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The decision-making process in Swiss foreign policy at the beginning of the 21st century

Abstract: Available scientific studies on modern external relations of Switzerland provide us with extensive interesting information about their current condition and foundations. Most of them also contain in-depth analyses of the outcomes of Swiss foreign policy, but rarely address the specificity of the decision-making process. The latter is currently undergoing major changes due to the growing influence of Europeanisation and internationalisation. In recent years we can observe some shifts in the distribution of power and the rise of new actors, the modification of consultation procedures or a reduction in the level of conflict. This is especially evident in European policy, which still remains a special case. Based on the available scientific studies and analyses of different socio-economic statistics, a few interesting conclusions can be drawn about the conditions and determinants of the decision-making processes. A point of reference here is provided by the Schengen/Dublin agreement, which was negotiated and signed in 2004, as a part of the second package of bilateral agreements. Based on this interesting example, the issue of the modern shape of decision-making process in foreign policy and its development over the last few years can be addressed.

Key words: foreign policy, decision-making process, Swiss-EU relations, Schengen, Dublin

Introduction

The process of political decision-making is extremely complex and depends on many factors. Sometimes it is very difficult to establish its exact course, to predict the final results or to indicate the most important determinants. However, a detailed analysis of the decision-making processes allows us to draw conclusions that can at least help us to understand some of the mechanisms and regularities behind them. As a result, we are able, at least to some extent, to understand the nature, source and cause of certain decisions taken at local, national and international levels. Interestingly, each of these levels has its own, sometimes unique circumstances that make it impossible to carry out a simple extrapolation to other areas of political decision-making. These differences are visible in both domestic policy and foreign affairs, and also between different countries. Moreover, they can be characterised by a certain specificity of the subject of decision-making process or the nature of appropriate institutions.

A particularly interesting area of research is the foreign policy of a state. The simple indication of the internal and external determinants of foreign policy characteristic of basic theories of political science seems insufficient to explain the nature of certain decision-making processes. In view of the increasingly intensive and very demanding integration processes in the modern world, undertaking specific political decisions is becoming more difficult and extremely complex. It depends on an increasing number of factors and

constraints, both at the institutional and personal level. The traditional determinants of foreign policy (economic, geographic, military) can serve as a starting point for further, in-depth analysis, but they cannot be the main explanation for certain decisions.

Taking that into consideration, a particularly interesting subject of study is the foreign policy of Switzerland. A state whose traditional concept of foreign policy, summed up in the principle of permanent neutrality, has significantly limited its activities in the international arena.

This situation changed with the increasing international activity of Switzerland, which was mainly motivated by the integration processes taking place in Europe and globalisation. These new geopolitical challenges created a need not only for mental, but also institutional adaptations to current conditions. For Swiss decision-making institutions which are typified by a relatively low level of innovation (Kriesi, 1998, p. 293–297), it was and remains a challenge.

In this regard, a particularly interesting area of research is European policy, in particular the bilateral agreements with the EU concluded in 1999 and 2004. The unprecedented nature of the Swiss-EU relationship, mostly due to their institutional arrangements and complex content, makes Switzerland one of the better EU-integrated countries, although it is still not an official member of the Community. Furthermore, the integration with the EU, or rather “flexible integration” with the EU (Lavenex, 2009) has a great impact on the functioning of political structures in Switzerland. This in turn calls for a discussion of the institutional readiness of Switzerland for such forms of cooperation. Numerous research studies have indicated potential problems of incompatibility between EU decision-making processes and the main instruments of direct democracy (Kaufmann, Kreis, Gross, 2005) or the federal structure of the state, which provides cantons with quite broad autonomy (Hänni et al., 2000).

The impact of Europeanisation and the internationalisation of decision-making processes in Switzerland

The specificity of decision-making in the foreign policy of Switzerland has constantly been changing. This phenomenon was particularly dynamic in the 1990s. These transformations refer both to the institutional evolution of decision-making centres (polity), political processes (politics) and political concepts (policy).

Over the years, the Swiss model of decision-making has been marked by consensus. In principle, this model has remained unchanged. Switzerland may still be described as a negotiation democracy (Kriesi et al., 2008, p. 115); however in recent years we can observe some shifts in the distribution of power between the different actors.

