

Interview with Marek Siwiec (MS). Interviewer: Kataryna Pryshchepa (KP). Place of record: Warsaw

KP: Let me start with a first general question: how did you get involved in Ukrainian relations? Was this related to your job at the Bureau of National Security or was it much earlier?

MS: I do not know if this thing exists, but even if it does it is not at the level it had when Lech Wałęsa was Poland's president, namely the Presidential Committee for Co-operation between Poland and Ukraine. As a rule, it worked like that that on their side the person in charge was the head of Ukrainian Bureau of National Security, which in Ukraine is called the Secretary of the Bureau of National Security and Defence and on the Polish side it was the head of the Bureau of the National Security. Hence, when I was involved in Ukrainian affairs, but more in their political dimension, was assigned to this Committee when I got my position in the Bureau of National Security, that is in 1997. But before, as a political advisor to Aleksander Kwaśniewski, for example, I prepared his first official visit to Kyiv in 1996. So I was engaged in these affairs.

KP: That means that as an advisor to the president you were involved in these affairs. And how do you perceive the relations between the then President Kwaśniewski and President Kuchma. Were these relations productive, so to say?

MS: You know it depends how you measure productiveness, as we need to remember that Poland in 1996 had a very ambitious agenda of ambitions, related to... it had this quite enforced agenda, and Ukraine was still, we can say, having difficulties in finding its place in this environment of an independent state. I am speaking about the environment because this Soviet culture, mentality, was very, very common. But common does not mean exclusive, but it means that there were many habits, customs, that one could feel that it was three generations of true communism. Hence, I can say that considering what Ukraine was at that time and what Poland was with its ambitions and this very, very fresh democracy I would say that the contacts between Kwaśniewski and Kuchma were this extremely positive "facilitator". This was caused by all ambitious aspirations that had emerged then. Of course from today's perspective we can say that economy was not talked enough about, that there were these key-words, such as "Odesa-Brody pipeline"

which were popular then but the economic reality of Ukraine was such that it was very closely connected with the Russian Federation and we have to say that Ukraine at that time, when compared to Russia, was a very liberal, friendly, predictable and calm, state. There was no terror, no attacks, it was full of... respect for religious minorities – this was the only country where the Jewish minority did not need to fight for the torahs, as it got them simply from a museum, from the state – meaning we were intuitively building this kind of trust which would expand what was the official ritual. The ritual means anniversaries, commemorations, this and that... I can say that what today in Poland constitutes a highly emotional debate, that it was from the Polish initiative that the declaration which Kwaśniewski and Kuchma signed in 1997, maybe, or in 1996, I cannot remember, the first official visit – it was then when the word “Volhynia blood” appeared. After terrible fights, as my Ukrainian partners, and at that time it was Volodymir Gorburin, believed that this was not the time and that we needed to wait as in fact nobody knew what had really happened in Volhynia. Well, we did have a general knowledge and started to bring it up. And in such a way many abutments were created, which were later used or not.

KP: So I understand that Kuchma’s re-election for the second term was well-received in Poland?

MS: Honestly speaking, it was...well-received because it was clear who the partner was. To tell you the truth, it was already then when the thing that we call the “specific nature of Ukrainian democracy” was visible – I am talking here about the huge impact of these state departments, these state resources, there is no good word to translate it, on all kinds of processes, but we had never any doubts that what is called an opposition in Ukraine is something natural, real, despite its limitations. Thus, Kuchma’s re-election was something natural.

KP: But it was the reason why these resources were used, to cast away any doubt regarding the legitimacy of this president?

MS: But... No, but this is a very good question, but we need to say that when associations were being made, or confrontations were made, in regards to the images on what this Soviet culture was with freedom on the streets, freedom of press, freedom of expression and the fact that opposition was present, in different

ways, in the parliament, I think that the abilities that Kuchma had in his hands, as he had complete and absolute power, he did not need to use, on a large scale, from these... he simply did not need to forge these elections, because in this... It was natural that, with a quite decent...quite.... There were no reservations towards him at that time, that he will win the election and he won these elections, without any great complications.

KP: But when it happened, the question, it turned out, or didn't it turn out, that these records of major Melnychenko were revealed and there was a huge fuss... To what extent, in your view, this influenced the later behaviour of the president, but also the relations and his international position?

