



**Indian Council of World Affairs**  
**Sapru House, Barakhamba Road**  
**New Delhi**

**Report**

**on**

**Panel Discussion**

**of the book**

**‘India-Poland Relations in the 21st Century: Vistas for Future  
Cooperation’**

**at**

**Sapru House, New Delhi**  
**24 June 2014**

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, organised a panel discussion on the book entitled “India-Poland Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Vistas for Future Cooperation” on 24 June 2015 at Sapru House, New Delhi.

Amb. Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director General of ICWA, in his welcome remarks, welcomed the participants and highlighted the changing contours of the India-Poland relationship. Talking about the significance of this book, he stated that the book examines various aspects of India- Poland relations, and it has espoused a ‘holistic and futuristic approach’ in order to explore vistas for future cooperation.

He said that academic and research engagement between ICWA and PISM is now a regular process. Both the institutions have organised three conferences and ICWA is looking forward to host a Polish delegation for the next joint conference. Amb. Bhatia stated that, with the recent political changes in India and Europe, the importance of this dialogue would be further augmented. Further, he mentioned that “the new government has amply indicated that a robust partnership with Europe would remain one of its top priorities.” He also stated “It seems that the European Union process might slow down and subsequently bilateral efforts by the member states may get prominence in the strategic engagement with the outside world. As the gateway to the EU markets, Poland has the potential to boost its economic and commercial ties with the European Union (EU).” He noted that a “vibrant intellectual interaction is a valuable asset for India-Poland relations and there is further need to widen our intellectual discourse.”

Recalling the past, Dr. Vijay Sakhuja said that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ICWA and the PISM was signed in 2006 and since then there have been a number of exchanges between the two institutions. He mentioned that thematically the book is divided into three sections. The first section provides a framework of the bilateral relationship and also explores the possibilities of India- Poland strategic partnership in near future. The second section deals with various aspects of socio-economic cooperation between India and Poland. He mentioned that although bilateral trade and economic relations have been expanding, there is need to look for new

opportunities to expand and strengthen the economic cooperation between the two countries. The third section deals with defence and security cooperation between India and Poland. The third section is also about the Poland and India's perspective on new and emerging challenges such as terrorism, climate change and other environmental problems. Poland enjoys a good reputation as a traditional and dependable arms supplier to India.

Mr. Patryk Kugiel, an analyst at PISM and co-author of the book, congratulated the ICWA for organising this event. He said that writing a book on India- Poland relations was a tough task and would have not been possible without the support of ICWA. This exercise is very important for expanding and strengthening of India- Poland relationships. Policy makers and academicians must understand the importance of India- Poland relations and must explore the new area of cooperation. One of the major problems is that Poland is not attaching enough attention to emerging powers like India, and the same way India's is more concerned about its relationships with major powers and neighbouring countries.

Narrating the history of India-Poland cultural relations, Mr Jakub Zajackowski said that it is very easy to understand India through Polish authors. Knowledge of India in Poland does not exist as a political feature. He talked about two famous Polish disciples who were very close to Mahatma Gandhi. Further, he argued that despite being the sixth biggest economy of European Union, Poland has not yet tapped the potential to increase its trade with India to an appropriate level. India is not among the Poland's top 50 trading partners.

There are three thousands Indians in Poland, but they are not enough or not able to influence the decisions. He noted that there have been strong cultural and civilizational bonding between the two countries and interestingly, in modern time, both countries have initiated the process of social and economic transformation almost at the same time. Poland always appreciates India's role in world politics, especially during the Non-Aligned movement. Poland still retains warm memories of the royal house of Jamnagar who had provided shelter and succour to displaced Polish children during the Second World War.

Further, he raised some problems that hinder the progress in bilateral relationships. Lack of

direct flight between India and Poland is limiting people to people contacts between the two countries. He said that some obstacles are from Indian side; only six diplomats are placed in Indian Embassy in Warsaw. Scarcity of diplomats at the Indian Embassy at Warsaw must be considered as one of the major impediments in advancement of India- Poland bilateral ties. Three Polish universities are promoting Hindi but Polish is not being taught in any Indian universities. Government of India Scholarships for Polish students studying at Jawaharlal Nehru, New Delhi is now matter of past.

Rahul Chabra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, India, noted that there have been regular ministerial level meetings between the two countries. Officials of different ministries of both countries are interacting on regular intervals. He states that India is planning to enhance the number of diplomats at the Embassy of India in Warsaw. He also mentioned the success story of India-Poland cooperation in the Arctic Council and the India-EU business forum.

Mr. Jakub Zajackowski noted that both India and Poland are keen to strengthen bilateral relations and it is expected that in near future cooperation between the two countries will be expanded and augmented. He congratulated ICWA and PISM for the publication of first book on India-Poland relations. According to him, deficit of information is one of the causes of slow pace of growth of India-Poland cooperation, and to promote the cooperation both countries must organise seminars and conferences at regular intervals, and enhance the ongoing cooperation on soft power. He was amazed by quite interesting explanation of common issues in the book,

Ambassador of Poland to India, Piotr Klodkowski, congratulated the contributors and publishers for timely publication of this book. In his closing remarks, narrating the success story of India-Poland relationships in recent years, he stated that India has emerged as one of the important trading partners of Poland. Poland has plenty to offer to India on energy front and looking forward to provide opencast and other mining related engineer technology to India. He informed that Poland's investment in India is more than in China and there are further plans to double it in near future. Both nations have great potential and it must be utilised in proper way to make their relations robust.

People to people contacts, cultural cooperation, India Poland strategic partnership, Ukraine crisis and Polish policy on Iraq issues were among the prominent issues which were discussed during the questions & answers session. Various attributes and impediments of India- Poland strategic partnership were also discussed during this session. Speakers from Poland tried to justify Poland's role during the Iraq crisis, and also highlighted the role of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland at New Delhi in promoting the cultural cooperation and diplomacy.

\*\*\*

*The Report is prepared by Dr. Amit Kumar, Research Fellow, ICWA.*