

REVIEW OF POLISH-ICELANDIC POLITICAL RELATIONS IN 1945–1989 – A POLISH PERSPECTIVE

Rafał Raczyński

*University of Gdańsk Institute of Political Science,
Department of International Relations
ul. Bażyńskiego 4, 80-309 Gdańsk, Poland
0000-0002-7143-790X
rafal.raczynski@ug.edu.pl*

Abstract

The article discusses the political relations between Poland and the Republic of Iceland from 1945 to 1989. Prior to the Second World War, the two countries had limited contact, mainly through trade. Political relations only began to develop in the post-war period. Although at that time, both countries found themselves in antagonistic political and military blocs, as well as in different economic systems, Polish-Icelandic relations were generally constructive, pragmatic, and positive in nature. From the Polish perspective, the opposition of a significant part of Icelandic society towards the location of an American military base in Keflavik and Iceland's membership in NATO, as well as the Cod Wars waged mainly against the United Kingdom, were the main influences. Additionally, the block of socialist states carried out a policy of 'constructive dialogue and cooperation' in relation to the entire Nordic area, and there was an interest in developing trade contacts.

Key words: *relations with Nordic countries, Iceland, political relations of 1945–1989, policy of constructive dialogue, foreign policy of Poland.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 1918, Poland regained its independence. Only twelve days later, on December 1, 1918, Iceland was also proclaimed an independent state. However, it

remained in a personal union with the Kingdom of Denmark. During the interwar period, both countries had very limited political relations. The ratification of the Trade and Navigation Treaty between Poland and Iceland [Traktat Handlowy i Nawigacyjny pomiędzy Polską a Islandią] in 1924 and the conclusion of the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Tonnage Certificates for Icelandic ships in Poland and Gdańsk, as well as for Polish and Gdańsk ships in Iceland [Porozumienie w sprawie wzajemnego uznawania okrętowych świadectw pomiarowych okrętów morskich, w Polsce i w Gdańsku islandzkich], expressed the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Between 1930 and 1939, Poland held an honorary consulate in Reykjavik, Iceland. Additionally, Michał Sokolnicki, the Polish Envoy in Copenhagen, visited Reykjavik during this time.

After the end of the Second World War, there was a significant increase in political interest in Iceland in Poland. This was reflected in the intensification of mutual contacts. However, this issue has not been thoroughly examined or described in detail in relevant literature, except for the article penned by Mirosław Romański, titled "Kontakty polsko-islandzkie po 1945 r.". The article titled 'Polish-Icelandic Contacts after 1945' aims to fill a void in the existing literature. It presents a descriptive hypothesis that despite being in antagonistic political and military blocks with different ideological and economic systems, Poland and Iceland had constructive, pragmatic, and positive mutual relations between the end of World War II and the 1980s. The article is structured into an introduction, main section, and conclusion. The main section analyses the content and scope of mutual political contacts between Poland and Iceland, and is divided into three subsections: development (in the 1940s and 1950s), stabilization (in the 1960s and 1970s), and limitation (in the 1980s) of political relations.

The approach used was political analysis within the model of historical political science, which includes the analysis of processes, phenomena, and relations. The research analysed the development of political life in Poland and Iceland, focusing on changes to their systems, institutions, and political relations. The explanation provided is causative and characteristic of historical study. Therefore, this article mainly employs the historical method.

Due to the limited research on the interactions between Poland and Iceland from 1945 to 1989, the article heavily relies on source materials. The analysis primarily examined archival materials related to the relationship between Poland and Iceland. These materials were collected from the Archives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Institute of National Remembrance and the Icelandic National Archives (Thjóðskjalasafn Íslands).

2. RELATIONS IN 1945–1989

2.1 Development of political relations (in the 40s and 50s)

Poland promptly recognized Iceland's full independence, which was proclaimed on June 17, 1944. On July 13, 1945, the Republic of Iceland was one of the first countries to recognize the Provisional Government of National Unity and propose establishing diplomatic relations with Poland [*Diplomatic notes dated 14 July, 1945 sent to the diplomatic representatives of France, Great Britain and the USSR; Telegram w sprawie uznania Tymczasowego Rządu Jedności Narodowej*]. The exchange of diplomatic missions took place in 1946 due to technical reasons [Frątczak 1974: 78]. In September 1945, Petur Benediktsson, the Minister Plenipotentiary of Iceland in Moscow, arrived in Warsaw with the Icelandic parliamentarian Einar Olgeirsson to discuss the case and explore the potential for establishing trade relations [*Pétur Benediktsson sendiherra í Póllandi 1946–1951*]. The Icelandic minister was also interested in determining whether Iceland should have created a distinct position in Warsaw or if it could be represented by its envoy in Moscow [*Notatka Naczelnika Wydziału Skandynawskiego z 1 X 1945 r.: 1*]. In the following year, the Icelandic minister plenipotentiary in Moscow received information from the Polish ambassador that "the Polish Government agreed to exchange diplomatic missions between Iceland and Poland, with Iceland being represented by its diplomatic representative in Moscow, and the Polish Government by its envoy in Norway" [*Depesza do Posła Islandii w Moskwie*].

As per the arrangements made in Warsaw, Mieczysław Rogalski, the Polish Envoy in Norway, travelled from Oslo to Reykjavik. The purpose of his visit was to submit letters of credence, establish personal relations, and discuss the proposed trade treaty between Poland and Iceland. The visit was initially scheduled for June [Rogalski 1946a], but was postponed to August 1946. In his report on the visit, Rogalski referred to the post-war political situation of Iceland, saying: "What one may discern in Iceland is the great supremacy of America and the abundance of American goods of all kinds and needs. America has taken all air bases and wants to retain them permanently. The position of the Icelandic government, financially dependent on America, is however to make the air bases equally accessible to all the major coalition powers. This policy is also supported by the Soviet Union, which [...] enjoys here high favour" [Rogalski 1946b].

In September 1948, Józef Giebułtowicz replaced Mieczysław Rogalski as the Polish Envoy in Iceland. Although his stay on the island was brief (September 10–18, 1948), he left with a positive impression. In his summary report of the visit, Giebułtowicz even included a personal reflection: "Throughout my diplomatic

service, Iceland has been the only place where, representing the New Poland, I felt treated equally with representatives of, for example, Great Britain or the United States. And since even for a diplomat it is difficult to get rid of the sensitivity caused by ambition as to these matters, often strikingly different in other countries (even those having closer contacts with Poland), it created a welcoming atmosphere for me and gave me for the first time in my service satisfaction with the result of my mission” [Giebułtowicz 1948a: 8]. Furthermore, in his summary report of the visit, Giebułtowicz, like Rogalski before him, provided an assessment of Iceland's post-war geopolitical position and the attitude of its people. The diplomat stated: “At the moment, Icelanders are acutely aware of the extent to which, in the existing geographic and political system, they are exposed to danger resulting from American imperialist aspirations. But the acceptance, which they do not even wish to express, but which is visible, should not be mistaken for a positive emotional attitude towards the United States. It ought to be noted that the American propaganda is so strong that this state of affairs may change over less than a generation” [Giebułtowicz 1948a: 8].

As previously mentioned, a Polish honorary consulate was established in Iceland during 1930–1939 [Pałyga 1970: 189]. Its activity was approved and recognized during Envoy Rogalski's stay on the island in 1946. In the first years after the war, the honorary consulate operated on the basis of pre-war letters of credence, which the new Polish authorities considered void. However, the Icelandic Government was not concerned with completing this formality. Only Józef Giebułtowicz, the next Polish envoy accredited to the presidency of Iceland, took an interest in this matter. In May 1948, he requested a new letter of credence from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Giebułtowicz also gave a positive assessment of the consulate, noting: “The existence of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Reykjavik is purposeful and even indispensable, due to the Polish ships calling in there as well as owing to the growing Polish-Icelandic trade relations. As it can be seen from the correspondence between the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Oslo and the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Reykjavik, the Consulate even makes certain steps in the propaganda field, distributes materials received from the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Oslo and arranges all the commissioned activities” [Giebułtowicz 1948b: 1–2]. At that time, the Honorary Consul was an entrepreneur named Hjalti Jonsson, while his nephew, Finnbogi Kjartansson, served as the Deputy Consul. Kjartansson had studied trade in Poland before the war and graduated from Warsaw in 1935 [Ristow 1972: 10].