MS: It means that from a certain moment, if I had my calendar or some notes with me, as I have it somewhere written down, but I never had time to look at them, the situation would be such that this rebellion, this open rebellion against Kuchma, as it seems to me that this was the case... as after the presidential elections there were parliamentary elections. In the parliamentary elections Yushchenko together with Yulia Tymoshenko run as political partners, she – by the way – was imprisoned by the then authorities, was released quite – we were already talking, which later turned out to be an absolute salvation for Ukraine, its elite, its opposition in such a way as opposition in treated in the West. There is opposition, what it means to be opposition – those who think differently and that maybe one day they will take over power, meaning it was normal that we were hosting this opposition, including the fact that here were, even came the delegations of the Parliament, after those heavy riots, as at these demonstrations there was non-stop something and Kuchma, from Gongadze's death and from the moment of his accusation – he was trapped. That means he was a man who was trapped, for him, as he did not feel connected with this crime, it is years later, now after years, that we can say a bit more how it all happened, and this, in turn, helped Melnychenko and – what is more – it seemed that it was quite easy to read at the end of Kuchma's term, it seemed that he was already excluded from international circles, nobody wanted to talk to him. Hoping that he will become replaced by someone else and this person will be better, hence I was a witness how this man, who was convinced, of course you can hold many reservations towards him, of different kinds, but as his current position shows, he left with underserved infame. The Gongadze case, which – in my opinion – is still unexplained, but I am gaining certainty that Kuchma is not responsible for it – it is probably somebody else – but he was such a comfortable, meaning the case was comfortable and the pretext was

comfortable, and the opposition had already gone to the streets, as it had a great pretext to stand united by such a morally clean case against Kuchma.

KP: OK, so what would you say to the statement that was made after 2004 that it was a Revolution of millionaires against billionaires. Do you agree with this assessment of those events?

MS: You know.... But there were any other kinds of revolutions?

KP: Well, maybe not those made by the millionaires but rather mobs against the billionaires?

MS: No. And what this Euromaidan was convened by the poor against the millionaires? Billionaires? No. Of course there always was a game in the background, a game within the power elite. Proshenko was also not a guy who showed up from nowhere, he was everywhere in the world and there he was too... Yushchenko the same.... Yulia Tymoshenko.... They all held very high positions. This is not a "deus ex machina" type of an opposition where two bearded hipsters meet somewhere at a café in Podole district in Kyiv and think how to take over power in Kyiv. Later the spirit of the revolution disappeared, they wrote a manifest.... No... this all took place in such a way that Kuchma's neglected children, as remember Yushchenko was the chairman of a bank, he was a prime minister – my God – he was a star so to speak, hence it was rather those neglected who rebelled and it seems to me that they had very many wings from the international support they were receiving.

KP: OK, in that case the average, rank-and-file participant of this protest, meaning not the millionaires....

MS: Are we talking about the first Maidan?

KP: Yes, of the first Maidan. The 2004, meaning this popular support...

MS: I know. It all started in the context where... if I were to describe it by this language, I am not a political scientist, not a historian, but I if I were to describe it with a language which describes, I would say this: this is the 10-year Kuchma's term, ten years have passed and this mechanism of the rotten power, and I am not talking here about Kuchma, but rather about the weak mechanism of implementing power, where everybody talks about democracy, where everybody knows that this democracy will generate change, or that it will not generate any change. Elections take place, as Maidan did not start because Kuchma was bad, but because Yanukovych had won in the first term.

KP: Yanukovych got only a few per cent...

MS: Yes, and from that moment, from that moment on, a terrible fight broke up. Meaning in the first round it all seemed more or less ok, as he won... or he even did not win....

KP: No, he had a few....

MS: Very little, but in the second round everything got.... People were still believing that this system that.... They were not making any money... Do you know what life is like in Ukraine? Are you Ukrainian?

KP: Yes

MS: So you know what life looks like there. People are poor, but have dignity. They always have their dreams, are taught to live a very modest life, they do not have large expectations, they know that everybody steals, they know that it has always been this way, that maybe it will get changed one day, we would like that but we cannot do it. And these people, who have a lot of dignity, this... trust towards the authorities, we need to say, maybe these authorities will generate change, but when they saw that a guy who was offering no warranty of change, was winning, and that he was only a warranty of continuation and the continuation of everything that was the worst, because one was an engineer director, while the

other was the governor.... And yeah. At that moment Maidan really started out. That means the protest was not a result of... which was a kind of a base to that... well there was an organized opposition, there was this whole philosophy that the government is bad, and that is why it was easy, it was easy to say to these honest people who live somewhere there on the outskirts of Kyiv, or somewhere else: “common, come here, we will be protesting, as this is the only chance for change”. Because there, with the methods we are using for elections, we need to remember that the issue in question was about 70 to 80 per cent of people, as these authorities had full legitimacy; in a democratic system a full legitimacy. And they simply could not take it any longer. And they did not.

KP: In your opinion, were the results of the second round honest?

