-Central European. It meant that the term 'Central Europe' and 'East-Central Europe' were (and are) more highly valued that the term 'Eastern Europe'. Both former Eastern Bloc and post-soviet countries felt that Eastern Europe was not fully identified with Europe as such, whereas East--Central Europe indeed was[28].

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The diversity of classification criteria for the term 'Eastern Europe' in Polish literature on the subject affects the definition of its borders in a political context. The Cold War period left the negative perception of Eastern Europe or not even a European area at all. In some cases, the choice of appropriate division criteria may be subjective. Defining the spatial scope of Eastern Europe as post-soviet area seems to be too broad and goes beyond the scope of this term. It is therefore more appropriate to use the term 'Poland's Eastern policy', proposed by Andrzej Gil and Tomasz Kapuśniak. Another issue concerns the possibility of including EU members into the Eastern Europe area as well. It especially relates

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[27] O. Halecki, *Historia, op. cit.* pp. 105–120; M. Koźmiński, *Szkice, op. cit.*, pp. 452–461.

[28] G. Szondi, *Filary, op. cit.*, pp. 62–63; N. Davies, *Europa, op. cit.*, pp. 39–59; I. Kobrinskaja, *Długi, op. cit.*, p. 20; O. Halecki, *Historia, op. cit.*; M. Koźmiński, *Szkice, op. cit.*, pp. 452–461; R. Stemplowski, *Wprowadzenie, op. cit.*, p. 111.

to Baltic republics, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Such a political approach may be 'an over-interpretation', although it is legitimate in historical and geographical contexts. It seems therefore more appropriate to define Eastern Europe as 'the area between EU and Russian Federation', including Belarus, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. In such an understanding of this area, it becomes an object of rivalry between EU and Russia. Those three countries, however, to a varying extent avoid being classified as Eastern European. The attempts to define them as Eastern European (especially on the basis of their foreign policy on the level of state organs) may meet with a negative response from Ukraine, Republic of Moldova or Belarus.

EUROPA WSCHODNIA JAKO PRZESTRZEŃ POLITYKI

Streszczenie. Przestrzeń określana jako Europa Wschodnia ulegała po zakończeniu II wojny światowe redefinicji. Do najważniejszych wydarzeń, które do tego doprowadziły należy zaliczyć procesy transformacji ustrojowej z 1989 roku i rozpad całego bloku wschodniego oraz rozszerzenie Unii Europejskiej w 2004 roku. Określenie obszaru Europy Wschodniej jako przestrzeni polityki wywołuje po zakończeniu zimnej wojny pewne kontrowersje. Wynika to z zastępowania terminu „Europa Wschodnia". terminami „Europa Środkowa", „Europa Środkowowschodnia", „Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia". Inna przyczyna wiąże się ze stosowaniem różnych sposobów definiowania Europy Wschodniej, w tym jako obszaru poradzieckiego, „przestrzeni między Niemcami i Rosją", w odniesieniu do Unii Europejskiej lub jako subregion Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Właściwą Europę Wschodnią należy rozumieć jako obszar obejmujący trzy państwa byłego ZSRR – Białoruś, Ukrainę i Mołdawię.

Słowa kluczowe: Europa Wschodnia, przestrzeń polityki, przestrzeń między Niemcami i Rosją, Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia, Ukraina, Białoruś, Mołdawia