
The article is an abbreviated version of a MA dissertation in international relations, defended on 24th July 2010 at Collegium Civitas (under the tutelage of Wiktor Ross, Ph.D.). It constitutes an attempt at answering the question regarding the causes of the tensions which have emerged in contacts between these two states in recent years (the refusal, by President Putin, to sign the treaty on the state border with Estonia in 2005, and the issue of the ‘Brass soldier’ monument in 2007). An analysis of the pronouncements by the politicians, legal acts and of the wider international context suggests that Estonia’s role in Russian foreign policy is significantly less than Russia’s impact on Estonia’s international situation. The reasons for such a state of affairs include the disproportions in the economic, military and demographic potential of both states and the Baltic republic’s unfavourable geopolitical location. Apart from that, the temperature of disputes among the politicians and the commentators is affected by resentments reaching back to the period of World War II and the Soviet ‘occupation’ of Estonia. Despite a fruitful cooperation in the fields of human pursuit (culture, education local government, and some sectors of the economy), it does not look as if the relations on the highest level will become any warmer in the near future. The hope for a changed perception of Estonia beyond its eastern border is related to the country’s involvement in the European integration process. It is, however, too early to assess the role of the Estonian establishment in the forming of the EU’s policy toward Russia.