MS: In the second round they were not. I was in a commission, as I was an observer. I was an observer in the first round too. I remember when I came back from the first round and we announced that the elections were free and fair. The European Parliament’s International Commission, I was the first chairman of the European Parliament’s Delegation to Ukraine. This is something that had not taken place before... before there was.... I remember the noise that *Gazeta Wyborcza* made that I dared say that the elections were fair. But they were fair! Because the elections in which two leading candidates get over 20 per cent, where they go head in head, one slightly higher - we had no evidence of forgery. What is more, at that time our knowledge.... In addition nobody in the first round starts forging on a large scale! This can be done when people are fighting for victory. The first round is a start position. But the second one gives the same opportunities to win. It was clear that all state resources were then supporting Yanukovich as such was the directive he will be doing all kinds of tricks, which.... Well there were two main techniques: those marching voters, as they were transported by buses from one place to another and they could vote over a dozen times, and the second thing was counting itself and here nobody had any control. As a result, we had enough evidence, even in these conditions – there were ten people from the European Parliament and there were many observers at that time – that things were not working and after the second round we said that were many formal problems, I do not even remember if the word “forging” was used then but the language of these assessments was strong enough that nobody had any doubts that the elections were forged.

KP: But if there were no such organised protests, I understand Victor Yanukovych would be regarded the winner of the elections, regardless of the observers' assessment?

MS: I think this is a kind of conditional thinking. OK, he would have been regarded as one, let's assume that he is winning the elections, there is no Maidan, he is sworn-in, there is the swearing in ceremony...meaning there is the inauguration, nobody comes – as this means the continuation of the worst stage of Kuchma's rule. Because it is continuation, right, and there is a guy and we do not like how he organised these elections, as he is already responsible for them. Kuchma says: "I am so sorry, I do not care, I have completed my term" and Ukraine is pushed back, it tilts towards Moscow, which is very clear. As clearly, when Moscow was supporting Yanukovych there was no doubt about it – it was all clear and open.

KP: OK. Coming back a bit to the moment of these protests and negotiations – do you know how it happened, or was it justify to expect, that President Kwaśniewski would be invited to become a certain kind of...a kind of intermediary. Were you surprised that this was the case?

MS: Surprised... you know... For you for answer this question, to whomever you will be passing it forward to, please make sure you establish the main players. The main players. There is Kuchma who is completely disoriented. He sees millions of people at the square. He is being approached by all kinds of advisors who are saying: "We have to use force, we have to disperse this whole crowd over there", he does not know what it means, he has no doubts that it is the Tiananmen Square, or even more. There is Yanukovych who says "I am sorry but what kind of evidence is here, what interventions, the elections took place, it's true that some people like it, others don't, but I did win".

KP: By just a few points...

MS: Four or five percent. Not much, but clearly. There is Yanukovych. There is Yushchenko and the whole opposition which says: "what took place was simple forgery". The only thing, these statements are trivial and obvious as everybody was saying what you expected of them and what they wanted to say. And

at that moment a guy, like Kwaśniewski, shows up and he is very well aware that the goal of this game is not who will be the next president of Ukraine, but whether this country will go down after an intervention of forces, does not matter whether legal or not, to a post-Soviet drawer, and will stay there for ever, as then no matter who is in power will be treated simple like someone.... Then we can finish the discussion on democracy, on the European Union. Farewell to them! There is the European Parliament whose presence nobody took into account and we were already there! We, meaning I was there, and many other people who had this “Ukrainian chip” implanted. We knew what was going on, we precisely... I was at the Maidan when it was still cool and peaceful there, when everybody would just come there and greet each other. Razom nas bahato, nas ne podolaty – that was the song. Kwaśniewski could feel it very well that when these people are there... that when they are there.... His merit was that he could sense it that it was not a joke, that it was not a demonstration which will tire people out and they will just go home, because it gets cold or something like that. And I think that this is the time when the opposition received a huge financial support, where did this money came from, we can only guess...

KP: Meaning it was right away. Right after a few days, yes?

MS: Yes, this is clear. But there is everything, all those performances... Meaning, there is Kwaśniewski, there is the European Parliament, which I said before, and which started to make demands , I remember I was delivering a speech as the head of the Polish delegation, Solana was there, whom we all knew very well. I knew him personally and Kwaśniewski knew him very well because Solana was the guy who brought Poland to NATO and he spend with me, with my whole family, two weeks in Poland. He toured the whole Poland. There was huge trust, we could talk in such a way with Solana, he knew that nobody was cheating him, nobody was pulling his leg. In the American administration there were highly positioned people who had been ambassadors in Warsaw – their names can be re-established, I do not want to give them – and of course we can say that Adamkus was there too, he was also a good friend and played an important role. This means that at a certain moment, the situation was such that both sides, which are standing there ready to fight, there is the disoriented Kuchma, who thankfully had no reason to finish his difficult term with such a hecatomb and here comes a credible negotiating mission which has an international mandate, what is more it is well-known, trustworthy, and it does not come to yell at everyone and patronize but to talk: “Listen, you know, maybe you could....” And so on. And then there is the third round in which he lost. I was trying to constantly explain it to him, to Yanukovych: “You know in this

context, after this pressure, after this Maidan, if you are getting 48 per cent in the absolutely unquestionable elections, then you have a half. If you wisely cooperate with this half, then you will be the next president of this state”. Because power wears off. All this has already happened. Meaning... But this also had to reach him. Reach Yanukovich. Yanukovich was very mad with these solutions as he believed that his victory was stolen from him.

