

Political aspects of security of the European Union Member States

Aleksandra Kuszykiewicz-Fedurek, *University of Warsaw (Poland)*

E-mail: a.kuszykiewicz@student.uw.edu.pl

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9912-549X

Abstract

Political security is very often considered through the prism of individual states. In the scholar literature in-depth analyses of this kind of security are rarely encountered in the context of international entities that these countries integrate. The purpose of this article is to draw attention to key aspects of political security in the European Union (EU) Member States.

The EU as a supranational organisation, gathering Member States first, ensures the stability of the EU as a whole, and secondly, it ensures that Member States respect common values and principles. Additionally, the EU institutions focus on ensuring the proper functioning of the Eurozone (also called officially "euro area" in EU regulations). Actions that may have a negative impact on the level of the EU's political security include the boycott of establishing new institutions conducive to the peaceful coexistence and development of states.

These threats seem to have a significant impact on the situation in the EU in the face of the proposed (and not accepted by Member States not belonging to the Eurogroup) Eurozone reforms concerning, inter alia, appointment of the Minister of Economy and Finance and the creation of a new institution - the European Monetary Fund.

Keywords: political security, EU Member States, European Union, stability of the EU, EU institutions, Eurozone (euro area).

Polityczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej

Streszczenie

Problematyka bezpieczeństwa politycznego w znakomitej większości przypadków rozpatrywana jest przez pryzmat pojedynczych państw. Brakuje jednak pogłębionych analiz tego zjawiska w ujęciu podmiotów międzynarodowych, których podstawowym celem jest integracja owych krajów. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na kluczowe aspekty bezpieczeństwa politycznego krajów członkowskich Unii Europejskiej (UE).

UE jako organizacja ponadnarodowa skupiająca państwa członkowskie z jednej strony, czuwa nad stabilnością UE jako całości z drugiej natomiast, dba o utrzymanie odrębnych tożsamości narodowych przy założeniu wspólnych, europejskich wartości i zasad. Dodatkowo, instytucje unijne

skupiają się na zapewnieniu prawidłowego funkcjonowania strefy euro. Do działań, które mogą negatywnie wpływać na poziom bezpieczeństwa politycznego UE można zaliczyć sprzeciw wobec inicjatyw mających na celu powołanie do życia nowych, ponadnarodowych instytucji sprzyjających pokojowemu współistnieniu i rozwojowi państw członkowskich

Zagrożenia te wydają się mieć istotny wpływ na sytuację w UE w obliczu proponowanych (a nie akceptowanych przez państwa członkowskie nienależące do Eurogrupy) reform strefy euro dotyczących m.in. powołania Ministra Gospodarki i Finansów oraz utworzenia nowej instytucji – Europejskiego Funduszu Walutowego.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo polityczne, państwa członkowskie UE, Unia Europejska, stabilność UE, instytucje europejskie, strefa euro.

The analysis carried out in this article is intended to verify the following research hypothesis: threats to the political security of the Member States of the European Union come from both the national and supranational levels because these countries strive to maintain the greatest possible autonomy despite actual participation in EU structures. The main area of research is the political security of EU Member States, with particular regard to its threats, the sources of which should be sought at both national and supranational levels.

The article undertakes to resolve the research problem regarding factors posing a threat to the political security of EU Member States. The solution to the above problem will be possible thanks to the answers to the research questions: How is the phenomenon of political security defined in the Member States of the European Union? How does deepening integration processes affect the level of political security in the EU? How does the desire of EU Member States to maintain the greatest possible autonomy affect the level of political security?

The main assumptions of this article refer to the theory of neofunctionalism. In line with the above approach, the creation of a supranational structure is associated with the impact of equal elements, i.e. political parties, pressure groups and finally the governments of individual Member States (Czaputowicz 2018: p. 44). Each of the above-mentioned structures has its own interests (which are not always convergent with the interests of other entities), but the establishment of supranational institutions and thus the transfer of part of their competences, increases their chances of achieving specific goals. Using the descriptive method, the issue of defining political security will be presented, while the use of the factor method (Chmaj, Żmigrodzki 1996: p. 31) will allow to identify the elements that constitute its threat.

The first part of the article deals with concepts related to broadly understood political security. In the next part, attention is drawn to the characteristic elements of this type of security in the context of EU Member States, in order to finally indicate the main threats (both from the supranational and national level).