The foreign policy of the state is conducted at federal level. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the federal government is responsible for external relations.¹ The division of competence is vertical, as in other federal countries like Germany or Austria (Goetschel, Bernath, Schwarz, 2002, p. 60). The tasks of the Federal Council in

¹ Art. 54 of the Swiss Constitution.

this regard are defined in the Constitution.² The government therefore represents the state outside and defines the objectives and means of Swiss foreign policy. All decisions in this manner are taken jointly by all members of the Federal Council, as different departments, not only that of Foreign Affairs (EDA), are involved in the implementation of foreign policy. The government makes the decisions at the strategic, rather than operational level. A number of other actors are involved in certain stages of the decision-making process.

Thus, the Swiss decision-making process can be divided into several stages. One, suggested by Deleon (1999), is presented below:

- agenda setting or initiation,
- preparatory, pre-parliamentary phase,
- parliamentary phase,
- direct-democratic phase,
- implementation phase.

Generally, the whole process, from initiation to the final vote in parliament, takes about 3 years (Kriesi, Trechsel, 2008, p. 115). The main emphasis is usually put on the pre-parliamentary phase, whose main objective is to develop a satisfactory consensus of each interested party. Therefore, different interest groups, experts, representatives of cantons and political parties are invited to participate in the consultation procedures. Developing a common position can be difficult, which is why that phase takes the longest time in the whole decision-making process.³ However, much of the time is needed not just to achieve a certain compromise, but to evaluate the whole process of consultation by the state administration (Sciarini, 2004, p. 531).

It is interesting, however, that different analyses show that the pre-parliamentary phase, contrary to its general assumptions, does not lead to a reduction in the level of conflict in the subsequent phases of the decision-making process (Kriesi, 1998a; Sciarini et al., 2002). Controversial legislative acts remain as such at any stage, no matter how intense the attempts to eliminate contradictions in the pre-parliamentary phase. What is more, if a legislative act is not adopted by a large majority in parliament, the higher the probability of an optional referendum, which means extending the decision-making process by another direct-democratic phase.

It should be emphasised that the role of parliament in the whole decision-making process is rather marginal. Most decisions on legislative proposals are taken at the pre-parliamentary phase. Only to a small extent are they modified by parliamentary negotiations. This can be seen especially in the area of foreign policy. Over the years, the dominant position of the government has not been an issue. However, due to the fact that European policy carries a lot of implications for domestic politics, the marginalisation of the role of parliament grew to become a major political and constitutional problem.

The above scheme for the decision-making process was influenced by internationalisation. A few important aspects should be mentioned here (according to Fisher, 2005,

² Art. 180 and 184 of the Swiss Constitution.

³ In the 1970s it took even 3/4 and in the 1990s 2/3 of the total time needed to reach the final decision adopted by parliament (Kriesi, Trechsel, 2008, p. 117).

p. 74–95). First of all, two forms of internationalisation can be distinguished – direct and indirect. The former refers to all decisions and legislative acts which are a result of international commitments contained in agreements that are signed. The *Bilaterals I* package can serve as a good example here. Indirect internationalisation refers to the phenomenon of so-called autonomous adaptation (*autonomer Nachvollzug*), which means that the unification of laws does not result directly from the provisions of international agreements, but is a result of progressive integration with the EU. A typical example is the decision on the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, which was not the result of pressure from the EU. An effect of the internationalisation of decision-making processes in Switzerland is the modification of consultation procedures, a reduction in the level of conflict, a shift in the distribution of power and the rise of new actors (Kriesi, 2008).

