

# EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

The Role and Significance  
in the Process  
of Transformation  
of the Countries  
of Eastern Europe  
and the South Caucasus

EDITED BY  
PIOTR BAJOR





# **EASTERN PARTNERSHIP**



**SOCIETAS**

seria pod redakcją  
**BOGDANA SZLACHTY**

**133**

# **EASTERN PARTNERSHIP**

**The Role and Significance in the Process  
of Transformation of the Countries  
of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus**

**edited by  
PIOTR BAJOR**




**Kraków**

© Copyright by individual authors, 2021

Piotr Bajor

Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2569-2552>

 [piotr.bajor@uj.edu.pl](mailto:piotr.bajor@uj.edu.pl)

Review: Marek Delong

Language editor: Keith Horechka

Cover design: Marta Jaszczuk

ISBN 978-83-8138-641-8 (print)

ISBN 978-83-8138-642-5 (PDF)

<https://doi.org/10.12797/9788381386425>

The publication was co-financed by the Priority Research Area Society of the Future in the framework of the strategic program “Excellence Initiative – Research University” at the Jagiellonian University, in connection with the project implemented in the competition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland “Public Diplomacy 2021”.

The publication is available under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Some rights reserved by the authors. The publication was created as part of the “Public Diplomacy 2021” competition. Any use of the work is allowed, provided that the above information is preserved, including information about the license used and about the rights holders.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the official positions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.



---

Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Poland

Public task financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Poland within the grant competition  
“Public Diplomacy 2021”

KSIEGARNIA AKADEMICKA PUBLISHING

ul. św. Anny 6, 31-008 Kraków

tel.: 12 421-13-87; 12 431-27-43

e-mail: [publishing@akademicka.pl](mailto:publishing@akademicka.pl)

Internet bookstore: <https://akademicka.com.pl>

# Table of contents

Introduction .....	7
ADRIAN TYSZKIEWICZ	
The Eastern Partnership as a Structural Actor: A Geopolitical Perspective .....	9
PIOTR BAJOR	
The Evolution and Functioning Conditions of the Eastern Partnership Programme.....	25
OLEZIA TKACHUK	
Successes and Failures in the Implementation of the Eastern Partnership Objectives in a Changing Security Environment .....	41
MARKIYAN MALSKYY	
The Ukrainian Transformation Initiatives of Eastern Partnership .....	59
ROMAN VOVK	
The Eastern Flank of Europe: Ukraine's Place in the Collective Security System.....	69
NATALIA STERCUL	
Evolution of Relations Between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union in the Context of Eastern Partnership (2009–2021): Main Directions.....	87
TATIANA TURCO, VALERIU MOSNEAGA	
Geopolitical Choice of the Republic of Moldova on the Example of Snap Parliamentary Elections (2021) .....	109
MARIAM LASHKHI, VAKHTANG CHARAIA	
The Role of the Eastern Partnership in Georgian Economic Development.....	125
NINO LAPIASHVILI	
Application of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement by the Georgian Judiciary: A Role Unplayed by the Inert and Under-Reformed Courts .....	141
NAREK S. GALSTYAN	
Within the EAEU and with the EU: The Evolution of the Attitude of Armenian Ruling Elites Towards the Eastern Partnership .....	157
SAMVEL HOVHANNISYAN	
The Role and Significance of the Eastern Partnership Program in Achieving Armenian Economic Priorities.....	177
Index.....	191





MARKIYAN MALSKEY 

*Ivan Franko National University of Lviv*

## The Ukrainian Transformation Initiatives of Eastern Partnership

**ABSTRACT:** The new problems and challenges facing the EU's Eastern Partnership Initiative are generated by the dynamism and predictability of political events in Central and Eastern Europe. The European Union is implementing this project by combining two interrelated approaches – intensive bilateral cooperation between partner countries and the EU and the multilateral interaction of participants within the framework of regional programmes.

Both sides (the Council of Europe and the partner countries) – mutually taking into account the positions and proposals of the Eastern Partnership participants – propose some new approaches and mechanisms for the project's functioning. In the list of new initiatives, a special place is occupied by the “revolutionary format” of cooperation with the “European Union – Associated Trio”, proposed by Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. This initiative is becoming the subject of extensive expert and political discussions in the European Union and raises the question of the future of the Eastern Partnership.

**KEYWORDS:** Eastern partnership, new initiatives, Association Trio security and defence cooperation, European Union, Ukraine

The dynamics of political events on the European continent and changes in regional configurations of interstate interactions constantly give rise to new problems and challenges in the practical implementation of the Eastern Partnership Polish-Swedish Initiative, conceptually formed in the form of communication of the European Commission in 2009 within the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy.