Another Polish envoy accredited to the presidency of Iceland was Stanisław Antczak, who came to Reykjavik in early July 1954 to submit relevant powers. In general, like Giebułtowicz before him, Antczak had positive impressions from his trip to Iceland. "My impressions as to the stay and meeting Icelanders – he wrote in the summary report on the visit – are favourable, as for the kindness and even a cordial reception, it indicates that Icelanders treat us with great respect and that commercial and political relations with Poland are taken seriously" [Antczak 1954: 5].

While Stanisław Antczak was in Iceland, the Icelandic Foreign Minister, Kristján Gudmundsson, raised the possibility of establishing a permanent Polish representation in Reykjavik. During a reception he hosted, Gudmundsson argued that such an office would greatly facilitate trade, cultural, and consular contacts between the two countries. The Icelandic business delegation staying in Warsaw in March 1956 (Witkowski 1956) also reported similar postulates. They highlighted serious problems in their contacts with the Polish side, which made it difficult to expand Polish-Icelandic relations. To meet the expectations of the Icelandic side, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided in April 1956 to open a consulate in Reykjavik with a consul's rank [*Notatka w sprawie otwarcia Konsulatów w Luxemburgu i Reykjaviku oraz Agencji Konsularnej w Heerlen, 19 IV 1956*]. Therefore, on June 5, the Legation of the Polish People's Republic in Oslo sent a diplomatic note to the Embassy of the Republic of Iceland in Oslo regarding the establishment of a consular post in Reykjavik [Antczak 1956a: 1]. In the same month, Envoy Antczak reported from Oslo that the Icelandic Government had agreed to the establishment of a consular post of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik with an official note dated 20 June. [*Wyciąg korespondencyjny Nr 11655 z Oslo, dn. 25 VI 1956 r.; Nota islandzkiego MSZ z dnia 20 czerwca 1956 r. potwierdzająca zgodę na utworzenie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjaviku*]. Consequently, on August 1, 1956, the Consulate of the Polish People's Republic was established in Reykjavik with territorial competence for Iceland by the decision of Minister Marian Naszkowski. [*Akt ustanowienia Konsulatu Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjaviku, 10 VII 1956 r.*]. One month later, Mieczysław Gumkowski was nominated as Consul of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik. In December of 1956, the Polish Envoy in Oslo, Mieczysław Antczak, informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about a letter received on December 11th from the Consul of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik. The letter contained information that on November 29th, 1956, the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent letters of credence to Gumowski along with the exequatur [Antczak 1956b].

In the first half of 1957, the Polish side made efforts to raise the consulate to the rank of legation. As a result, on 15 October, the Consulate of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik was abolished, and its responsibilities were transferred to the Legation of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik, which had been established on August 15, 1957. [*Akt zniesienia Konsulatu Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjaviku, Warszawa 5 X 1957; Akt ustanowienia Poselstwa Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjaviku*]. The Consul, Mieczysław Gumkowski, was appointed as the First Secretary of the Legation. In the absence of the envoy, who stayed in Oslo on a daily basis, he headed the post as *chargé d'affaires* [*Parafraza dep. Szyfr. z dnia 31.07.1957 r. do Morskiego – Oslo*]. In 1962, the governments of the Polish People's Republic and the Republic of Iceland decided to elevate their representative offices in Warsaw and Reykjavik to the rank of embassies, resulting in another transformation of the Polish representation on the island. The Polish side presented this initiative in a letter dated November 10, 1962, addressed to the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kazimierz Dorosz, the sitting Envoy, was appointed as the Polish Ambassador to Iceland. However, the organizational structure did not last long. On May 30, 1963, the Polish authorities decided to liquidate the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik as a separate institution. Instead, they established a representative office that functioned based on the structures of the commercial counsellor's office [*Plan perspektywiczny prowadzenia pracy wywiadowczej na kierunku: fińskim, norweskim i islandzkim z dnia 27.10.1965 r., 22*]. Bolesław Piasecki was appointed its head and presided as *chargé d'affaires a.i.* (while maintaining the position and responsibilities of the *commercial attaché*) [*Szyfrogram Winiewicza do Kazimierza Dorosza z dnia 6 marca 1963 r.*]. In subsequent years, the Polish representative office in Reykjavik underwent further reorganizations, including the restoration of embassy status.

The establishment of Polish posts in Reykjavik in the second half of the 1950s, first the consulate and later the legation, was primarily motivated by political factors related to the internal political situation in Iceland. The 1956 election brought significant changes to the Icelandic political scene. As a result, the centre-right coalition of the Independence Party and the Progressive Party, which had been directing Icelandic policy for a decade and integrating the country into a network of international connections with the United States and other Western countries, was removed from power. The new government, which is known as the first 'government of the broad left', was formed by the Progressive Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's Alliance. Regarding international policy, the new ruling group,

primarily composed of the People's Alliance gathering Icelandic socialists and communists, made revocation of the Defence Agreement with the US and withdrawal of American troops from the Keflavik base a key assumption [Raczyński 2011: 184–185]. The political realignment of Iceland caught the attention of and was welcomed by the USSR and other socialist countries, including Poland. As a result, they began seeking to intensify mutual contacts with Iceland and support the political changes taking place there. Consequently, Poland decided to open its consulate on the island, followed by a diplomatic representation in the form of the Legation of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik. The following text is a direct quote from a secret correspondence between Przemysław Ogrodziński, Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Albert Morski, Envoy of the Polish People's Republic in Oslo, dated April 20, 1957: “The decision to foster our relations with Iceland was made in the spring of 1956 after the Icelandic government had declared revision of the agreement with the US concerning the bases. The decision, thus, resulted from political assumptions and aimed to enable permanent observation of Iceland's political evolution and to establish direct contact with the Icelandic political circles favourable to the idea of peaceful coexistence. At the same time, the governing bodies recommended developing cultural relations with Iceland. Trade relations had been already established. As a result of this decision, we resolved to establish a consulate in Iceland, which we intended to transform into a legation within a year. To set up a legation at once seemed to us to be too harsh in this period” [Ogrodziński 1957: 1]. Relatedly, Morski, on the occasion of a visit to Reykjavik connected with the submission of credentials, received the task of obtaining the Icelandic Government's consent to transform the Polish consulate into a legation and to implement this transformation. At the same time, Morski was obliged to travel to Iceland several times a year in order to “strengthen contacts with Icelandic political circles” [Ogrodziński 1957: 1].

The letter instructed the Polish envoy in Oslo to provide conclusions on the development of relations with Iceland after visiting the country. From May 25 to June 7, 1957, Morski stayed in Reykjavik. In his report, the Polish diplomat highlighted the reluctance of a portion of Icelandic society towards American domination over the island. He noted: “What expresses the Icelandic society's attitude towards Americans is last year's overthrow of the conservative government which had led to the installation of the US military bases in Iceland during peacetime, and the support of the sitting government, composed of «progressivists» / peasant party / social democrats and communists, which came to power under

the slogans of removing American bases from Iceland. In the further part of the report he added his assessment of the situation: «If it had not been for the Hungarian incidents, this matter would have been undoubtedly brought to an end already last year. The situation created due to the Hungarian incidents and the Suez Crisis forced the Icelandic government to make temporary concessions to the US. In consequence, the decision on the future of the American bases on the Icelandic territory was suspended until the summer of 1957. However, the number of American troops in Iceland has been considerably reduced, Americans make their presence in Reykjavik very seldom, and the financial inflows from the lease of the bases, which in the previous years amounted to almost 300 million Icelandic kronas, were reduced in 1957 to 1/3» [Morski 1957: 1].

Assessing the attitude of Icelanders to Poland, Morski generally regarded it as friendly and kind (especially towards some fraction of the political elite).

As part of the process of strengthening contacts with Icelandic political circles, measures were taken to establish direct contacts between the leaders of the Icelandic Socialist Party and the leaders of the Polish United Workers' Party. In May 1957, talks were held between Mieczysław Gumkowski, the Consul of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik, and Einar Olgeirsson, the leader of the Socialist Party and chairman of the lower chamber of Althing. Gumkowski stated that the Icelandic socialists considered it important to establish communication with the Polish United Workers' Party [Gumkowski 1957a: 1–3].