KP: But did he listen to this argumentation? That he could become the next president... did he...?

MS: At that time you do not think about it. You think: “I was elected and they stole it from me, they all conspired and they stole it from me, I am too weak, I cannot do it”. The key was that these people could not be removed by force, because how he treats Maidan we could see five years later. Kuchma did not undertake the huge risk, he took the huge risk of his not fully legitimate... with all these Supreme Courts, Commissions, all these... the point was that in the conditions recognised by the whole world, by those people at the Maidan, by this million or how many there were, to have the repeat of voting. Had he won back then, and that was really close, Yanukovich, without any discussion, would have been president. But he did not win. So the fate took the form it did....

KP: If... let's go back to these negotiations. People from Yushchenko's headquarters told us that they were trying to contact president Kwaśniewski, right after the second round or even before the second round and they did not succeed. And that it was based on the clear request from Kuchma that president Kwaśniewski agreed to take part in these talks...

MS: Of course, this is correct. Because the first round is only a procedure, so what was he supposed to do? He was supposed to come and say that he supports one side or another? No, he was the president of a country which was in NATO and the EU. He could not just play such games and act without the allies, hence... and Kuchma as the president was his partner. That is why in a situation when a president is asking, and such was a case, it is this international umbrella, which gave great force to those negotiating on the spot.

KP: So without a clear request from Ukraine's president this mediation would not have taken place?

MS: But it does not look like this that Kuchma is sitting and sitting and worrying and...making a phone call. They were talking with each other all the time. There were talks, I remember that we, as MPs, met with Kuchma. I organised a meeting at Koncha-Zaspa because he would not longer to Bankova. And it was a highly dishearting meeting. This was a man who had been cornered and he lost influence on reality. Life was going on without his participation, and yet he is the number one enemy for those people who were protesting over there.

KP: And in your opinion could Kuchma, during the campaign, influence its course in such a way that there would be less forging in the second round, or was it somebody else who already at that time was managing it?

MS: You know what.. the mechanisms of power – and you should know about that – are such that once this administrative machine concentrates on somebody then this person usually knows about that. And it really is not necessary to issue orders, it is enough that one person knew how to do it.... This is enough. And in such a situation nobody would listen to Kuchma! And what would he tell them: “Hey guys”?

KP: Does this mean that Kuchma, from a certain moment, that is from the beginning of these elections, from the first round, overall lost...?

MS: This administrative machine, yes he lost it completely as it was clear that with these authorities, no matter who would have won, he had nothing in common.

KP: Because he was a president about to leave his office?

MS: Yes, because he was a president about to leave his office. Had it all taken place based on a rule.... As Kuchma had never really blessed this Yanukovych... People were convincing Kuchma to become a prime minister, that this would be the Lithuanian scenario, that everything was already there.... And in the end he made a decision that that was the end and that he was leaving.... And he was not even 70 years old yet! He was not that old. So he simply made this decision and it seems to me – returning to your question – that he no longer had such an operational influence. He would issue an order and what?

KP: Sure. In your opinion, the solution that was opted for, this Supreme Court, and all these decisions, was it all part of a greater procedure?

MS: You know, let us first of all remember that we are dealing, as I said in the beginning, with a country which did not have mechanisms – I am talking about Ukraine 20 years ago. Even Poland, until today, does not have mechanisms to manage such situations! There was a certain breaching of a scheme, and the scheme allowed the oligarchs to make deals and then transfer power. And here it turned out that nothing came out of it and one party used the available methods to get the election results it wanted. But they did not foresee this populist, wide movement as Maidan turned out to be and overall they got scared of this Maidan. And rightly so, and fortunately they got scared, as because of that we can talk about a peaceful ending.

KP: Can we then talk for a few minutes about this second Maidan....

MS: I am not rushing anywhere, but I see that you are running out of your questions.

KP: No, no, I am not running out of questions. I am just trying to figure out how much time we still have. OK, there is the democratically elected president Yushchenko, things are going forward, and in 2010 president Yushchenko loses power and there is president Yanukovych, who is elected....

MS: But don't jump like that because, you know, a few quite important things happened on the way. Specifically, in these five years two fundamental things happened, so to say. The first one was that Ms Yulia Tymoshenko got empowered so much as she started to act against Yushchenko, meaning this who Maidan camp departed, it ended badly I would say. For the people who were this noble spirit of the Maidan this was unacceptable as they believed that it was a tandem, as they indeed looked like one. The second thing is that Yanukovich started to simply play like a democrat. First of all, he accepted the results, even though they probably hurt him much, but he consolidate, established the Party of Regions, and consolidated opposition at that time. And he did something, which in my view was a masterpiece – he became a prime minister. Because he built a majority with the socialists. At that time the country was such a mess when it comes to management that I fully understand the socialists and all this talk that Morozov was mistaken, as Morozov happens to be the man who, we can say, in a sense moved things forward back then. And we cannot forget that he is a somewhat forgotten figure recently.