The goal of this initiative was to deepen the systematic cooperation between the European Union and its eastern neighbours – Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine – to implement and support fundamental reforms of the political and economic system of these states. The most attractive and effective mechanism for the practical implementation of cooperation was the association agreements of each state with the European Union, the creation of free trade zones and visa liberalisation. At the same time, taking into account, on the one hand, a certain scepticism of Eastern partners about the European Neighborhood Policy, on the second – competition with the European Union initiative to expand cooperation with leading neighbours, and on the third – different positions of the “old” and “new” member states of the European Union, the initiators of the Eastern Partnership Project proposed several new approaches and practical proposals, taking as much as possible into account in their concept of the initiative and the positions of partner countries.

The so-called “two dimensions” of the Eastern Partnership focus on intensive bilateral cooperation between the partner country and the European Union through association agreements by deepening the Free Trade Area, introducing a visa-free regime and implementing a special technical assistance programme to strengthen the administrative capacity of partner countries.

In multilateral cooperation, the main focus is on mechanisms for strengthening the energy security of the countries of the European Union and its eastern partners, effective equalisation of regional development levels, integrated border management programmes, development of regional electricity markets, assistance to small and medium-sized businesses, operational interaction in the field of emergency situations.

The multilateral format is responsible for creating systemic prerequisites for the harmonisation of European and national legislation, regulatory convergence, organisational and institutional support for the activities of Eastern Partnership institutions, intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary multilateral cooperation.

The creation of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities, and the Eastern Partnership Business Forum, although it was an effective incentive to activate cooperation between the project’s countries, failed to provide an adequate and fully-fledged response to the rapid political transformations in the region. On the agenda

was the issue of weakening common positions and overcoming significant political differences in the approaches of the six partners, especially on the prospects for membership to the European Union. The signing of the association agreement with the European Union for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia has become an additional factor in the informal division of Partner States into two camps – associate members with clear European integration ambitions (up to European Union membership) and other partners with a differentiated level of participation.

As O. Motsyk rightly points out, the lack of a European perspective for partner countries, or at least agreement on the European identity of the EU's eastern partners, can significantly reduce the cost of the Eastern Partnership for countries seeking full membership to the EU. On the other hand, we need to be aware that in the current situation in the EU, launching any initiative that would open the way for the EU's eastern neighbours to gain membership is not an easy issue. The lack of ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, support for the thesis of "fatigue" with expansion, the EU's focus on the Balkans and palpable pro-Russian sympathy among several key EU players are just the tips of the iceberg of fear and unwillingness to raise in any form the question of the possible prospect of membership for its eastern neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

The European Union is trying to respond quickly to the dynamic change in the geopolitical and geo-economic situation and the emergence of new trends, challenges, and threats by reviewing and improving the Eastern Partnership framework, mechanisms and procedures.

In 2016–2017, the European Union presented a new approach to the multilateral architecture of the project in the form of a joint working document "Eastern Partnership – 20 achievements until 2020: focusing on top priorities and real results." This made it possible to expand the range of multilateral cooperation. At the political level of decision-making, sectoral ministerial meetings, informal partnership dialogues and high-level meetings were added to the meetings of the Heads of State and Government of the project's countries, and 20 Eastern Partnership goals were officially proposed as a roadmap for building relations between the EU and Partner States until 2020.

An important stage in the transformation of the Eastern Partnership policy was the celebration of the tenth anniversary of its establishment, during which a number of countries, especially Poland and Lithuania, proposed separate initiatives aimed at strengthening institutional cooperation. Poland, emphasising that the institutionalisation of the Eastern Partnership policy is one of the most important principles of its

---

<sup>1</sup> O. Motsyk, *I Believe in the European Future of Our Peoples*, Lutsk: Vezha-Druk 2020, p. 148.

implementation, proposed the idea of creating an Eastern Partnership secretariat and a mechanism for chairing the six Eastern Partnership partners annually on a rotating basis.

Lithuania has prepared an informal position document, “Strategy Trio 2030,” which provides for a more active approximation of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova to the EU by creating an EU Support Group from among the friendly EU member states and joining the trio to the main EU policies in the field of small and medium-sized businesses, access to the domestic market, digital agenda, investment and infrastructure projects.