Following instructions from the head office, the Polish diplomatic representation in Reykjavik aimed to maintain close contact with the centre-left government of Iceland, as well as leading politicians, particularly those on the left. The legation sought to use these contacts primarily for two purposes: firstly, to obtain political information, and secondly, to generate interest in the main directions of Polish foreign and domestic policy. The Polish chargé d'affaires a.i. observed that the implementation of the latter goal faced significant challenges. For example, there was little interest among Icelandic politicians in the Rapacki Plan, which was being promoted by Polish diplomacy at that time. A similar situation arose with the proposal for an exchange of visits between Polish and Icelandic parliamentarians. However, at the turn of 1958, Mieczysław Gumkowski could report to the head office: “Since the Consulate of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik was transformed into the Legation (August 15, 1957), the interest in the institution and the range of its contacts have increased significantly. The establishment of the Committee of Polish Friends [Komitet Przyjaciół Polski] in Reykjavik, the first steps

on the path of the exchange of journalists, interest in the Polish literature, publications and cinema, and finally the growing trade in goods are a promise to well-developing Polish-Icelandic relations” [Gumkowski 1957b: 16]. However, in late 1958, the prospects for their evolution changed significantly due to the reassessment of Iceland's internal policy. Just before Christmas, the People's Alliance left the government coalition due to the lack of an agreement on economic affairs, resulting in the dissolution of the so-called government of the broad left. Following its collapse, the country was briefly governed by a social democratic minority government led by Prime Minister Emil Jonsson. In 1959, after electoral district reforms and new elections, the Independence Party, Social Democratic Party, and Progressive Party formed a centre-right 'reorganization government' that remained in power for the next three terms (1959–1971). The cabinet's name was associated with the economic reform programme initiated in 1960. The programme included krona devaluation, liberalisation of foreign trade, and a reduction in state protectionism and interventionism. Iceland expressed the new policy by signing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1964 and joining EFTA in 1970 [Raczyński 2011: 185]. In international politics, the new centre-right government proposed an alliance with the US, membership in NATO, and the continuation of the American base in Keflavik. Therefore, Halina Kowalska, Gumkowski's successor as *chargé d'affaires* a.i. in Reykjavik, reported on the legation's activities in the second half of 1959, stating: “The foreign policy of the social democratic government [...] is characterized by the persistent pursuit of closer ties with the West, eager emphasis on belonging to the Atlantic community, and above all, close cooperation with Americans. In these conditions there is no question of centrifugal tendencies in relation to NATO. Likewise, the matter of the implementation of the 1956 parliament resolution on the liquidation of the American airbase [...] completely lessened” [Kowalska 1959: 2]. Referring to the relations between Iceland and the Soviet Union, Kowalska emphasized: “Iceland's governing circles have deep and unconcealed – to put it mildly – aversion to the Soviet Union. It is driven by hostility toward communist ideology and fear of infiltration” [Kowalska 1959: 5]. At the same time, the new political conditions did not significantly deteriorate official Polish-Icelandic relations. According to the Polish diplomatic representative, this was because Iceland still viewed Poland in “a certain October halo” at the end of the 1950s, considering it to be “politically oriented westward”. This generated a friendly attitude towards Poland [Kowalska 1959: 7, 17].

At the end of the 1950s, international matters played an important role in Polish-Icelandic bilateral relations. Iceland sought to obtain the widest possible international support for its decision to extend the belt of territorial waters, which led to a sharp dispute with Great Britain. In October 1959, Haralður Gudmundsson, Iceland's Envoy accredited in Poland, met with Minister Adam Rapacki in Warsaw to seek Poland's support for Iceland's position on the naval law ahead of the 1960 Geneva Conference. In response, Minister Rapacki emphasised that the Polish perspective on this matter was based on the fundamental principle of recognising the sovereign rights of states to specify the width of their territorial waters within reasonable limits, in order to protect their vital interests. Therefore, he assured Gudmundsson that, as was the case at the Geneva Conference in 1958, Poland still recognised Iceland's debating points and would continue to support its position [Zabłocki 1959]. In its relations with Iceland, the Polish delegation aimed to gain support for the disarmament concepts proposed by the socialist block and official recognition of the western Polish border by the Icelandic government. The Polish delegation in Reykjavik was also committed to monitoring the FRG's "penetration" in Iceland [Druto 1959; *Penetracja Niemieckiej Republiki Federalnej w Islandii*]. In both cases, Polish diplomacy encountered significant difficulties. The Icelandic political elite, as previously mentioned, showed little interest in the Polish disarmament initiative presented in the Rapacki Plan. Additionally, Icelandic authorities did not understand the importance of officially confirming the Polish border on the Oder and Nysa Łużycka rivers [*Note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iceland to the Polish Legation in Reykjavik dated August 10, 1960*]. In the subsequent years, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs endeavored to closely observe and monitor the following issues: Iceland's international political position (which was increasingly leaning towards the US), the growing influence of the US on the island, the balance of power in domestic policy, and the prevailing sentiments in Icelandic society (particularly anti-NATO or anti-American demonstrations). At the same time, the Polish state supported Iceland's position at international forums, even when it conflicted with the interests of Western powers. Therefore, as noted by Bernard Piotrowski, in the post-war period "Polish delegates at the UN supported all Icelandic efforts to strengthen the country's political sovereignty" [Piotrowski 1972: 37].

2.2 Stabilization of political relations (in the 60s and 70s)

In the 1960s, Poland placed significant importance on developing relations with the Republic of Iceland. This was due to political reasons, mainly related to NATO

issues and concerns about FRG “propaganda penetration” in Iceland. Additionally, there were economic reasons, particularly the potential for Polish shipyards to secure contracts for constructing cutters and trawlers for Icelandic ship owners, as well as an interest in maritime and fishery matters [*Pilna notatka 19/D.III/1969 z 9 stycznia 1969 r.*: 3]. As the centre-right coalition still held power in Iceland, trade began to play an increasingly important role in bilateral relations, particularly in the late 1960s. This was partly due to Icelandic foreign policy, which, guided by national interest, sometimes manoeuvred between the West and the East. Ambassador Ogrodziński emphasized this in his October 1969 report on his trip to the island: “Iceland does want the presence of socialist countries at home, a limited one, but undoubtedly posing a certain counterbalance to its links with the West” [Ogrodziński 1969: 12].

In the late 1960s, political communication between the two nations was primarily conducted through diplomatic missions and consular posts. However, this changed with the introduction of official visits by senior politicians. In 1968, Icelandic ministers visited Poland for the first time in the history of their mutual relations. The first visit, which took place from 1–12 July, was made by Gylfi Th, the Icelandic Minister of Culture and Commerce. In January 1969, Gislason and later, from 18–22 August, Minister of Fisheries Eggert Thorsteinsson visited Poland. According to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both visits were successful in familiarising foreign guests with Polish production and export capabilities, particularly in shipbuilding [*Pilna notatka 19/D.III/1969 z 9 stycznia 1969 r.*: 3]. In September 1969, Ryszard Karski, the Polish Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, paid a return visit to Iceland. He headed the delegation that negotiated and signed a trade agreement for the period of 1970–1974.

Regarding political contacts, it is noteworthy that the Progressive Party showed a willingness to establish relations with the Polish Peasants' Party in the late 1960s. According to *chargé de affaires* a.i. Mieczysław Kroker, the Progressive Party chose to intensify cooperation with people's democracy countries in all possible areas. At that time, they were already maintaining regular contacts with people's parties in the GDR and Bulgaria [Kroker 1969: 5].

The beginning of the next decade did not bring any fundamental changes in bilateral relations. At the beginning of the 1970s, the Polish side in contacts with Iceland was primarily aiming at: 1. Development of trade, and in particular boosting Polish exports to the island in order to offset the negative balance; 2. Maintaining and, where possible, developing contacts at the intergovernmental level initiated by

visits of Icelandic ministers in 1968 (primarily to promote Polish exports and to conduct political talks on European security); 3. Continuing and developing cultural, scientific and technical cooperation – to the extent defined by real possibilities [*Notatka dotycząca stosunków polsko-islandzkich z 10 kwietnia 1970 r.*: 1].

At that time, Polish official state bodies were interested in Iceland's position on the proposal to convene a conference on security and cooperation in Europe, as Iceland was among the NATO members who were relatively positive about it [*Tezy do rozmów z Sekretarzem Generalnym islandzkiego MSZ Petur Thorsteinssonem*: 1]. The Icelandic government was primarily interested in maritime issues, in addition to economic concerns. This was because of their unilateral decisions in 1972 and 1975 to expand the exclusive economic zone in the waters surrounding the island. They also sought international support and recognition for these activities.