KP: He has a bad reputation.

MS: I do not know among whom he has this bad reputation. Among those who do not like him because we joined Yanukovich in power? But whom he could join? The other.... At the Maidan he was loyal throughout all this time, it was him who started the Revolution, he had courage to get on the stage and play the tapes, right, and the whole world could hear it, so if somebody.... This is like today's Polish elite are accusing Michnik for not having participated in changes... But what were we talking about because I am starting to.....

prawda, i cały świat to usłyszał, więc jeśli ktoś... To jest tak jak dzisiejsze elity polskie opieprzają

KP: About in between the Maidans...

MS: So there were two things, meaning we can say that Yanukovich consequently was building his image as a democrat. A democrat in the meaning that he was respecting the rules. He would not go to Moscow, he

would not call for help, he did not organise demonstrations but was simply building his own internal... with his own methods. I do not know if you ever looked into it, as I spent some time on analysing it – the Party of Regions was a very good, organised in a modern way structure where cadres were trained and there were career paths for young people. When somebody was joining the Party of Regions, a council, here to administration, and later we will see what we can do with you, what kind of talents you have. Hence, we cannot those, metaphorically speaking forty some percent who always supported Yanukovych, as it was geographically dispersed we know that it was the East and Crimea, it's true... but these were people, hard-working citizens who in the – let's call it – an unfavourable context as nobody... or unforced...they would vote for Yanukovych, for the Party. They knew that he had been to prison, they knew it all, they knew who his friends were, they knew it all. So we have the following situation: Yushchenko – the fight of Yushchenko who turned out to be a political failure, a complete one because without Yulia he was nothing; and this party of his “Our Ukraine” or whatever was its name....

KP: "Our Ukraine" yes.

MS: And we know what kind of party it was. Its election results shows it all. Yulia Tymoshenko without this kind of buffer of Yushchenko, got lost immensely, meaning she got lost when she was doing her politics. This means that we had a kind of an erosion on the Orange side and consolidation on the Blue side. And this was taking place in the context that we are recognising. I am saying “we” meaning the West. There were parliamentary elections, somebody was winning, somebody losing, right? And so on.... So...

KP: But if we go back to the elections: this situation when Yushchenko announced that there will be a re-run, that is earlier elections to Parliament... did this take place?

MS: Yeah, that's it. But see here Yushchenko turned out to be such a worthy follower of all these disgusting tricks which were earlier used.

KP: So in your opinion this was not a legitimate decision?

MS: Of course it was not. In any way. What is more – only someone who knows nothing about politics could organise these elections because he would lose in these elections terribly, and everybody who knew that it wasn't right, knew that they would only gain from that. So why should they be fighting with Yushchenko as who won the elections – the Party of Regions, decisively. So this is such a nail to the coffin of Yushchenko's credibility, but this was his choice.

KP: So there is a loss in support in a way and maybe some distraction of these people who were supporting the Orange camp?

MS: Distraction, nice word. Thank you. Complete mess, all these wars, they were just jumping at each other that no authority was needed for them... Yanukovych was sitting, switching his TV on and watching and saying: "very good, very good, very good".

KP: This means that Yanukovych was elected and after five years he got what he wanted. He was quite well perceived in the first few years in the West, from what I am reading. Were there some kind of expectations towards him in addition to this association agreement?

MS: Here there is no... it was like this: first he had legitimacy and nobody questioned that as we had no doubts in subsequent observations that this is... that he simply won. He own, what is more, he won with a candidate who was rather a warranty of a mess than of any kind of government. And he, later in this chaos, which was there during the rule of Yulia and Yushchenko, he, ok maybe he is not our hero, but maybe there will be peace and some kind of predictability, which can – we do not know what kind of politics he will follow – so he kind of got all toys into his hands. We do not need to love him, but we can do business with him. And he did two things, which... led to his collapse. What I mean is; as I believe that corruption in Ukraine was always a permanent element he institutionalised it in such a way that they themselves started to steal from each other and those who were the closest to him and there was always some kind of group and it was clear that they were dividing things, for better or worse. He apparently cared the most about his son, there were these young hungry guys who really wanted to have a lot of money. So this was

that. The second thing is how he treated Yulia Tymoshenko. By sending her to prison he created this axis – she was imprisoned so that the West would not agree to Ukraine’s membership and signing....

KP: So, in your view, he did it on purpose?

MS: Everything happens for a reason and if I were to describe this with the language of logic I would say that the only reason that Yulia Tymoshenko was in prison, meaning I am not saying that the only overall, but I do not know whether she deserved this sentence for this gas agreement....

KP: But this is a different thing.