On the other hand, the negative political transformations of the second half of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, which manifested itself in the political crises in Belarus, Georgia and Moldova, the Azerbaijani-Armenian war, the freezing of the Normandy format against the background of the aggravation of the Ukrainian-Russian confrontation, as well as the coronavirus pandemic not only made their own adjustments to the functioning of the political-economic and financial mechanisms of the Eastern Partnership, but also sharply put on the agenda the issue of differentiation within the multilateral format of the Eastern Partnership.

Different Eastern Partnership member countries sometimes clearly demonstrate different assessments of political events and processes, contradictory approaches to solving topical issues of domestic development and international cooperation, different rates of democratisation of the political system and different individual priorities and expectations from cooperation with European Unions.

In these circumstances, it is necessary to avoid unification of approaches to the implementation of cooperation policies with a group of states that demonstrate reforms of the political system (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova) and states that do not seek full membership to the European Union or do not meet the European criteria for stability and democracy.

In this context, the European Parliament has launched the Eastern Partnership initiative as a future model for Associate Partners which provides for close cooperation and accession of partner states to the Customs and Energy Union, a common digital market, association with the Schengen area and deeper integration in other areas. This is a continuation of the policy already agreed on the goals, objectives and principles of cooperation in various fields, as well as compliance with the requirements of the “more for more” and “less for less” approach to the countries that have made the most progress in implementing social and economic reforms.

This position is the basis for joint communication between the European Commission and the European External Action Service to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the committee

of regions “Eastern Partnership policy after 2020. Strengthening sustainability – the Eastern Partnership that brings results to all.”

This programme document is the result of joint work and lengthy consultations on the future of the EP. It provides for the use of opportunities for the EU Common Market by partner countries, joining the common zone of payments in European currency, participation in projects within the framework of the EU strategy for combining Europe and Asia, increased participation in the Horizon Europe Programme and deepening sectoral cooperation between partners and the European Union. It lays the fundamental foundations for the Eastern Partnership’s post-2020 long-term goals platform, which define the partnership’s main objectives for the future.

The main and determining factor is the concentration of efforts on trade intensification and effective regional and bilateral integration of the economies of partner countries and the European Union. To this end, the gradual liberalisation of access to the EU market will continue, including public procurement, market supervision, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, customs services and tax standards.

The Eastern Partnership’s incentives for key economic reforms include financial support from the EU through an external investment plan, a programme to support countries’ efforts to meet the criteria for joining the single euro payment zone, finance innovative startups and support farmers and rural regions. Attention is focused on the implementation of indicative investment plans to improve the infrastructure of roads, railways, ports and airports, increase the role of cross-border and regional interconnectors, increase investment in renewable energy and increase energy efficiency.

Successful economic development should be based on effective state institutions, whose sustainability is based on justice reform with the participation of international institutions and experts, overcoming corruption and organised crime, and combating human trafficking and illegal goods.

A cross-cutting idea of Joint Communication is the EU Green agreement, which is aimed at ensuring urgent actions of the European Union and partner countries in the field of ensuring the environment and climate.

In order to ensure the health and well-being of the population, the Eastern Partnership will continue to work on promoting environmental innovations and introducing a circular economy, preserving biodiversity, supporting sustainable agriculture and fishing, and strengthening energy and nuclear security.

An important element of the Eastern Partnership’s long-term strategy is the digital transformation of partner countries in accordance with EU legislation and practice. The main thing here will be to and modernise the digital infrastructure, strengthen

regulatory authorities' independence, support e-governance in the EP region, and develop a digital innovation and cyber sustainability programme by the governments of partner countries.

Success in fulfilling the above tasks will largely depend on strategic communication with the population of the Eastern Partnership countries, managing the multilateral structure of the EP and implementing future achievement programmes.

The Eastern Partnership Platform, as the list of primary tasks shows, includes many essential areas for strengthening cooperation between partner countries and the EU, but the emphasis on strengthening regional security for eastern project participants is becoming completely relevant. Five of the six countries participating in the EP programme have acute territorial conflicts with their neighbours and are unable to independently resolve issues of reintegration policy, countering modern hybrid and terrorist threats.