During his stay in Warsaw on May 19–23, 1970, Secretary General of the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Petur Thorsteinsson, conducted discussions on the issues mentioned above. The Icelandic initiative led to Thorsteinsson's meetings and talks with Adam Willmann, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ryszard Karski, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, and Czesław Wiśniewski, Deputy Minister of Culture and Art. At the end of the visit, the Icelandic secretary was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stefan Jędrychowski. The purpose of the visit was for the Polish side to present its position on matters related to European security, the German problem, and the process of normalization of Polish-German relations. The talks also included a review of the state and prospects of bilateral relations, particularly in the commercial and cultural dimensions. Regarding the issue of European security, the Icelandic diplomat repeatedly emphasised that Iceland supported the idea of convening a conference on this matter. Iceland aimed to normalise relations in Europe and maintain good relations with all countries, which was one of the main principles of Icelandic foreign policy at the time. Regarding the German issue, the Republic of Iceland placed great importance on talks between the Polish People's Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Thorsteinsson emphasized that his country did not support the exclusion of the possibility of German unification. The discussions held in Warsaw also covered maritime and fishery issues. Thorsteinsson expressed his hope to gain Poland's acceptance for the plans to expand Iceland's exclusive economic zone. It was agreed that contacts regarding these matters would take place through the permanent representations of both countries at the UN. If necessary, direct contacts through diplomatic channels would also be utilized. Concerning economic issues, both parties reiterated their

mutual desire to develop existing trade relations. The Icelandic diplomat invited Minister Jędrychowski and Deputy Minister Willmann to visit Iceland. The diplomat also reminded the Polish side of their obligation to host a return visit from the Minister of Culture. Deputy Minister Willmann summarized the talks as follows: "Taking into account the peripheral location of Iceland in Europe, preoccupation with its own problems, intensification of the American influences – we got basically a positive impression on the overall position of Icelandic policy and its willingness to develop contacts and relations with socialist countries in general and with Poland in particular" [*Pilna notatka z 27 maja 1970 r.*: 1–6].

In March 1971, the IV Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to Thorsteinsson's invitations by undertaking activities to organize a return visit by Deputy Minister Willmann. The proposed dates for the visit were in May or June. Eventually [*Wizyta Min. Willmanna w Islandii*], however, it was made only in 1972 by Deputy Foreign Minister, Józef Czyrek.

The development of bilateral relations between Poland and Iceland in the 1970s was influenced by the reshuffle on the Icelandic political scene. Unlike the 1960s, the 1970s were marked by high political instability in Iceland, with subsequent elections bringing changes to government coalitions. Following the 1971 elections, the Independence Party lost power, and the Progressive Party, along with opposition groups, formed the second government of the 'broad left'. In 1974, the Independence Party regained power and cooperated with the Progressive Party. In 1978, an alliance composed of the Progressive Party, the People's Alliance, and the Social Democratic Party took power, forming the so-called third government of the 'broad left'. However, they remained in power for just over a year. The return of the Icelandic left to government brought back the slogans of Iceland's exit from NATO and the withdrawal of American troops from the island into the mainstream of Icelandic political life. The political climate created by this situation was conducive to improving relations between Iceland and countries of the socialist bloc. According to a 1971 report by the Polish *chargé de affaires* a.i. in Reykjavik, Czesław Godek: "The programme of the current Icelandic government is a national programme. None of the coalition parties wants to see American troops in Iceland, and the press organ of the People's Alliance and also of the Progressive Party often oppose the anti-Soviet campaign conducted in the opposition press. The atmosphere is different than at the times of the former government. Willingness to cooperate with socialist countries has also intensified" [Godek 1971: 15]. In August 1971, Ambassador in Norway and Iceland, Przemysław Ogrodziński reported from Oslo:

“The new Icelandic government can be considered the most radical / leftist government in capitalist Europe” and further: “The situation justifies increasing our contacts with the Government of Iceland. Poland is in a good position because we have not interfered with the internal affairs of the Icelandic left” [Ogrodziński 1971]. However, it soon became apparent that the Icelandic left, which had evolved into the position of 'Eurocommunism' (as termed by Polish official state bodies), was not enthusiastic about establishing closer cooperation with socialist countries, as its representatives had been in the 1950s. For instance, in 1975, the People's Alliance declined the invitation from the Polish side to participate in the VII Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party [Szymanowski 1975a, 1975b]. Officially, the authorities justified their decision by invoking the principle of non-participation in congresses of other countries' parties, which had been formulated a few years earlier, although there were exceptions to this principle. Two years later, in the context of the political activity of the embassy in Reykjavik, chargé de affaires Antoni Szymanowski reported the following: “[...] the main leftist force, «People's Alliance», is now displaying unfavourable tendencies, hindering contacts and cooperation, to say nothing of a more generous basis: these are clear sympathies to «Eurocommunism» and explicit accents against the USSR and SC [socialist countries]. The party's organ - on the scale of the Icelandic press – should be placed today after the most anti-communist and anti-Soviet conservative newspaper” [Szymanowski 1977a: 5].

In the first half of the 1970s, an important event in bilateral relations occurred when Icelandic Foreign Minister Einar Agustsson visited Poland from May 20–24, 1973. This was the first high-level visit in the history of Polish-Icelandic relations. The invitation was extended by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Czyrek during his stay on the island in 1972. The Polish side gave Agustsson's visit the same protocol and press coverage as other Nordic foreign ministers, emphasizing the importance of relations with Iceland. During the visit, the Icelandic minister met with Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz and Minister of Water Transport Jerzy Szopa. Although a meeting with Chairman of the Polish Council of State Henryk Jabłoński was planned, it did not take place. Agustsson had to cut short his stay in Poland and urgently return to Iceland due to the worsening of Icelandic-British relations during the second 'Cod War'.

According to Polish diplomacy, the Icelandic side attempted to demonstrate their willingness to expand relations with socialist countries by promptly accepting the proposed visit by Deputy Minister Czyrek. It is important to note that, at that time,

Poland and Iceland shared similar stances on many key international issues. This was because the foreign policy of the new Icelandic centre-left government met the expectations and interests of the socialist countries in many areas. The Icelandic authorities have declared their interest in European events and expressed their willingness to pursue a policy of détente and cooperate with all nations. They have also announced their intention to seek a revision of the agreement with the US and gradually withdraw American soldiers from the base in Keflavik, with completion expected by 1975. They have also announced their intention to seek a revision of the agreement with the US and gradually withdraw American soldiers from the base in Keflavik, with completion expected by 1975. Poland shares the assessment of the importance of bilateral agreements ratified by the USSR with the Polish People's Republic and the German Federal Republic, as well as the four-party agreement on Berlin, for a positive development of the situation in Europe. The speaker recognizes the GDR and announces the establishment of diplomatic relations with this country in the near future. The speaker also supports the admission of both German states to the UN. The speaker advocated the swift convening of the European Conference on Security and Cooperation and announced active participation in it. They declared support for the ongoing arms reduction talks in Vienna and fully agreed with the idea of convening the World Conference on Disarmament. The signing of the Paris Peace Accords regarding Vietnam was welcomed, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was recognized. The establishment of diplomatic relations with this country was also announced. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was recognized, and the policy of UN support for national liberation movements in Africa was backed. Finally, the speaker advocated for a broad development of economic cooperation in Europe.

During the review of bilateral relations, both parties rated them positively and emphasized the need for further development. The discussion mainly focused on economic issues, particularly the export of Polish vessels and an agreement between Iceland and the EEC. In a previous issue, Agustsson evaluated the trawlers purchased from Poland as the best out of all obtained so far. He also announced that Iceland would continue to place orders for Polish ships while striving to diversify its imports from Poland, particularly in the area of consumer goods. Regarding the latter topic, the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the Icelandic agreement with the EEC would not adversely affect the development of Polish-Icelandic economic relations.

According to Minister Olszowski, Agustsson's visit to Poland was purposeful and conducted in a friendly atmosphere. The conversation was characterised by...

“constructiveness and mutual striving to achieve consensus”. The Polish side managed to accomplish all the assumed main goals. The only concessions concerned fishing issues. As emphasized by Olszowski, in this area the Polish side took into account “the specific situation of Iceland in connection with [...] exacerbation of its conflict with Great Britain”. Generally, nonetheless, Olszowski stressed that the visit of the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs was useful and fruitful. It made an important “contribution to the programme of comprehensive activation of relations between the Polish People's Republic and the countries of the Nordic region” [*Pilna notatka z wizyty Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych Islandii Einara Augustssona w Polsce w dniach 20–24 maja 1973 r.*: 7].