Direct internationalisation has led to a reduction in the importance of formal consultation and the parliamentary phase, and strengthened informal consultations between government and experts. So in this case, we are dealing with the growing importance of the executive, as the only body responsible for international negotiations and the formulation of proposals, which can only be accepted or rejected in the later stages of decision-making. The importance of other actors in the decision making processes, who cannot take a direct part in the identification of problems and the formulation of the government's position in the negotiations, is therefore decreasing. In fact, there is very little room for negotiation or consultation at domestic level (Fischer et al., 2002, p. 148). Usually the government is limited to discussing and developing its position only through expert groups. Potentially, this could imply a high degree of conflict at the domestic level. All interest groups, if neglected, can endanger agreement in the domestic ratification phase (Kriesi, Trechsel, 2008). However, as indicated by the study, the level of conflict in the case of direct internationalisation is relatively low. The explanation of this phenomenon may be that in the case of bilateral agreements with the EU we are dealing with economic openness and vulnerability, which promotes a reduction in contradictions at the domestic level. The analyses by Sciarini and Nicolet (2005) confirm this assumption. This does not mean, however, that the government has complete control over the whole ratification process. The agreement on the free movement of persons, or that concerning Schengen/Dublin are the best examples. Both were voted on in a referendum, the result of which was not easy to predict.

Therefore, we should bear in mind that the policy-makers always face a so-called two-level game, which means that any political decisions must always take into account social moods, which obviously limits their freedom of action. Even if, as briefly mentioned earlier, the position of the executive in the entire decision-making process has been recently strengthened. Therefore, it is important to identify all the actors in terms of their actual impact on the final shape of the analysed decision. It therefore makes sense to give up in this case the classical theory of rational choices (H. and M. Sprout, 1956), bearing in mind that only a multilevel analysis (bureaucratic constraints, domestic influences, external environment) allows for in-depth explanation of the entire process (Holsti, 1970). It is difficult to present all aspects and determinants of a concrete decision-making process in one short paper. Therefore, only the most important ones will be briefly discussed below.

Determinants of the decision-making process. The case of the Schengen/Dublin agreement

Indication of the determinants of the decision-making process concerning the Schengen/Dublin agreement requires analysing each of its stages. For this purpose, I used the division proposed by Deleon and Heritier, taking into account its weaknesses, resulting from the impact of the internationalisation processes outlined above.

Agenda setting or initiation

The available studies indicate that the initiators of agenda-setting in foreign policy are usually parliament or the executive (the government or the federal administration).⁴ Less commonly, this process depends on external factors, although as indicated by Kriesi (1998), from the 1990s on, the growing importance of international determinants in shaping agenda-setting in foreign policy can be observed.

The initiator of signing the Schengen/Dublin agreement was Switzerland. Different political actors had demanded an association with the Schengen states since the early 1990s. In 1993, an expert group chaired by the Nationalrat Jean-François Leuba (“Grenzpolizeiliche Personenkontrollen” – EGPK) asked the Federal Council to look into concluding an agreement with the Schengen states (Wichmann, 2009). There was a concern that the expansion of the Schengen zone would lead to further alienation of Switzerland, making it the main destination for asylum seekers or criminals.⁵ The conclusions and recommendations presented in the final EGPK report were adopted by the government and formed the basis for the new strategy of internal security of the state, putting the emphasis on international cooperation. Hence, it can be concluded that the government was the initiator of signing the association agreement (but in practice it was in fact the expert group).⁶ This is an important fact for the further analysis, bearing in mind that new legislative proposals usually cause more tension when they are motivated by external influences (Germann, 1994; Hug, Sciarini, 1995).

One of the key reasons behind initiating cooperation in the area of security were new forms of threats. It should be remembered that the beginning of the 1990s was a period of large geopolitical changes, such as the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia, the uncertain situation in the Middle East, terrorism and the rise of organised crime. There were concerns that Switzerland might become an alternative to illegal immigration. The rejection of EEA accession intensified the sense of alienation. It was believed that in relation to an increasingly integrated Europe, Switzerland could become an “island of uncertainty” (Hürlimann, 1993, p. 72). European integration thus be-

⁴ According to Sciarini et al. (2002), in the 1970s, parliament initiated agenda-setting in 46% of cases. This percentage went down by 26% in the 1990s.

⁵ H. Busch, *Eine ganz besondere Partnerschaft*, “Europa-Magazin”, <http://europa-magazin.ch/ee6bf3f/cmd.14/audience.D>, 15.11.2013.

⁶ See Interpellation der Christlichdemokratische Fraktion: *Gegen eine Schweiz als “Insel der Unsicherheit”*, http://www.parlament.ch/d/suche/seiten/geschaeft.aspx?gesch_id=19933349, 1.12.2013.

came an element of national security against new challenges at the turn of the 20th century.