MS: This is a completely different thing but the political cause was that irritated West said “with a political prisoner, we do not want any agreement with you”. He returns to Kyiv and says “Sorry baby, I really wanted but look, everything was quickly negotiated, here is the agreement, one thousand pages, everything”. Kluyev was going there, by his own car, and everything cut, cut, cut. And now we are implementing plan B.

KP: But in Ukraine there were expectations that it was the oligarchs who were connected with Yanukovich or close to him, that they wanted to have good economic relations, at least with the EU, because they had from that...

MS: But this is what it seemed like, this is what it seemed like, that this fuel of history, that he was doing it to, as if.... People sometimes say that there the warranties of resources, I do not like the word of the oligarch, but wealthy people, which are offered by western banks are better than those offered by Putin. And even these formal ties with the West give a chance for a gradual, maybe not spectacular and maybe again with Yanukovich, in the next term, but approaching with the West, and let this be the model which

fits everybody. And to that one more thing appeared that Putin stepped in and said: “I am not giving you much time”. Either, or. And everything came together.

KP: Meaning when.... But returning to Yanukovich – this whole operation when he brought back all these presidential entitlements, which Yushchenko lost as a result of this compromise – weren’t they some kind of a warning sign?

MS: But you know they all treated the Constitution in the same way. I believe that the opposition...meaning that the opposition, Tymoshenko’s opposition, it was putting a rope on its head as it was when they agreed to return to the old election system. This old election system – that was the place for political corruption, this majority districts – this where the whole scandal is. When someone has money, he/she can win any elections and at any place. And this is how half of the Parliament operates here. And they agreed. As they believed that it would be easier for them this way.

KP: You mean these...

MS: Majority.

KP: Single..

MS: Single-member districts.

MS: And this was too voted on in the Parliament. We were shocked and saying: “Guys what are you doing?” “No, no, everything is thought out here” “OK, these thought out things, good luck!”

KP: And if we move to these events directly before the Maidan...

MS: Please forgive me – but even these new authorities also did not change that.

KP: Depends. It looks that they have. But this means that everybody believes that they can use this electoral system to their advantage.

MS: OK. What else do we have?

KP: Maidan, right before 2013. When Azarov officially announced that we are not signing the association agreement, was there a surprise that it was announced only three days before the Summit?

MS: It is clear, well I do not want to be that smart after it happened, but I believed that everything was going not to sign the agreement and I had no doubts. Of course until the very end there were attempts to save the situation. Stefan Füle would go there, trying to convince, creating these last lifelines and so on...and at a certain point it was clear that even with Yulia Tymoshenko in prison the West would sign this. And at this moment Yanukovych, when his whole plan collapsed, as his alibi stopped working, right? And these things evolved, and I am not surprised, that people who are biting their teeth when they see Yanukovych, this stealing, this whole power system, they say: “Ok, let him sign this association agreement, let him do it, and we are able to forgive him everything”. And in the end, no agreement. Why? Because not. Not even because of Yulia Tymoshenko. And this is when things got tipped. But again because the mechanism, the technology were known. Because these organisers of this, let’s call it this way, they knew how to do it. And they knew that this is not going to be like with Kuchma. That here it won’t be just going there and smile at each other, that the Berkuts will hide somewhere. Thus, from the beginning this Maidan started to look like a fort, right?, from both sides take the form of an armed conflict. An armed conflict, because from the very beginning people were beaten indeed, and later were really killed, and they were also really getting ready for a real war. And everybody knew about it because this who side of the authorities they were not idiots and they knew what these Right Sectors are keeping there on the fifth floor

of the Union's Building, right? So, as things, as things were going here, they were heading to a real disaster. So it was heading to a real disaster and I am wondering... it happened in a strange way...my luck, an accident. I landed in Kyiv at two on that day when the day before all these authorities ran away from Kyiv, meaning it was such...

KP: It was on the 21st....

MS: I don't remember the exact day but we went there as the European Parliament, we had some kind of meetings there. And it happened that I fell asleep at the tribune when Yulia Tymoshenko returned and was talking as they took me there, I did not really want to go anywhere, but what I am driving at is to say that if Yanukovich could take it a bit longer and stayed they would have of course put him in prison. They would imprison him, but the West would have freed him, in a very short time. The West had no other choice but to work with the legally elected president, regardless of how much it cost it, and they simply lost their reputation by this escape, what is more they all ran away. It was an empty city, there was nobody to talk to. There was only Verhovna Rada. And this whole coup it actually took place at Verhovna Rada, following the rule: "as somebody needs to govern this country".

KP: And you describe it as a coup?

MS: Yes, a coup, as the president was not legally dismissed, but left and is still a president. There is no technology that three hundred guys convene at Verhovna Rada and say that he is no longer a president. This is not an impeachment.

KP: But there was no law on impeachment.

MS: And why would I care? If there was none, there was none. Even more he is a president. So they could summon a prime minister who would fulfil the duties of the president and here they started with you know what methods, that the Chairman of the Verhovna Rada started to play the role...