In 1973, Ludvik Josepsson, the Icelandic Minister of Trade and Fisheries, paid an official visit to Poland, following in the footsteps of Agustsson. The agenda of his visit included talks with Polish ministers in Warsaw, as well as a stay in Gdańsk and Gdynia, where he familiarized himself with the functioning of the Polish shipbuilding industry. According to the report of chargé d'affaires a.i. Czesław Godek, Josepsson gave a very positive assessment of the trip to Poland and the talks held there.

In the following years, the main issue in bilateral relations was the regulation of possible access for the Polish fishing fleet to Icelandic fisheries. Polish diplomacy raised this matter several times, but the Icelandic side consistently prolonged discussions and avoided making any declarations. Finally, on September 9, 1977, the two countries signed the Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Fishery [*Umowa o współpracy naukowo – technicznej w dziedzinie rybołówstwa*]. However, the Polish fleet was not granted any fishing rights in the Icelandic fishing zone. The agreement did not include a stipulation that both parties considered it desirable to extend in the future for “economic cooperation” [*Bieżące sprawy Islandii, 15 VIII - 15 X 1977*: 2]. In September 1977, in order to sign the agreement in question, the Polish Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, Edwin Wiśniewski, arrived in Reykjavik to be received by Iceland's Prime Minister, Geir Hallgrímsson [*Polsko-islandzka umowa w dziedzinie rybołówstwa*: 2].

In September 20–22, 1976, Stefan Olszowski, the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Poland, visited Iceland as part of a strategy to develop political contacts with the Nordic countries and in response to repeated invitations. The visit coincided with the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations and signing the first trade agreement between Poland and Iceland. This was the first visit of a Polish Foreign Minister in the history of mutual relations and the first official visit

of a senior politician from the bloc of socialist countries to Iceland. During his short visit to Reykjavik, Olszowski met with Icelandic Foreign Minister Einar Agustsson and was also received by Iceland's President Kristjan Eldjarn. During the visit, its participants reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on the most important international problems of the time, in particular with regard to the implementation of the CSCE Final Act and preparations for the Belgrade conference scheduled for the following year. As for the international issues, the Polish side wanted above all to point to the wide opportunities created by the "policy of détente and peaceful coexistence for the positive development of bilateral relations between states with different socio-political systems". In the sphere of bilateral relations, the aim of the Polish diplomacy was to discuss ways of solving the problem of possible fishing of the Polish fleet in the waters around Iceland, which had not been remedied at the time, as well as to debate on the prospects of expanding and increasing trade, based on stable long-term agreements [Ciešlar 1976: 2].

Regarding international issues, the Polish side viewed the consultations positively. According to Polish diplomacy, Minister Agustsson's statements during the plenary talks were more extensive than any previous official statements made by the Icelandic government [*Bieżące sprawy Islandii, 15 sierpnia – 30 września 1976*: 5]. In response to the raised issues, Minister Agustsson: The speaker agreed with the Polish side that there is a need to strengthen the process of political and military détente. They emphasized the importance of fully and comprehensively implementing the provisions of the CSCE Final Act and properly preparing for the meeting in Belgrade. The speaker also expressed appreciation for Poland's efforts in this regard. The Icelandic side expressed interest in the Soviet initiative to hold three pan-European congresses on energy, transport, and environmental protection. However, it was noted that participating in such events would pose significant personnel and organizational challenges for Iceland. Poland expressed interest in the progress of SALT II negotiations and Vienna talks on reducing armed forces and armaments in Europe. They also hoped that disarmament efforts in Central Europe would extend to the northern flank of the Nordic region in the future. The speaker expressed support for the proposal to hold the World Disarmament Conference and agreed with the Polish stance on the importance of the UN and the need to reinforce it without amending the UN Charter. They also praised the Polish government's efforts to improve relations with the FRG, acknowledging that it was a significant step towards promoting détente and enhancing relations between countries with differing political systems.

The bilateral talks resulted in a slight decline. The discussions centred mainly on fishery and economic matters, specifically on the potential for trade expansion.

The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs summarised Minister Olszowski's visit to Iceland as useful and held in a friendly and convivial atmosphere. The visit contributed to the deepening of the political dialogue with Iceland, which was a positive complement to Polish relations with other countries in the Nordic region. The report, prepared by Deputy Director of IV Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paweł Cieślak, emphasised these points. "The Polish side clearly felt that this visit – as the first diplomatic visit of a politician from a socialist country at this level – had particular importance for the Icelandic side. The Icelandic interlocutors stressed in all their speeches the importance of Poland, its economic and social achievements and the activity of foreign policy" [Cieślak 1976: 4–8]. Olszowski's visit was significant because it occurred during the reign of Iceland's centre-right government, which was less inclined to establish connections with socialist countries. The Polish Embassy in Reykjavik viewed the visit as a means of confirming that, among all socialist countries, Poland held the most favourable position in Iceland [*Bieżące sprawy Islandii, 15 sierpnia – 30 września 1976*: 5].

In the late 1970s, political relations between Poland and Iceland were described as 'good and free from controversy'. However, due to Iceland's size and distance from Poland, these relations were less developed than with other Nordic countries. Poland's interest in developing these contacts was demonstrated not only by the visits of Minister Agústsson in 1973 and Minister Olszowski in 1976, but also by the establishment of a political department at the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik, which included an MFA employee with the rank of Minister-Counsellor [*Islandia, notatka informacyjna, z września 1976*: 14].

At that time, the post in Iceland, which fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, aimed to improve and strengthen relations with Iceland. This was achieved by maintaining close contact with the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other ministries, leading politicians, political parties, parliamentary groups, social organizations, and mass media. In 1977, Antoni Szymanowski, the Polish *chargé d'affaires* in Reykjavik, expressed his opinion on the state of relations between the two countries in the following way: "Polish-Icelandic relations are good, they can even be described as friendly. Evidently, the degree of their development cannot be compared to the state of relations between the Polish People's Republic and other Nordic countries [...]. Nonetheless, Poland occupies an important position in Iceland's foreign trade as one of the largest importers – thanks to large purchases of fish flour and leather. The political field is

free from controversial issues, if we disregard the fact that the two countries belong to opposing military groups as well as the state of affairs in the fishery industry, which is unfavourable for Poland, but not very likely to change [...]. Thus, one can speak about the general convergence of both countries' foreign policies, which opt for strengthening of détente, limitation of armaments, especially nuclear ones, suppression of the sources of conflicts (Middle East), development of economic and scientific-cultural cooperation, support for the UN" [Szymanowski 1977b: 2–3].

In April 1978, Henrik Bjornsson, Secretary General of the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited Warsaw to strengthen political ties. During his visit to Poland, the Icelandic diplomat held consultations with Józef Czyrek, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, conducted talks at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, and was also received by Emil Wojtaszek, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Following the intentions of the Polish side, the visit was meant to establish a tradition of holding regular meetings and consultations at the level of deputy ministers of foreign affairs, in line with the model of Polish relations with other Nordic countries. Regarding international affairs, it was found that both countries share similar perspectives on various contemporary issues of European or global significance. Bjornsson presented Iceland's official position as being deeply interested in the progress of détente. Iceland did not regard the debates of the CSCE review conference in Belgrade as a failure. The country recognized the crucial importance of SALT II talks for progress in disarmament and further advocated for organizing the World Disarmament Conference. Iceland hoped that the forthcoming Special Session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to this subject would be the prologue for its convening. The country disapproved of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction and did not share the position of states in favour of reviewing the UN Charter. Regarding bilateral relations, the meeting participants were pleased to note improvements in both the political and economic aspects in recent years. While fishery issues received significant attention during the negotiations, the outcome dispelled any doubts about Poland obtaining fishing quotas in the Icelandic zone in the coming years.

In general, the Polish side gave a positive assessment of the visit and the consultations. They even proposed to elevate the rank of the ongoing political dialogue to the prime ministers of both countries [*Wizyta w Polsce H. Bjornssona, 26–30.04.1978, Notatka informacyjna o konsultacjach polsko-islandzkich przeprowadzonych w Warszawie w dniach 26–28 kwietnia br.: 1–7*].

Several months later, in September 1978, the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik made a proposition related to the transfer of power in Iceland

to the left-wing government and a similar proposition had been made. They suggested renewing the invitation for the then Prime Minister, Olafur Johannesson, who had been invited to visit Poland during his previous role as Minister of Trade and Justice in the previous cabinet [Szymanowski 1978]. However, the government of Johannesson fell after just over thirteen months in power, so the visit never took place.