This thesis is confirmed, to some extent, by the available statistical figures. When analysing the overall rate risks index published by the research institute gfs.Zurich, we notice that the general sense of danger increased from the mid-80s. Apart from minor intervals, this trend persisted through the 1990s and reached a peak in 1998. After this period, public sentiment improved to a certain degree, although it did not return to the level observed in the mid-80s. These results were shaped by current socio-economic conditions.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the analysis provided by the gfs.Bern institute. According to cyclical surveys, called *Sorgenbarometer*, in the 1990s most respondents indicated that unemployment was a major problem. In 1993, this ratio reached a record level of 89%, which is not surprising, considering that in just three years the unemployment rate had risen from an almost imperceptible 0.5% to an alarming 4.5%. Gfs.Zurich polls showed also that the biggest concerns were aroused by ecological threats, physical problems (health) and fear of alienation. Only the concern of alienation may be indirectly related to the broad context of European integration or general geopolitical changes. However, it is interesting that in 1993, 47% of respondents assessed the future of Switzerland as very pessimistic (Haltiner et al., 1997).

Due to the substantive scope of the Schengen/Dublin Association Agreements, it is worth looking at the issues of asylum policy in Switzerland over the 1990s and early 2000s. It might seem that the Swiss accession to the Schengen/Dublin area was motivated by objective problems associated with the growing number of asylum seekers, which could be related to the aforementioned geopolitical changes. However, the statistical data do not completely confirm this thesis. Admittedly, in the years 1989–1991 the number of asylum applications almost doubled (from 24,325 in 1989 to 41,663 in 1991). This data was used as the reason for the right-wing SVP party's initiative against illegal immigration, which was ultimately rejected by the society in a referendum (held in December 1996). One of the arguments that led to the rejection of the proposal was the fact that the number of asylum seekers in the following years significantly decreased, and oscillated around 20,000 (except in 1998 and 1999).⁷ It should however be noted, that the turnout was relatively high (46.7%), which may indicate a quite large degree of public attention on this matter, especially as the total number of asylum seekers in Switzerland increased steadily in the 1990s. According to the statistical office, 60,062 people were registered in 1990, nine years later – it was already 104,738. This trend was not permanent. It must be emphasised that since 2000 the number of persons residing in Switzerland thanks to being granted asylum has steadily decreased (70,353 in 2000 to 48,412 in 2005).⁸

Other factors which might also be considered here are the development of illegal immigration (mainly labour migration) and organised crime. Social dumping and an increase in the shadow economy were one of the key arguments used by anti-EU groups in

⁷ According to Federal Office for Migration <https://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/dam/data/migration/statistik/asylstatistik/uebersichten/gesuche-nation-1986-2013-d.pdf>, 10.10.2013, p. 6.

⁸ According to Bundesamt für Statistik BFS, <http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/01/07/blank/key/01/02.html>, 20.11.2013.

the public debate. The data concerning the number of illegally employed workers in the analysed period is inconclusive. Statistical data indicate a range of between 90,000 and 180,000 people, employed mostly in agriculture and tourism industry.⁹

Another widely commented problem concerned the crime rate among foreigners, although the data published by the Federal Statistical Office was often criticised. For instance, they do not distinguish crimes committed by persons who reside in Switzerland permanently or temporarily. However, since the mid-90s the number of offences committed by foreigners usually reached slightly over 50%, which might be considered as high, compared with the European average. However, it must be remembered that the overall percentage of foreigners in Switzerland belongs to the highest in Europe. Hence, the government had to take into consideration the domestic political and social consequences of this situation – the increase of polarisation in society, racism and xenophobia undermining the Swiss tradition of humanitarianism. It was essential to implement the preventive measures postulated by the EGPK.

During the initiation of any new decision, the government must assess its real chances of success in the later stages of the decision-making process. Due to the expected positive economic effects resulting from the entry of Switzerland to the Schengen area, for example for tourism and the hotel industry, it was predicted that the key economic organisations would support the government's decision.¹⁰ Unclear, though to some extent foreseeable, was the opinion of the right-wing parties. In this respect, it should be underlined that the initiation phase is particularly important for the whole decision-making process, because the implementation of the subsequent stages depends on its success.