The prospect of combining EP countries into a single security format is actively and critically discussed in the expert community. An expression of the extreme position is the statement that it is inappropriate to talk about a common security space of the Eastern Partnership countries.<sup>2</sup> Turchyn is less categorical about the situation, stating that "the transformation of the Eastern Partnership into a new integration security model can take place only after deepening a differentiated approach to the aggressor countries in the implementation of the programme, as well as the interest of EU member states in such project changes."<sup>3</sup>

The formation of such a model is now directly influenced by Russia's aggressive policy, its destructive position on the main European security trends and influences. The European Union has taken the first steps to review security relations with the partner countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative, introduce anti-terrorist mechanisms and anti-propaganda measures, and consolidate efforts on a Joint Comprehensive counteraction to Russian expansion in the European region. In the EU, there is a growing desire to attract euro-oriented Eastern neighbours to the European defence strategy, among which Ukraine occupies a special place. Experts and politicians discuss expanding cooperation within the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy in the field of security and defence, implementing practical steps to create "European combat groups" to strengthen military-technical cooperation, master advanced operational standards for training troops and achieve operational compatibility. There is

<sup>2</sup> L. Chekalenko, *Is the Eastern Partnership Program a New Security Model?*. At: <http://www.viche.info/purnal/47>, last accessed November 2, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Y. Turchyn, "Prospects of the Eastern Partnership in the Context of Geopolitical and Security Changes in the Eastern European Region", *Political Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2016), p. 65.

a growing understanding that the security situation and sustainability in the Eastern Partnership area are important elements of the security architecture of all central and Eastern European countries. Therefore, it is important and productive initiatives of partner countries, particularly Ukraine, to implement a range of political and military measures that are adequate to modern challenges and requirements, to use the security potential of the European Union and the experience of its eastern neighbours. This complex should be based on a well-thought-out reintegration policy as one of the goals of the partnership, which includes the reintegration of annexed and occupied territories and the holistic reintegration of internally displaced persons and the regulation of their status.

The security situation in the region is critically threatened by terrorism and radicalisation of social and political movements. In the case of Ukraine, this is the radicalisation of the local population in war zones, mobilisation into the ranks of illegal quasi-military formations and an aggressive hybrid information policy. In this context, the Eastern Partnership can open access to its member countries to specialised analytical and information centres of the EU and NATO, in particular the European Center for improving Countering Hybrid Threats, the European situation and Intelligence Center, the European Directorate of intelligence of the military staff, and the European Union Agency for network and information security.

In implementing security initiatives, Ukraine emphasises ensuring reliable cyber defence and cybersecurity, analytical capabilities, rapid response and protection of the information processing and transmission system. The involvement of EP countries in the EU's information and cybersecurity policy will allow them to master the experience of analytical work and practical counteraction to information attacks and increase the effectiveness of responding to joint measures for the European Union and EP partner countries.

Constant discussions on various international platforms and platforms give rise to numerous initiatives and projects to modernise the Eastern Partnership Project. Among such initiatives, the "revolutionary" format of cooperation with the "European Union – Associated Trio," which was proposed by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia as an example of close regional cooperation, is of great interest and controversial assessments. This idea is in line with the EU's historical aspirations to strengthen the multilateral format of regional cooperation between the EP countries themselves as the emergence of the EU itself was based on the European regional communities that later united in the Union. The trio countries identified their main priorities as the desire to become members of the European Union, commitment to further progress in the implementation of the association agreements with the EU and the search for



new dynamics in the strategic development of the Eastern Partnership. The creation of such a new regional alliance that will unite states with similar European integration intentions and problems (territorial conflicts over the Russian Federation, joint threats in the energy sector, militarisation and security challenges in the Black Sea region, information and political expansion of the “Russian World”) is part of a broad strategy of Ukraine’s foreign policy – which has already been called the big strategy of small alliances aimed at solving specific, practical tasks in the interests of the Ukrainian state (Lublin Triangle, Quadriga). The Ukrainian initiative strengthens both the Eastern Partnership and the European Union’s influence in the region on the pace and scale of internal reforms and transformations by improving infrastructure, “deoligarchisation” society and living standards.

The memorandum of understanding between the ministries of foreign affairs of the trio countries defines the coordination of joint actions and the search for new formats of sectoral integration with the EU – especially accelerating integration into the EU internal market, expanding cooperation in transport, energy, digital transformation, strengthening security and defence cooperation.

What is important in the priorities of the trio’s activities is the defence aspect itself, which provides for the development of a platform for cooperation with the EU Coordination Group on Countering Hybrid Threats and the EU Cybersecurity Agency, participation in missions and operations of the SPBO, as well as participation in projects of continuous structural cooperation.

The initiative proposed by the three Eastern Partnership member countries was a serious impetus not only for activating and concretising European integration steps and determining the prospects for membership of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in the European Union, but also a challenge for the EU’s neighbourhood policy, its ability to respond quickly and promptly to new geopolitical realities and adhere to declared principles and approaches.