The 1970s marked a significant revival in bilateral relations between Poland and Iceland, with unprecedented intensification of political, economic, and cultural contacts. For this reason, at the end of the 1970s, a note regarding the bilateral relations prepared by IV Department contained information that they “should be described as good and characterized by a keen interest for Poland” [*Ambasador Islandii w Polsce z siedzibą w Oslo A. Tryggvason, Notatka informacyjna o Islandii i stosunkach polsko-islandzkich*: 5]. In these circumstances, the political priorities of the Polish Embassy in Reykjavik were to take actions aimed at implementing the CSCE Final Act and strengthening the process of détente. Additionally, the embassy aimed to develop bilateral relations in all areas, in line with the assumptions of the Polish People's Republic's policy towards the Nordic region. The embassy also aimed to shape a positive image of People's Poland [Szymanowski 1979: 2]. In the late 1970s, Polish diplomacy raised the rank of diplomatic relations with Iceland by sending an ambassador to permanently reside in Reykjavik. This demonstrates the importance that Poland placed on maintaining contact with Iceland [*Uwagi Departamentu IV Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych do planu pracy Ambasady PRL w Islandii na rok 1980*: 1]. Previously, the embassy in Iceland was led by a chargé d'affaires, while the accredited ambassador resided permanently in Oslo.

2.3 Limitation of political relations (in the 80s)

Following a period of dynamic development, Polish-Icelandic contacts were significantly limited in the early 1980s. This was primarily due to the acute economic crisis faced by Poland, as well as its complex internal situation and international repercussions. Initially, however, there were no indications of significant changes in Polish policy towards Iceland or in the mutual relations. In 1980, the Polish government aimed to maintain a close relationship with Iceland. The action programme for 1980 outlined the following plan for their diplomatic relations.

- in the political field – creating favourable conditions for the development of mutually beneficial political and economic relations (mainly through maintaining contacts with the government, main political parties and trade unions);

- in the economic field – creating more favourable conditions for boosting Polish exports to the island;
- in the field of culture and information – presenting Poland and its position in the world [*Program działania na 1980 rok w stosunkach z Islandią*: 1–2].

The embassy aimed to expand its “cultural and political” activities beyond the country’s capital by planning three trips to Akureyri, Neskaupsstaður, and Husavík. This is in addition to building good relationships with the political environment of Reykjavík. [*Plan pracy ambasady w Islandii na 1980 r.*: 2]. In 1980, there was an analysis of the idea of sending a delegation of Polish parliamentarians to Iceland.

However, these plans were quickly abandoned due to the challenging economic situation in Poland and the deterioration of Polish-Icelandic relations resulting from the repression of the opposition and the imposition of martial law in Poland. The political elites, mass media, and broad public opinion in Iceland, as well as in many other countries, closely followed the August strikes, establishment of the Independent Self-Governing Labour Union 'Solidarity', and the subsequent events that took place in Poland from 1968 to 1981 [*Utanríkispolítík Póllands 1968–1981*]. In mid-April 1981, the Polish Ambassador in Reykjavík, Henryk Wendrowski, presented the prevailing views on the situation in Poland in Icelandic society as follows: “Even talks in the local circle of diplomats indicate a wholly one-sided way of seeing Polish affairs. Much like at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here. There is a general belief here that the Polish nation, that the workers rebelled against the system. Not only against the current government, but against communism. So, the conclusion is simple: a bad system must be replaced by a better system, that is by a capitalist one. That is why the revolt in Poland should be supported and sympathised with, and that is why «Solidarity» has been classified as a positive force, while the communist, weak government as a retrograde one” [*Islandzkie komentarze do sytuacji w Polsce*: 2]. The Embassy reported that Icelandic trade unions had established contact with 'Solidarity'. Haukur Mar Haraldsson visited Poland to meet with Lech Wałęsa and invite representatives of 'Solidarity' to Iceland. [*Islandzkie komentarze do sytuacji w Polsce*: 3–4].

Due to the worsening political relations between the two countries, there were significant changes in the guidelines of Polish foreign policy towards Iceland. It was reflected in the Programme Guidelines for Relations with Iceland in 1981 [*Programowe kierunki działań w stosunkach z Islandią w 1981 r.*] noting that: “Iceland is not one of the main targets of our political and economic interests, the

scope of Polish-Icelandic relations will not expand". At the same time, among the instruments of influence in the political sphere the document mentioned only: "maintaining contacts between Polish and Icelandic trade unions", "further actions for contacts between the Polish United Workers' Party and the People's Alliance" and "maintaining contacts with the main Icelandic political parties, particularly with the opposition Social Democratic Party" [*Programowych kierunkach działań w stosunkach z Islandią w 1981 r.*: 1–2]. The document did not mention any contacts with the Icelandic government, which had criticized the Polish authorities for violating the provisions of the CSCE Final Act.

This situation coincided with the fact that in 1981, the Polish Embassy in Reykjavik faced a difficult financial situation. In light of the aforementioned issues, the Polish government took action by recalling the Ambassador of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik during the summer of 1981 and subordinating the post to the Ambassador of the Polish People's Republic in Oslo [Korczewski 1981]. Subsequently, on May 31, 1982, all Polish delegations in Iceland were closed [Ambasada PRL w Reykjavíku]. The closure of the Polish Embassy in Iceland had a negative impact on both Polish-Icelandic political relations and trade between the two countries. This was highlighted by the Icelandic delegation during the Polish-Icelandic Joint Committee session held in Warsaw on 19–21 September 1984. The delegation strongly advocated for the reactivation of the Polish representation, stating that it would facilitate the development of economic relations. This postulate was fully understood by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Trade [Nestorowicz 1984] and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [*Pismo do Ministra Handlu Zagranicznego T. Nestorowicza z dnia 8 listopada 1984 r.*].

However, it took three years to relaunch the Polish post. The Ministry of Foreign Trade recommended Stanisław Laskowski for the task of commercial counsellor and chargé d'affaires a.i. to travel to the island. Laskowski arrived in Reykjavik on October 31, 1987, and made an official visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland at the beginning of November. Although the atmosphere was convivial, Icelandic official state bodies did not express much interest in developing economic relations with Poland. As a result, trade relations on the Icelandic side were primarily conducted through individuals and their business entities¹.

During the 1980s, there were limited direct contacts between senior representatives of Poland and Iceland, reflecting a significant limitation in their relations. Only one

¹ Stanisław Laskowski completed his mission in Iceland on July 30, 1991. Then in 1994, he was appointed Honorary Consul of the Republic of Iceland to Poland.

high-level visit occurred during this decade, which took place from December 12th to 15th, 1988, when Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, visited Warsaw. During his stay, he met with several high-ranking officials including the Chairman of the Polish Council of State, Wojciech Jaruzelski, Prime Minister Mieczysław Rakowski, Marshal of the Sejm Roman Malinowski, Foreign Minister Tadeusz Olechowski, and Minister of Economic Cooperation with Foreigners Dominik Jastrzębski. Additionally, at his own request, the Icelandic minister held talks with prominent representatives of the anti-systemic opposition [Laskowski 2000: 234].

3. CONCLUSION

From the mid-1940s to the end of the 1980s, there was a development in Polish-Icelandic political relations. During this period, the interactions between the two countries became more lasting and less incidental. The friendly political atmosphere favoured the strengthening of mutual contacts. Although Iceland and Poland were in opposing political and military blocs, and had different economic systems after the Second World War, Iceland was generally portrayed positively in Poland. This was due to the policy adopted towards all Nordic countries, with whom Poland aimed to establish a framework for constructive dialogue and cooperation. However, Icelandic specificity conditioned it, primarily through the existence of a relatively strong trend opposing American domination in Icelandic society and among some political elites. This was expressed through the desire for Iceland's withdrawal from NATO and the closure of the American base in Keflavik. The positive image of Iceland was partly derived from its involvement in political and economic conflicts, particularly with the UK. The Icelandic authorities sought allies among socialist countries in response to the intensification of these conflicts. It is important to note that the perception of Iceland in Poland and the level of interaction between the two countries was largely influenced by Iceland's internal political situation. Specifically, it depended on whether the government in power was centre-right or centre-left. The official inter-state relations played a significant role in the development of Polish-Icelandic contacts, which were fully established only in the latter half of the 20th century. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1946. Ten years later, Poland established its diplomatic representation in Iceland. Regular inter-state contacts were conducted through consular and diplomatic institutions, and infrequent official visits were made by representatives of both countries.

Acknowledgements

Archival enquiries and research for the needs of this publication were conducted thanks to a scientific grant entitled “Polish-Icelandic Relations: from the 17th century to the present” (Kontakty polsko-islandzkie: od XVII w. do współczesności), financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, as part of the contest for Department Grants for Young Scientists.