Pre-parliamentary and parliamentary phase

The final text of the agreement, initialled on 24 June 2004, was sent for public consultation six days later.¹¹ At this stage of the decision-making process, all interested parties were given the opportunity to present their position. However, in this case, the consultation process was quite limited, due to the inability to make changes in the content of negotiated agreements. Interested parties could therefore in practice only endorse or express a critical position to the proposed agreement.

Most commonly, therefore, the representatives of the cantons (KdK) pointed to the institutional weakness of the agreement, resulting from the need to transpose the *acquis communautaire* into national law. The position of the cantons in this case was especially important, because in practice they were responsible for the implementation of the bilateral agreements and, thus, largely bore the costs of their arrangements (for example, costs related to bringing the cantonal police to work more closely with border police and international law enforcement authorities).

⁹ According to Schwarzarbeitsstudie der Uni Zürich (Nationalfonds-Projekt).

¹⁰ The tourism sector provides an average of 5% of GDP. Tourists leave in Switzerland about 12 billion Swiss francs a year. See: *Schweizer Tourismus in Zahlen*, http://www.swisstourfed.ch/files/infothek/Vademecum/2004/Vade_2004_de.pdf, 15.10.2013.

¹¹ According to article 147 BV and Article 1, paragraph 2 letter b of the Regulation from 17 June 1991, SR 172.062.

Apart from the above mentioned position of the KdK, general support for the negotiated agreement was also expressed by almost all political parties, except the SVP and the Federal Democratic Union. According to conservatives, the Schengen/Dublin agreement undermines the main pillars of the rule of law, such as internal security and sovereignty.¹² The whole package of *Bilaterals II* was treated by the SVP as another step on the road to full integration with the EU, which they have been opposed to from the very beginning.

A similar position was also presented by different social partners, associations and other interest groups (*Economiesuisse, Schweizerische Arbeitgeberverbände*).¹³ Only AUNS (*Aktion für eine unabhängige und neutrale Schweiz*) showed a completely negative attitude towards the agreement. In their view, the Schengen agreement was practically ineffective, leading to an increase in crime and lawlessness, and its legal structure would limit the sovereignty of Switzerland, undermine cantonal police jurisdiction and pose a threat to banking secrecy. They demanded, therefore, an obligatory referendum.

Due to the general political consensus on bilateral agreements from the second package, the parliamentary phase had no significant importance for the whole decision-making process. The draft agreement was welcomed by both chambers of parliament, although obviously not unanimously. The National Council adopted the proposal by a majority of 129 votes for to 60 against. In the upper house of parliament the difference was much smaller – amounting to only 36 for and 3 against. The low level of conflict in the pre-parliamentary phase and during the discussion and voting in parliament does not mean, however, the elimination of the direct-democratic phase. Thus, the thesis that non-controversial proposals are rarely subject to a vote in a referendum cannot be confirmed in this case.

Direct-democratic phase

Since none of the agreements signed within the *Bilaterals II* package met the formal criteria defined in the constitution, there was no obligation for a compulsory referendum.¹⁴ The vast majority of agreements, including the one concerning Schengen/Dublin, met only the conditions for a facultative referendum, which eliminated the need to obtain a double majority. That, in practice, would probably have meant the rejection of the proposal.

However, the result of voting, even in the case of an optional referendum, was not entirely clear.¹⁵ Public sentiments against further EU integration were highly divided (45% were in favour of integration, albeit in varying form, while 35% were opposed). A partic-

¹² *Botschaft zur Genehmigung der bilateralen Abkommen...*, p. 6015.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 6017.

¹⁴ See: *Bilaterale II: Fakultatives Referendum für sieben Abkommen*, Pressemitteilung der Schweizerischen Bundeskanzlei, http://www.admin.ch/cp/d/40d95eb8_1@fwsrvg.html, 10.10.2013.

¹⁵ According to surveys conducted by GFS.Bern, 55% of the citizens supported the proposal. However, 10% were undecided. Very often, eventually such people tend to vote no. It should also be noted that during the year (i.e. between April 2004 and May 2005) the number of supporters of the association agreement decreased by 9%, while the number of opponents rose from 12% to 35%, *Medienbericht zur Befragung für die Srg Ssr Idee Suisse vom 17.–21. Mai 05*, gfs.Bern, Bern, den 24. Mai 2005.

ularly large group of about 25% were undecided, which was especially important for the government, because it could influence the final stage of the decision-making process.