KP: But the prime minister also escaped.

MS: Yeah, but it was easier to summon a prime minister.

KP: OK, that means to dismiss this one formally...

MS: You know I will not be going into details here. But the revolutionaries did not think about such an option. Should Yanukovich and Azarov had a different plan and changed the government, then the very same Maidan would demand a change of government as there was no revolution. He would have been a great president, and then he would come. Poroshenko would have become prime minister. He would have agreed, for sure. And what? The end.

KP: OK, so why in your view Yanukovich behaved so unwisely?

MS: Because this situation was too much for him.

KP: Meaning not... but why then also this thing, which you call a coup, whatever the name is, why did they do it in such a clumsy way if they were prepared for it?

MS: But they were not prepared to Berkut's moves and that they would start shooting and that we will be shooting as well.

KP: OK. So to an armed conflict.

MS: Yes, to the armed conflict, and not to the fact that he will run away. Give me mercy, they will even leave the whole city empty, all the ministries, as everybody escaped. There was nobody to talk to there so it was like: vice-minister – you are now playing the role, now just in case, so where...

KP: So they only had one path in their heads as how things could develop and they were not prepared for a different solution?

MS: Of course. Yanukovich, every two weeks, would announce a new peace plan. The only thing was that this plan was usually applicable to earlier solutions, as if he proposed after a month, let's say fights, after these attempts to take over the City Council and so on, if he proposed: "Ladies and gentlemen, you are right, indeed this is how things are here... well, I am suggesting earlier parliamentary elections, a temporary government, the government of national unity, there you go, opposition – please give me here five ministers and as a rightful majority believe that this is of temporary nature. The Party of Regions gives five, done, done, done, done. Me as the president, I am controlling force services, defence and so on. For one year, a reform plan. Whatever you want." The only thing is: we need to sign the association agreement with the European Union. This is something which he could not have done.

KP: But when it comes to Yanukovich, in your opinion, to what extent was he under the influence of external factors, so to say?

MS: I do not know. I am not to make guesses, please answer this question to yourself.

KP: I... well this was so absurd, all that what took place that...

MS: No, it was not absurd, but this was... he was already implementing a plan that he worked out with Russia. And Russia is that an external or internal factor?

KP: Difficult to say.

MS: You should decide on that.

KP: OK. So the role of Victor Medvedchuk. How do you assess this...?

MS: I do not know. I have the highest opinion regarding these Ukrainian elite from the times when I worked with them. He was a great organiser, a man who always completed things, this is the guy with whom we organised the 60th anniversary of the Volhynia massacre – it was full of dignity, with large content, which reached public opinion on both sides, with the participation of Polish victims, two presidents, with monuments. I have a whole folder of publications on the Volhynia crime, so then Viktor Medvedchuk played a very, very positive role in Ukraine. I can say that at that stage his connections with Putin, and Russia, did not bother me, what had to be done, he was doing it with us. What role he played during the last Maidan, this I do not know. All I know is that he is affiliated as the leader of the pro-Russian fraction in Kyiv.

KP: And what about the fact that he has such family ties with Putin?

MS: He has them and so what? I ask a different question: Are his activities today first of all legal, are they beneficial to Ukraine and does he have supporters in a democratic system? I can say that unfortunately not, but if Medvedchuk set up his own party and consolidated the remains of the Party of Region – they would take a third of the Verhovna Rada, just like this!

KP: Maybe has such plans.

MS: Maybe he has.

KP: OK. Now president Poroshenko. Could you say that already during Maidan it was clear that he would be the winner after all these events?

MS: You know what; just as much as the authorities had no scheme, neither did the opposition. They simply, at the moment when they got all power and had to divide it, divided it. And what will happen, I am not judging the president, even though I go to Kyiv once a week these days, but it is the Ukrainian people who assesses him, during elections they will, that is why I do not want to take the role of such a smart guy, a reviewer. What for?

KP: Because the issue is that he was not a leader, meaning the issue is not about his personality, but..

MS: Did he go to Maidan? The second one? He risked it and together with Klichko and Yatskeniuk would constantly go there, right? He could get shot in the head just as easily as any of those from that one hundred at Instytucka Street. He stood on the right side of the barricade. And that's it, of course we could be upset with him that he co-operated with every regime, OK, but here he knew where to be.

KP: One more issue; the reaction of the European Union. I do not want to talk here about any accusations or assessment but rather whether the European Union was prepared for that?