Political security – the meaning of the concept

Issues related to security in the literature are very often considered through the prism of specific threats and fields that can affect this security. Political security is one of the

five universally recognised security fields, which include the political, military, economic, cultural-identity and ecological sectors (Gierszewski 2013: p. 104). Due to the fact that there are many shots and definitions of political security in the source literature, it is worth looking at a few of them.

The political security of the subject, in general terms, is a state of certainty of survival, sovereign functioning and development of its political system and results from the lack of political threats or the ability to protect against them (Chojnowski 2012: p. 108). This definition contains several important determinants that have a direct impact on the level of security.

These include: the certainty of survival of a given entity, the sovereignty of its functioning as well as the possibility of developing a political system. All these elements can function properly due to the lack of political threats or the entity's ability to protect against them. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to a number of correlations that occur between the above-mentioned factors, for example without the development of the political system, it is difficult to find instruments to defend against emerging threats in this area. Summarising, political security in this approach means a way of functioning of a given entity, which ensures sustainable development leading to the elimination of the effects of existing political threats.

The source literature assumes that the dominant political organisations are states and thus they are also the main subject of the analysis of the political security sector. However, one should remember about other political units functioning at the state level, such as:

- 1) emerging "superstate" (treated in this way may be the European Union);
- 2) organised identity groups that do not have the form of a state but have strong institutions;
- 3) transnational social movements that can mobilize the loyalty of their supporters (e.g. religious organisations: The Catholic Church in the past and Islam currently) and usually with strong support from the state or countries (e.g. communism on the part of the Soviet Union) (Chojnowski 2012: p. 114).

The functioning of each of the above-mentioned entities can be considered through the prism of political security. Each time, however, one must bear in mind the specificity of the given unit and the correlations occurring within it. The table below demonstrates the level of link between individual entities and political security.

Table 1. Political security and the degree of connection between entities

The level of political security	Degree of connection
The international system	average
State	significant
Unit / Society	average

Source: Brzeziński 2012: p. 6.

This list demonstrates that the degree of political security connection is the most important for states, followed by the international system and society (Brown, Ainley 2009: p. 3). Once again, on the basis of the above analysis, it can be clearly seen that research on political security cannot be limited only to its individual levels. Each time, the environment (both international and internal) of the state should be taken into account.

Political security can also be included in the category of authority, which is aimed at achieving socially acceptable goals, organised in accordance with applicable laws and has the power to support this activity in internal and external realisations (Zalewski 2010: p. 20–21). This type of security concerns both the international system (global approach), international subsystems (regional approach), states and other entities – political units functioning at this level of analysis, as well as social groups and organisations functioning in countries, as well as the human unit. The European Union (as a specific international organisation) is therefore also responsible for ensuring an adequate level of political security (Zalewski 2010: p. 114). Of course, this applies to the supranational level, which obviously also affects the situation in the Member States. Consideration of political security in a broad international context includes many problems that are not characteristic of states as basic security units (Mojsiewicz 2000: p. 45): number and effectiveness of international organisations, stability of systems, ways to resolve conflicts, and threats to international governance.

The definitions cited above clearly demonstrate that when considering the subject of political security analysis, one should take into account the complexity of this problem. In this article, these issues are further complicated by the status of the European Union (and the manner and nature of the functioning of the Member States, which represent different approaches to strengthening further cooperation also in the field of security).

Political security of the Member States of the European Union

The European Union, due to its goals and functions, is an atypical type of international organisation – it does not have citizens or its own territory. It was brought to life by democratic and sovereign states (Fischer 2017: p. 18). Currently, it brings together 27 countries which, by signing accession treaties, expressed their will and willingness to transfer some of their competences to the supranational level. As a result of European integration, sovereignty *de facto* has been divided and transferred to supranational institutions that led to the formation of the so-called shared sovereignty, which derives from the German experience of the federation, according to which the central (federal) government shares sovereignty with other social institutions, especially regional ones. Member countries have agreed to respect the findings (including those related to security) made by EU institutions. Such a solution gave the opportunity to better recognize and combat threats (which often go beyond the borders of countries and sometimes the EU itself), so that both the state and the EU are better able to react to them.