The government was preparing to promote the Schengen/Dublin topic, involving providing additional funds for the information campaign to be carried out, not only through open channels, but also via a system of lobbying aimed at different audiences (image campaign), special articles in magazines, interviews, brochures, and even financial support to non-governmental organisations presenting a favourable view of the government's proposals.

Finally, the proposal on Schengen/Dublin was accepted by 54.6% of voters, with a turnout of 56%, which may be regarded as relatively high. This allows us to conclude that the issue of further cooperation with the EU was important to public opinion. The only question remains, what were the key factors that determined the outcome of the voting?

To answer this question, we should examine the results of a study of social moods.¹⁶ Polls indicate that in the case of Schengen/Dublin, in principle, only one element did not raise controversy. For most citizens the benefits for the tourism industry resulting from accession to the Schengen area were quite clear (57% were of such opinion, only 27% against). Regarding the aspects of security, opinions were much more diverse. According to 39% of the respondents, accession to Schengen would bring tangible benefits. The opposite opinion was represented by 46% and the undecided accounted for 15%. Polls showed that public opinion was in this case confused, which may suggest that the general message of government and pro-European centres was not sufficiently clear or convincing. Overall, 23% of respondents did not have any specified opinion on the possible effects of accession to Schengen area. The rest were divided into two equal groups – supporters and opponents.

The results of the referendum traditionally reflected divisions between the German and French-speaking cantons, but they were smaller than in the case of voting on the European Economic Area. The polarisation of society remained strong,¹⁷ although not along language divisions, but rather in line with material status or education and, above all, general political views (92% of SVP supporters voted against the Schengen/Dublin agreement).

According to the gfs.Bern analysis, the majority of respondents felt that the arguments used by the proponents and opponents of the agreement were relevant. The first group expected effective improvements of safety and benefits for tourism industry, arising from the introduction of Schengen visas. Therefore, we could conclude that public opinion probably felt threatened, although the sources of these threats cannot be confirmed by available surveys.¹⁸ Neither organised crime, nor illegal immigration, nor the issue of asylum policy aroused large controversies.¹⁹ The available data from that period indicates that in 2005 the number of asylum applications reached their lowest figure since 1986

¹⁶ According to surveys conducted by the Institute gfs.Bern.

¹⁷ According to gfs.Bern, the difference between SVP supporters and sympathisers of other centre-right parties since the vote EEA 1992 years increased threefold!

¹⁸ According to the research center gfs.Zürich, the perceived threat level was high (5.4), higher than that reported after the attacks of 11th September 2001 (4.9). See: Angstbarometer 2013, gfs-Zürich.

¹⁹ See: *Sichtbare politische Hände erwünscht*, Credit Suisse Sorgenbarometer 2010 Schlussbericht.

– 10,795. Studies regularly carried out by the Institute gfs.Bern indicated that the issue of foreigners and asylum policy was not considered at that time to be especially important. Also, economic conditions could not justify the negative social mood. The Swiss economy began to grow and the unemployment rate was on average 3.6% (with a declining trend).

Accession to Schengen meant, admittedly, the need to transpose the *acquis communautaire* to the Swiss legal order. However, not automatically, as was repeatedly argued by the government and other pro-European centres. It is therefore difficult to resist the impression that the arguments or factors related to the socio-political development of Switzerland or security concerns did not have decisive importance for the outcome of the referendum, but rather the general belief of public opinion that there was a need for the continuation of bilateral cooperation as the most optimal form of integration with the European Union. In that sense we can see that certain decisions do not always result from objective determinants which can be ascertained by tangible indicators and statistics, but very often by other subjective values and beliefs. Thus, the actual benefits of inclusion in the Schengen area, though important, should not be treated as a priority. It was rather a general will of opening Switzerland to international cooperation and showing support for government policy. This thesis is confirmed both by the statistical data and public opinion polls.