REFERENCES

- Akt ustanowienia Konsulatu Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjavíku (10 VII 1956 r.)*, Ustanowienie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku (Zespół 20, Wiązka 61, Teczka 761). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Akt ustanowienia Poselstwa Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjavíku*. Protokół Dyplomatyczny – Islandia, Organizacja stosunków dyplomatycznych i konsularnych (Zespół 16, Wiązka 23, Teczka 386). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Akt zniesienia Konsulatu Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjavíku (Warszawa 5 X 1957)*, Sieć placówek konsularnych (Zespół 20, Wiązka 47, Teczka 597). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Ambasada PRL w Reykjavíku*. Islandia 1982 (7/86, W-2, D-IV-1982). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Ambasador Islandii w Polsce z siedzibą w Oslo A. Tryggvason, Notatka informacyjna o Islandii i stosunkach polsko-islandzkich*. Irlandia, Islandia, Islandia 1979 (3/84, W-8, D-IV-1979). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Antczak, S., (1954), *Raport specjalny z pobytu w Islandii (26 VII 1954 r.)*. Ustanowienie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku (Zespół 20, Wiązka 61, Teczka 761). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Antczak, S., (1956a), *List Posła PRL Stanisława Antczaka do Dyrektora Departamentu II MSZ*. Islandia. Utworzenie konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku (Zespół 8, Wiązka 50, Teczka 657). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Antczak, S., (1956b), *List Posła PRL Stanisława Antczaka do Protokołu Dyplomatycznego Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (z 17 grudnia 1956 r.)*. Organizacja stosunków dyplomatycznych i konsularnych (Zespół 16, Wiązka 23, Teczka 385). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Bieżące sprawy Islandii (15 sierpnia – 30 września 1976)*, Norwegia, Irlandia, Islandia, Szwajcaria, Szwecja, Islandia 1976 (W-8, D-IV-1976). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Bieżące sprawy Islandii (15 sierpnia – 30 września 1976)*, Norwegia, Irlandia, Islandia, Szwajcaria, Szwecja, Islandia 1976 (32/82, W-8, D-IV-1976). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Bieżące sprawy Islandii (15 VIII – 15 X 1977)*, Irlandia, Islandia 1977, Islandia 1977 (1/83, W-9, D-IV-1977). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Cieślak, P., (1976), *Pilna notatka z wizyty Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych PRL w Islandii (20–22.09.1976)*. Austria, Dania, Finlandia, Islandia, Norwegia, Szwajcaria, Szwecja, Wielka Brytania, Islandia 1976 (31/82, W-4, D-IV-1976). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Depesza do Posła Islandii w Moskwie*. Organizacja Stosunków Dyplomatycznych i Konsularnych (Zespół 6, Wiązka 76, Teczka 1079). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.
- Diplomatic notes dated 14 July, 1945 sent to the diplomatic representatives of France, Great Britain and the USSR*. Utanrikisráðuneytið 1968. Vidurkenning á bráðabirgðastjórn Póllands 1944–1962 (B/311-4). National Archives of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland.

Druto, J., (1959), *Depesza Dyrektora Departamentu II Ambasadora J. Druto do Poselstwa PRL w Reykjavíku z dnia 19 listopada 1959 r.* Departament II Wydział Skandynawski, Islandia 2421. Notatki polityczne 1959–60 (Zespół 8, Wiazka 81, Teczka 1133). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Frątczak, S., (1974), *Stosunki polsko-skandynawskie w 30-leciu Polski Ludowej*, in *Komunikaty Instytutu Bałtyckiego*, 20, 77-89, Instytut Bałtycki, Gdańsk.

Giebułtowicz, J., (1948a), *Raport Posła RP Józefa Giebułtowicza z pobytu w Islandii*. Departament Polityczny, Wydział Zachodniej i Północnej Europy, Islandia (Zespół 6, Wiazka 76, Teczka 1082). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Giebułtowicz, J., (1948b), *List Posła R. P. dr Józefa Giebułtowicza do Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych z 4 V 1948 r.* Organizacja Stosunków Dyplomatycznych i Konsularnych, Departament Polityczny, Wydział Zachodniej i Północnej Europy, Islandia. Konsulowie Honorowi (Zespół 6, Wiazka 76, Teczka 1081). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Godek, Cz., (1971), *Notatka o Islandii sporządzona przez chargé de affaires a.i. Czesława Godka*. Finlandia, Irlandia, Islandia, Teczka: Islandia 1971 (27/77, W-2, D-IV-1971). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Gumkowski, M., (1957a), *Notatka służbowa Konsula PRL w Reykjavíku z dnia 14 maja 1957 r.* Departament II Wydział Skandynawski, Islandia - 222, Partie polityczne 1957 (Zespół 8, Wiazka 56, Teczka 758). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Gumkowski, M., (1957b), *Raport polityczny z dnia 28 XII 1957 r.* Departament II Wydział Skandynawski, Islandia 242. Raporty polityczne (sprawozdanie z roku 1957) (Zespół 8, Wiazka 62, Teczka 863). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Islandia, notatka informacyjna, z września 1976, Norwegia, Irlandia, Islandia, Szwajcaria, Szwecja, Islandia 1976 (32/82, W-8, D-IV-1976). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Korczewski, R., (1981), *Pismo R. Korczewskiego do Towarzysza Ministra J. Czyryka z dnia 3 sierpnia 1981 r.* Islandia 1981 (45/84, W-4, D-IV-1981). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Kowalska, H., (1959), *Raport polityczny Poselstwa PRL w Reykjavíku za drugie półrocze 1959 r.* Departament II Wydział Skandynawski, Islandia 242. Raporty polityczne (Zespół 8, Wiazka 86, Teczka 1204). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Kroker, M., (1969), *Sprawozdanie za okres od 1 grudnia 1968 do 15 czerwca 1969 r.* Finlandia, Irlandia, Islandia, Teczka: Islandia 1971 (27/77, W-2, D-IV-1971). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Laskowski, S., (2000), *Drogami rozpaczy i nadziei*, Wydawnictwo Stefania Żelazny, Gdańsk.

Morski, A., (1957), *Notatka z pobytu w Islandii. Sprzeczności między Islandią i jej sąsiadami. Stosunek do Polski i krajów naszego obozu*. Departament II Wydział Skandynawski (Zespół 8, Wiazka 56, Teczka 756). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Nestorowicz, T., (1984), *Pismo Ministra Handlu Zagranicznego T. Nestorowicza do Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych S. Olszowskiego z dnia 23 października 1984 r.* Islandia 1984 (39/87, W-8, D-IV-1984). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Nota islandzkiego MSZ z dnia 20 czerwca 1956 r. potwierdzająca zgodę na utworzenie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku. Islandia. Utworzenie konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku (Zespół 8, Wiazka 50, Teczka 657). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Notatka dotycząca stosunków polsko - islandzkich z 10 kwietnia 1970 r. Irlandia, Islandia, Norwegia, NRF, Islandia 1970 (27/76, W-4, D-IV-1970). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Notatka Naczelnika Wydziału Skandynawskiego z 1 X 1945 r. Organizacja Stosunków Dyplomatycznych i Konsularnych (Zespół 6, Wiazka 76, Teczka 1079). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Notatka w sprawie otwarcia Konsulatów w Luxemburgu i Reykjavíku oraz Agencji Konsularnej w Heerlen (19 IV 1956). Ustanowienie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku (Zespół 20, Wiazka 61, Teczka 761). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iceland to the Polish Legation in Reykjavik dated August 10, 1960. Utanríkisráðuneytið 1996. Utanríkisþólitik Póllands 1956–1971 (B/168-2). National Archives of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Ogrodzinski, P., (1957), *List Dyrektora Generalnego P. Ogrodzińskiego do Tow. A. Morskiego, Pošta P.R.L. w Oslo z dnia 20 kwietnia 1957 r.* Departament II Wydział Skandynawski (Zespół 8, Wiazka 56, Teczka 756). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Ogrodzinski, P., (1969), *Sprawozdanie z podróży do Islandii Ambasadora PRL Przemysława Ogrodzińskiego z dnia 24 października 1969 r.* Dania, Finlandia, Islandia, Teczka: Islandia 1969, Stosunki bilateralne PRL – Islandia 1969 (30/76, W-1, D-IV-1969). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Ogrodzinski, P., (1971), *Szyfrogram nr 7770/3383.* Irlandia, Islandia, Norwegia, Szwajcaria, Islandia 1971 (28/77, W-8, D-IV-1971). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Pałyga, E. J., (1970), *Stosunki konsularne Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa.