In this way, a new international order was formed, which is expressed in the statement that the existing structures of mine are increasingly not so much intergovernmental as supra-state:

- a) the difference between foreign policy and domestic policy is blurred;
- b) international structures and their states have the right and even the obligation to interfere in matters, which in the past belonged exclusively to the discretionary power of national governments of sovereign states;
- c) nowadays countries increasingly accept the jurisdiction of international tribunals, especially in matters concerning human rights and minority groups (Zalewski 2010: p. 156).

The examples cited clearly demonstrate that nowadays we are also delegating powers in the field of political security to the supranational level. That is why it seems justified to promote ever closer integration in political security, which not all EU countries are convinced of.

The political security of the Member States that are part of a particular international organisation that is the EU also largely depends on its internal situation. At this point, attention should be paid to the need to distinguish national states from the Member States, which is quite important in the context of political security (Cristian-Eduard 2012: p. 90).

Table 2. Features distinguishing a nation state from an EU Member State

National state	EU Member State
Strong policy of sectoral policies	Depoliticisation of sectoral policies
Territorial contempt	Peaceful quenching of conflicts
Restrictive boundaries	State borders abolished or contractual
Economic divisions	Economic convergence
Selfishness	Altruism
Lack of international loyalty (or business-like loyalty)	European loyalty
National interest	Community interest
Individual logic	Collective logic
Non-coordinated activities	Coordinated actions
Small delegation of competences to international institutions	Large delegation of competences to international institutions
Authority and competences constituted more horizontally	Authority and competences constituted more vertically

Source: Ruszkowski 2017: p. 13.

Each EU Member State is also a national state, but not every nation-state is a Member State of the Union. Accession to the EU means that countries adopt the principles and values that guide this international organisation. As a result, these countries change their approach to some areas of their activity, depoliticise sectoral policies and territorial jurisdiction gives way to peaceful conflict suppression and restrictive boundaries

get contractual status or are completely abolished. It should also be noted that the accession countries agree to comply with the applicable legal order and, consequently, institutional. In this way, their sovereignty and a specific kind of freedom of functioning in this area is significantly reduced. It is worth noting, however, that these are voluntary actions and taken by the states in a conscious manner. In addition, Member States in such an international organisation as the EU are situated in a hierarchical system, then their competences and power are more vertically established, because over the states there are supranational European institutions with competence and below are regional and local authorities, which also they have their own scope of authority (Ruszkowski 2017: p. 16).

In summary, the political security of European Union Member States must be considered through the prism of two levels, i.e. transnational and national. Ensuring the proper way of functioning of institutional and legal order is the responsibility of the international organisation, which is the EU, but it cannot be considered in isolation from the internal conditions of the Member States.

Threats to political security of the Member States of the European Union

Threats to political security for the Member States of the European Union inherently involve problems in the whole international system. The table below presents a list of the most serious challenges in this area.

Table 3. Types of political threats to the international system

Lp.	Political threats to the international system
1.	enlarging the spheres of influence – subjugation of other countries by the superpowers,
2.	conflicts of powers over global and / or regional hegemony,
3.	non-compliance with agreed and established institutions and international regimes, in particular international law,
4.	boycotting and/or opposing the establishment of new institutions and organisations regulating international relations, especially those favouring peaceful coexistence and development of states,
5.	lack of readiness for international cooperation aimed at stabilising the order of the international system, through the prevention and peaceful resolution of international disputes and conflicts,
6.	non-compliance by States with the principles of peaceful coexistence, based on mutual respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit,
7.	developing and/or supporting international terrorism, using cultural diversity and stimulating fundamentalism, especially religious,

8.	stimulating and developing aggressive ideologies and political movements, referring to aggressive nationalism, racism, xenophobia, chauvinism, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance that lead to deep ideological and political divisions,
9.	differences on the political and ideological background, constituting the political foundations of states that in themselves can generate conflict situations

Source: Chojnowski 2012: p. 118.

The catalogue of these threats is very wide, covering many areas ranging from strictly legal to ideological issues. In view of the fact that Member States constitute a characteristic category of entities (as described in greater detail in the second part of the article), the catalogue of threats will also be slightly different than in the case of non-EU countries. For the purpose of this analysis, this catalogue will be divided into two groups:

- 1) threats resulting from the political situation in the EU,
- 2) threats resulting from the political situation in individual EU Member States.

The current political situation within the EU is dominated by debates related to the future of the Union as such, as well as proposals for the reform of the euro area. The EU development scenarios presented by the President of the European Commission (EC) Jean Claude Juncker present five concepts for the future functioning of the community (Komisja Europejska 2017).