Conclusion

The example of the Schengen/Dublin agreement perfectly illustrates how the decision making process in Swiss foreign policy has evolved over the past few years. Europeanisation undoubtedly influenced both the decision making and its institutional dimension. Firstly, there was a clear strengthening of the importance of the pre-parliamentary phase and also a change in the nature and importance of the consultation process, which was largely confined to saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the government’s proposals. This does not mean that consultations have lost their meaning. They primarily allow the evaluation of positions of various interest groups to be made, and on this basis predictions can be made concerning the further stages of the decision-making processes, i.e. mainly those associated with the probability of an optional referendum. Secondly, the importance of the executive has increased. The government not only initiates but also, to a large extent, affects and, at least tries, to control the subsequent stages of the decision making process.

In analysing the most important factors that determined Swiss accession to the Schengen area we should pay attention to several interesting aspects. First, in contrast to what might be expected, the signing of an association agreement was not motivated primarily by objective socio-economic determinants. The quoted statistics contradict the thesis that the government’s decision was made in response to deteriorating economic indicators or clear social expectations related to, for example, a deepening sense of alienation or anxiety associated with asylum and migration policy of the state. They were not perceived as the most important sources of insecurity, and therefore they could not serve as the main motives for specific electoral behaviour in the final stage of the decision mak-

ing process. This does not mean that the arguments raised both by supporters and opponents of the agreement were not taken into account. It seems, however, that due to the relatively low level of actual problems experienced by people, these issues were simply not decisive.

Secondly, also significant here is the meaning of the so-called veto-players in the whole process. In the Schengen/Dublin case is difficult to point out the obvious losers of signing this agreement (as in the case of the free movement of persons agreement). In this matter we are dealing with a general and social consensus, though no doubt stoked by the propaganda efforts of the government. Even conservative groups were not able to block the whole process initiated by the Federal Council.

Thirdly, examining the position of the major interest groups during the consultation procedures, it can be noticed that the Schengen agreement was treated more as a continuation of closer cooperation with the EU, and to a lesser extent as part of strengthening state security, exposed, due to the changes in the geopolitical environment, to new sources of threats. Especially because the economic figures, social studies or surveys of public sentiment do not indicate an actual or subjectively perceived increase in threat. Opponents of the Schengen/Dublin Agreement focused mainly on the arguments known from the previous campaign – the sovereignty and neutrality of Switzerland, and treating the agreement as another step on the road to EU integration, which was generally rejected. Substantive arguments that could have undermined the sense behind signing the agreement were not raised at all, or were raised very rarely, perhaps because it was difficult to find them.

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Proces decyzyjny w szwajcarskiej polityce zagranicznej na początku XXI wieku

Streszczenie

Dostępne badania naukowe dostarczają nam bardzo interesującej wiedzy na temat aktualnego wymiaru relacji Szwajcarii z innymi państwami. Większość z nich koncentruje się jednakże głównie na poziomie praktyki politycznej tj. efektach określonych decyzji politycznych niż szerszych rozważań teoretycznych. Co za tym idzie, relatywnie mało uwagi poświęca się specyfice procesu decyzyjnego, który w ostatnim czasie uległ znacznym modyfikacjom. Źródła tych zmian należałoby doszukiwać się w postępujących procesach integracyjnych w Europie oraz globalizacji. Zmiany, o których mowa, nabrały szczególnej dynamiki w latach 90. ubiegłego wieku. Związane były zarówno z ewolucją ośrodków decyzyjnych, jak i struktury procesów i koncepcji politycznych. Analizując szczegółowo poszczególne etapy szwajcarskiego procesu decyzyjnego jesteśmy w stanie wskazać szereg istotnych zmian, jak chociażby modyfikacja procedur konsultacji, redukcja poziomu konfliktu, przesunięcia w podziale władzy czy pojawienie się nowych aktorów. Punktem odniesienia w niniejszej pracy są porozumienia z Schengen oraz Dublina, zawarte między Szwajcarią a Unią Europejską w 2004 roku. Stanowią one doskonały przykład, obrazujący ewolucję procesu decyzyjnego, jaki miał miejsce w ciągu ostatnich lat.

Słowa kluczowe: polityka zagraniczna, proces decyzyjny, stosunki Szwajcari–UE, Schengen, Dublin