MS: Of course not, but how? How? Yanukovich was not prepared, broke like a balloon at a certain point, the opposition was not prepared so how could the European Union? The European Union is prepared for gentle massages, that it will say a lot, that we happily welcome you, or that we have been expecting...and suddenly these democrats who were being shot a week before, and we were condemning it, suddenly they are coming to power. And they are saying: "The Association Agreement, we are taking it all" And here, honestly speaking, a problem emerged for many people. As we did not prepare such scenarios. I am saying "we" the European Union because I myself really liked what had happened. Thus the EU had to adjust speed to the one the second Maidan forced on it and – to a large degree – it adjusted it, meaning there were internal mechanisms introduced in the Commission, in the European Parliament, which create a kind of support, long-term support for positive changes in Ukraine. But this is not always taking place in accordance with everybody's preferences. This is a kind of political correctness, which says: when there is democracy, also freedom wins and we need to support that – but there are also those who say "But for how long?" and "Will they manage?" "They are stealing like they were stealing before, maybe now they are just trying to fight it a little bit". Hence there are those who are not so enthusiastic....

KP: But when we come back to the early stage of these protests, I have such a feeling, that then the EU had a larger problem to determine its position. In the case of the elections the reaction was more decisive.

MS: It had a bigger problem, but the need was much greater. Here, there was no, zero, process. In other words, the process was such that Sikorski and Bildt when... with whom he went there?

KP: The French they went too..

MS: Yes, it was this famous negotiation. "You have to stop fighting and they will not be attacking you". And they stopped. And here is my question: what happened 24 hours later, I would say that everybody is hiding something. I asked Kozhara and he has his own story, I am asking Lucenko and he has his. We do not know at what moment Yanukovich broke and got scared, we do not know at what moment the opposition, seeing what had happened, moved forward and took over this city, meaning physically filled up the gap.

KP: And these shootings, in your opinion was Yanukovich aware of them? Or was it done without his approval?

MS: All I can say: I cannot imagine that a crime of such a scale is done without the knowledge of the main leader.

KP: So he had to somehow give the...

MS: This is my opinion, I do not have any facts to back it. I also find it scandalous that for over three years the new authorities have done nothing in regard to this crime.

KP: But maybe this was part of the arrangement after coming to power.

MS: But you know what, what an arrangement is... that is, that is.... The arrangement could not allow to protect those who made these decisions. In some justified historical context, you can allow them to leave the country, to emigrate, different things can be done. Bigger criminals were able to save their asses and millions. The thing is, that from the point of view of criminal studies one hundred people were killed with weapons. You know this is not just like kids' shooting game. There is ballistic examination, there are bullets, calibres, estimated area from which this man was shot at, some witnesses, somebody was taking these bodies to hotel Ukraina, right? Something took place! One hundred people died! If you are the head of the police, and it was in Kyiv where the crime took place, you set up a special group of detectives, you do not talk about the KGB, NKVD or any other security service, but ask to find out why this and this guy became the member of the Heavenly Hundred and how he was murdered. At least you are trying to do that. Somebody says that evidence has been removed, OK, too bad, it happened, the evidence was removed, but there is a victim, at least someone tried to do it. That the person was not killed with a personal shot gun but

a sniper's rifle of such and such kind... you can learn all about it from a bullet... has there been such an investigation?

KP: There was some, but did you know that some of those who were convicted have already escaped.

MS: I did not know.

KP: Regarding the investigation – Piotr Andrusieczko reminded us once again yesterday that he had found Polish ammunition where Berkut was stationed. That means that there is evidence that these divisions, maybe not Berkut, but they were shooting with Polish ammunition...

MS: This has to be explained. A bullet is like a fingerprint you can learn from it everything: who produced it, when, what profile, etc. Was anybody trying to do it?

KP: It seems that not.

MS: Why not?

KP: Andrusieczko is a journalist. OK, so last question. If it seems that because of the Maidans Ukraine will get divided, that there is a cleavage, I am not saying that I would like that, but if this is what it's going to happen, would there be any reaction of the UE and what next? Does it seem that there is such a scenario?

MS: You know that depends at what moment, as today the situation is such and the assessment is in accordance to the situation. Things are going slowly there, but they are going. At a snail's speed. Those

property declarations this was such a beautiful example how difficult it is to get something that is irreversible.

KP: But for the society this was such a hit in its moral, those declarations.

MS: Hit in the morale? It was a hit in the political elite. As the nation was laughing and saying “thieves”. Now we know who stole and how much. As they did not make that money for two years, right? But everybody knew, apparently they heard how things were, but now they know for sure. Two apartments (...). OK, fighting with corruption. The new court system. If things continue to go at that speed, then the government will think that “things are relatively calm, let them be. It is better that things move on at a slow speed than there is bloodshed”. The war is overall quite a comfortable situation because the government says: “hmm, there is a war, everyday in Adriyevka this and this number of guys dies”. But if an extreme situation was again to happen, and I am talking here about protests. Who can organise protests these days? The opponents of this government. Meaning this democratic, pro-European government. This coolest government that we elected after the Euromaidan. That means its opponents are pro-Moscow as there is no other Maidan. Well, there is this fourth, or third, whatever. This next Maidan is the only thing that can go to Putin and ask for help, then the West... you know what the West will do...