## Summary and recommendations

The future of the European Union’s geopolitical project depends on its focus and ability to respond to the rapidly changing political, economic and security situation on the EU’s eastern borders. Both the member states of the European Union and the Eastern Partnership countries offer various approaches and initiatives to improve the format of the functioning of the institutional mechanisms of the EP, increase the ef-



fectiveness of cooperation in various areas of international relations and the effective use of new resources and funds.

The most European-oriented countries, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, successfully took advantage of the EU's proposed policy of deepening a differentiated approach to the Eastern Partnership countries, offering a "revolutionary format of cooperation with the 'European Union – Associated Trio'." This format of cooperation with the EU has become part of a broad foreign policy strategy of Ukraine and its closest partners in the Eastern Partnership – Georgia and Moldova. This initiative puts the issue of membership of these states in the European Union on the agenda and also tests the EU's ability to respond to new geopolitical realities in the eastern region adequately.

Therefore, in terms of recommendations, it is necessary to indicate the need to adapt the mechanisms and tools under the Eastern Partnership programme to the level of involvement of the European integration process and the reforms implemented in a given country. This process should take into account the willingness of individual countries to cooperate further, as well as maintaining cooperation with countries that are interested in the level of cooperation so far.

After years of operation, the Eastern Partnership has confirmed its importance as an essential element of the European Union's eastern policy; therefore, in terms of recommendations regarding the current situation related to international conditions and security threats, it should expand the mechanisms and tools of interaction in mutual cooperation – both at the level of individual and multilateral perspective.

## References

- Chekalenko L., *Is the Eastern Partnership Program a New Security Model?*. At: <http://www.viche.info/purnal/47>.
- Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, *Resolution by the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly on the Future of the Trio Plus Strategy 2030: Building a Future of Eastern Partnership*, (2020/C 134/05), April 24, 2020. At: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22020P0424\(05\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22020P0424(05)&from=EN).
- Hil'ko M., *Ukraine and the Eastern Partnership: The Vision of 2025*, *Ukrainska Prisma*, April 13, 2021. At: <http://prismua.org/eap2025/>.
- Ilnytska U., "Eastern Partnership as a Dimension of European Neighborhood Policy and Dialogue Level of Cooperation Between Ukraine and the EU". In: U. Ilnytska, *Ukrainian National Idea: Realities and Prospects of Development: Collection of Scientific Works*, Lviv: Lviv Polytechnic Publishing House 2014, pp. 113–120.
- Ministerstvo infrastruktury Ukraïni, *Eastern Partnership. General Information on the Eastern Partnership*. At: <https://mtu.gov.ua/content/shidne-partnerstvo.html>.

Motsyk O., *I Believe in the European Future of Our Peoples*, Lutsk: Vezha-Druk 2020.

Palagnyuk Yu. *Content and Prospects of the Eastern Partnership Policy as an EU Foreign Policy Initiative towards Ukraine*. At: [http://www.dridu.dp.ua/vidavnictvo/2014/2014\\_02\(21\)/4.pdf](http://www.dridu.dp.ua/vidavnictvo/2014/2014_02(21)/4.pdf).

Rabinovič M., *Eastern Partnership as a Development Initiative after the Revision of the Program in 2015: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects*, 2021. At: [https://kse.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/study-KAS-new\\_ua.pdf](https://kse.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/study-KAS-new_ua.pdf).

Šapovalova O. et al., "Ukraine-EU Relations: Eastern Partnership in the Regional Dimension", *International Review*, no. 3 (2010). At: [http://www.fes.kiev.ua/new/wb/media/publikationen/international\\_review\\_blok3.pdf](http://www.fes.kiev.ua/new/wb/media/publikationen/international_review_blok3.pdf).

Turchyn Y., "Prospects of the Eastern Partnership in the Context of Geopolitical and Security Changes in the Eastern European Region", *Political Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2016).

"Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia Have Expressed their Desire for Deeper Integration within the Eastern Partnership Framework to the EU", *Pravda*, February 2, 2021. At: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2021/02/2/7282061/>.

Ukrainian National Platform, *Economic and Investment Investment Plan: Key Initiatives for Ukraine* (Економіко-інвестиційний план: Ключові ініціативи для України). At: <http://eap-csf.org.ua/2021/07/21/ekonomiko-investytsijnyj-plan-kliuchovi-initsiatyvy-dlia-ukrainy>.

The publication contains a collection of articles devoted to the most important aspects related to the process of transformation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus under the Eastern Partnership program. The book covers the results of a research project by an international team of scientists who present their findings on the policy of European integration, the role and importance of the Eastern Partnership in the process of change, and give recommendations for its implementation and activities in the future.



<https://akademicka.pl>