Parafraza dep. Szyfr. z dnia 31.07.1957 r. do Morskiego – Oslo. Organizacja stosunków dyplomatycznych i konsularnych (Zespół 16, Wiazka 23, Teczka 385). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Penetracja Niemieckiej Republiki Federalnej w Islandii. Departament II Wydział Skandynawski, Islandia 2421. Notatki polityczne 1959-60 (Zespół 8, Wiazka 81, Teczka 1133). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Pétur Benediktsson sendiherra í Póllandi 1946–1951. Utanríkisráðuneytið 1996 (B/577-4). National Archives of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Pilna notatka 19/D.III/1969 z 9 stycznia 1969 r. Dania, Finlandia, Islandia, Teczka: Islandia 1969, Stosunki bilateralne PRL – Islandia 1969 (30/76, W-1, D-IV-1969). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Pilna notatka z 27 maja 1970 r. Grecja, Irlandia, Islandia, Portugalia, Islandia 1970 (28/76, W-5, D-IV-1970). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Pilna notatka z wizyty Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych Islandii Einara Agustssona w Polsce w dniach 20–24 maja 1973 r. Dania, Irlandia, Islandia 1973, Wizyta Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych E. Augustssona w Polsce, 20–24.05.1973 (47/77, W-8, D-IV-1973). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Piotrowski, B., (1972), *Polsko-islandzkie kontakty w XIX i XX wieku*, in *Komunikaty Instytutu Bałtyckiego*, 16, Instytut Bałtycki, Gdańsk.

Pismo do Ministra Handlu Zagranicznego T. Nestorowicza z dnia 8 listopada 1984 r. Islandia 1984 (39/87, W-8, D-IV-1984). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Plan perspektywiczny prowadzenia pracy wywiadowczej na kierunku: fińskim, norweskim i islandzkim (z dnia 27.10.1965 r.). Zarząd II Sztabu Generalnego Wojska Polskiego w Warszawie [1945] 1951–1990 [1991], Teczka dot. organizacji pracy operacyjnej na kierunku skandynawskim (Finlandia, Norwegia, Islandia, Dania, Szwecja) (syg. IPN BU 2602/11755). Instytut Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie, Warsaw, Poland.

Plan pracy ambasady w Islandii na 1980 r. Islandia 1980, Plan pracy Ambasady PRL w Islandii na 1980 r. (43/84, W-8, D-IV-1980). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Plan pracy Departamentu IV w stosunkach z Islandią na rok 1981, Programowych kierunkach działań w stosunkach z Islandią w 1981 r. Islandia 1981 (45/84, W-4, D-IV-1981). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Program działania na 1980 rok w stosunkach z Islandią. Islandia 1980, Plan pracy Ambasady PRL w Islandii na 1980 r. (43/84, W-8, D-IV-1980). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Programowych kierunkach działań w stosunkach z Islandią w 1981 r., Plan pracy Departamentu IV w stosunkach z Islandią na rok 1981 (45/84, W-4, D-IV-1981). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Raczyński, R., (2011), Ogniwa dziejów politycznych Islandii, in A. Chodubski, A. Frączek and B. Słobodzian (eds.), *Politologiae miscellanea. W świecie wielu rzeczywistości* (pp. 167–188). Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.

Ristow, J., (1972), Polacy w Islandii, in *Wiadomości Zachodnie*, 41.

Rogalski, M., (1946a), *List Posła R. P. Mieczysława Rogalskiego do Obywatela Ministra Józefa Olszewskiego z 10 V 1946 r.* Organizacja Stosunków Dyplomatycznych i Konsularnych (Zespół 6, Wiązka 76, Teczka 1079). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Rogalski, M., (1946b), *Raport polityczny dotyczący Islandii nr 1 z dnia 31.08.1946 r.* Organizacja Stosunków Dyplomatycznych i Konsularnych (Zespół 6, Wiązka 76, Teczka 1079). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Romański, M., (2012), Kontakty polsko-islandzkie po 1945 r., in *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych* 1, 85–99, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź.

Sprawy prasowe, Islandzkie komentarze do sytuacji w Polsce. Islandia 1981 (45/84, W-4, D-IV-1981). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Szyfrogram Winiewicza do Kazimierza Dorosza z dnia 6 marca 1963 r. Organizacja stosunków dyplomatycznych i konsularnych (Zespół 16, Wiązka 23, Teczka 387). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Szymanowski, A., (1975a), *Depasza chargé de affaires a.i. Antoniego Szymanowskiego do Towarzysza L. Piątkowskiego, Zastępcy Kierownika Wydziału Zagranicznego KC PZPR z dnia 8 grudnia 1975 r.* Islandia, Norwegia, Szwajcaria, Szwecja, Wielka Brytania, Islandia 1975 (17/81, W-11, D-IV-1975). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Szymanowski, A., (1975b), *Depesza chargé de affaires a.i. Antoniego Szymanowskiego do Towarzysza L. Piątkowskiego, Zastępcy Kierownika Wydziału Zagranicznego KC PZPR z dnia 28 października 1975 r.* Islandia, Norwegia, Szwajcaria, Szwecja, Wielka Brytania, Islandia 1975 (17/81, W-11, D-IV-1975). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Szymanowski, A., (1977a), *Sprawozdanie z wykonania planu pracy ambasady za rok 1977.* Irlandia, Islandia 1977, Islandia 1977 (1/83, W-9, D-IV-1977). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Szymanowski, A., (1977b), *Raport polityczny Ambasady PRL w Reykjavíku za rok 1977.* Irlandia, Islandia 1977, Islandia 1977 (1/83, W-9, D-IV-1977). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Szymanowski, A., (1978), *Sytuacja wewnętrzna, Korespondencja chargé d'affaires Antoniego Szymanowskiego do Towarzysza Józefa Czyrka, Podsekretarza Stanu w Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych z dnia 27 września 1978 r.* Finlandia, Irlandia, Islandia, Islandia 1978 (1/84, W-6, D-IV-1978). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Szymanowski, A., (1979), *Sprawozdanie Tow. A. Szymanowskiego za okres kierowania placówką w Reykjavíku.* Irlandia, Islandia, Islandia 1979 (3/84, W-8, D-IV-1979). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Telegram w sprawie uznania Tymczasowego Rządu Jedności Narodowej. Organizacja Stosunków Dyplomatycznych i Konsularnych (Zespół 6, Wiązka 76, Teczka 1079). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Tezy do rozmów z Sekretarzem Generalnym islandzkiego MSZ Petur Thorsteinssonem. Irlandia, Islandia, Norwegia, NRF, Islandia 1970 (27/76, W-4, D-IV-1970). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Trybuna Ludu (1977), Polsko-islandzka umowa w dziedzinie rybołówstwa, 219.

Utanríkisþólitík Póllands 1968–1981. Utanríkisráðuneytid 1996 (B/327-2). National Archives of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Uwagi Departamentu IV Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych do planu pracy Ambasady PRL w Islandii na rok 1980. Islandia 1980, Plan pracy Ambasady PRL w Islandii na 1980 r. (43/84, W-8, D-IV-1980). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Witkowski, S., (1956), *Notatka st. radcy St. Witkowskiego z dnia 10 marca 1956 r.* Ustanowienie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku (Zespół 20, Wiazka 61, Teczka 761). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Wizyta Min. Willmanna w Islandii. Finlandia, Irlandia, Islandia, Teczka: Islandia 1971 (27/77, W-2, D-IV-1971). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Wizyta w Polsce H. Bjornssona, 26-30.04.1978, Notatka informacyjna o konsultacjach polsko-islandzkich przeprowadzonych w Warszawie w dniach 26-28 kwietnia br. Finlandia, Irlandia, Islandia, Islandia 1978 (1/84, W-6, D-IV-1978). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Wyciąg korespondencyjny Nr 11655 z Oslo (dn. 25 VI 1956 r.). Ustanowienie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjavíku (Zespół 20, Wiazka 61, Teczka 761). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.

Zabłocki, J., (1959), *Notatka z rozmowy Tow. Ministra Rapackiego z Posłem Islandii z dnia 29 X 1959 r.* Departament II Wydział Skandynawski, Islandia 2421. Notatki polityczne (Zespół 8, Wiazka 78, Teczka 1090). Archiwum MSZ, Warsaw, Poland.