The first concept assumes the continuation of the policy pursued so far by 27 Member States on the basis of the Commission's *A New Beginning for Europe* guidelines. According to the second concept, the EU will focus only on the single market and, as a result, its proper functioning will become the main reason for the existence of the Union. As part of the next scenario, the EC postulates the diversification of integration in such a way as to create a group of states that strengthen cooperation in the framework of jointly undertaken initiatives. Another Commission proposal is to narrow cooperation between Member States to a smaller number of policies, while deepening cooperation in these areas. The last scenario assumes that EU countries will decide to cooperate in all areas.

The EC proposals presented above have received wide coverage among Member States – mainly due to the third scenario, which allows the functioning of the so-called Europe of many speeds. The critics of this idea argue that its implementation may lead to a deeper integration of only the strong EU Member States, which will make the weaker ones pushed into the periphery. Looking through the prism of political security – the adopted order and institutional hierarchy could be significantly disturbed mainly due to the functioning of entities within various groups for which a new institutional structure would be needed.

Another of the currently discussed concepts is the creation of a separate budget for the Eurozone and, consequently, the office that will manage it, i.e. the minister of finance of the Eurozone (he would replace the current position of the head of the Eurogroup). He would be primarily responsible for: overseeing and coordinating issues related to the macroeconomic policy of the countries of the single currency and taking loans through

bonds denominated in euro. The creation of a new institution that would include such broad competences in its hand will undoubtedly be associated with the introduction of changes to the generally accepted and prevailing decision-making process in the European Union.

According to advocates of the introduction of the office of finance minister, the Eurozone would be a remedy for possible asymmetric shocks, an example of which is Greece's debt crisis – even though it concerned only one Member State had a very negative impact on the entire Eurogroup. In turn, the opponents of the abovementioned changes claim that the separation of a separate budget for the Eurozone countries would result in a huge division between the Member States, thus leading to the creation of the so-called hard core in the EU. In this example, it is clear that the political security of the EU and its Member States can be shaken due to the clear opposition of some countries regarding this type of concept.

This situation can be solved in two ways. First of all, Member States will decide to (as adopted in the EU) reach a compromise in this area. Secondly, the Eurogroup countries will adopt appropriate regulations without taking into account criticism from countries not belonging to the Eurozone. The second option, from the point of view of political security, is definitely more dangerous because it leads to closer integration only within a group of countries, resulting in the increase in existing divisions.

The second group of threats for EU Member States concerns their internal political situation. We have learned about the importance of political balance in the EU countries on the example of the last independence referendum in Catalonia. Although this issue concerned only one country, it has received wide coverage throughout Europe. Another example is Brexit, where internal political games have led to an unprecedented situation, in which one of the most active states leaves the community. In this way, the sense of the existence of the organisation and, consequently, this case study is a huge challenge for EU institutions that are responsible for maintaining political security and must negotiate such conditions that none of the other EU countries would like to launch Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). The main assumption of EU decision-makers is that the process of leaving the EU should be so painful and unfavourable, thus discouraging similar actions.

Conclusions

In conclusion, threats to the political security of the European Union Member States refer to both the national and EU level, for example, the manner in which the process of spill over processes in individual countries is clearly visible. We are dealing here with both the positive influence (which are the ongoing integration processes) and the negative one, which can be exemplified by the threats discussed above. Despite the main principles and values of the Union, its Member States are still striving to satisfy their own aspirations – especially when it comes to security issues. Today, we are observing in Europe a disturbing trend, in which individual states strive to achieve the greatest possible autonomy despite their actual participation in EU structures.

The presented analysis demonstrated that threats to the political security of EU Member States come from both national and supranational levels. This is mainly due to the aspirations of member countries to maintain the greatest possible autonomy while participating in EU structures. Therefore, the hypothesis presented in this analysis has been positively verified.

Aleksandra Kuszykiewicz-Fedurek – PhD student at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies at the University of Warsaw. A graduate of the Faculty of Law and Administration and the Institute of European Studies. Research interests: European Union law, European funds, financial law.

Aleksandra Kuszykiewicz-Fedurek – doktorantka Wydziału Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Absolwentka Wydziału Prawa i Administracji oraz Instytutu Europeistyki. Zainteresowania badawcze: prawo Unii Europejskiej, fundusze europejskie, prawo finansowe.

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