

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



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of Transformation of the Countries
of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus**

**edited by
PIOTR BAJOR**




Kraków

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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

The Eastern Flank of Europe Ukraine's Place in the Collective Security System

ABSTRACT: The effective protection of European countries and citizens in today's conditions requires joint and coordinated systemic actions that will address existing threats and prevent new challenges in both physical and virtual spaces. The threats from the east, caused by the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation and possible socio-political disturbances in the neighbouring countries, need special attention. The EU has implemented the European Neighbourhood Policy and initiated the Eastern Partnership programme to support stability, security and prosperity in the EU's proximity.

Many important projects were implemented in the partner countries within the cooperation under the adopted programmes; they contributed to the democratisation of the political system, the civil society and economic development – all of which had a positive impact on the security situation in the region.

The article presents the main achievements of Ukraine in the process of economic reform and transformation of the socio-political system as a result of cooperation with the European Union within the Eastern Partnership programme. The positive impact of the adopted Association Agreement on the development of Ukraine-EU cooperation is being noted.

An important step in maintaining regional security is the development of military and technical cooperation between Ukraine and the EU which provides access to financial resources and defence innovative technologies, contributes to the modernisation of Ukraine's security forces and increase their defence capabilities. Ukraine successfully cooperates with European partners in cybersecurity, civil protection and integrated border management.

In general, Ukraine-EU cooperation is of great benefit to both parties and helps to improve the security situation in Europe, and further integration into European structures and programmes such as PESCO will increase this effect.

KEYWORDS: Eastern Partnership, European Neighbourhood Policy, Common Security and Defence Policy, European Union, Ukraine

Nowadays, Europe is facing several challenges and threats which none of the countries can prevent and overcome without outside help. In recent years, the issues of collective security and interaction have appeared on the agenda of numerous international summits, and today we cannot say that the security-related situation on the continent of Europe is under complete control and citizens feel entirely safe.

At the Brussels Summit¹ on the 14th of June 2021, NATO member countries noted that the security of the Euro-Atlantic area was significantly affected by international processes related to the systemic competition of the assertive and authoritarian powers, and the security of countries and citizens was threatened from all systemic directions. The most worrying are Russia's aggressive actions, various forms of terrorism, China's growing influence and current international policy. It is also pointed out that more and more state and non-state actors undermine democratic principles and rules of international order. Escalation of conflicts often leads to an increase in irregular migration and human trafficking. Every year, the waves of challenges related to cyberspace have been growing, hybrid and asymmetric threats have been emerging, among which the flows of misinformation and criminal use of information networks have loomed large. A special place is occupied by the problems of combating the spread of COVID-19 and climate change.

¹ NATO, *Brussels Summit Communiqué. Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021*, June 14, 2021. At: www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm, last accessed September 21, 2021.

Under such circumstances, the European community should establish and maintain effective mechanisms to counter threats of all kinds and from all directions as soon as possible. And the most attention should be paid to the eastern flank of Europe where, after the illegal annexation of Crimea and deployment of hostilities in eastern Ukraine in 2014, Russia continues its destructive policy against European countries. This is manifested in the application of political and economic pressure, especially on Central and Eastern Europe countries, criminal activity in European cyberspace aimed at interfering in electoral processes and undermining democratic institutions, as well as attempts to disrupt critical infrastructure. There are many examples of illegal intelligence activities conducted by Russian security and intelligence agencies in a number of European countries, which have resulted in human deaths and significant material losses.

In recent years, Russia has been investing heavily in the modernisation of its strategic nuclear forces and actively developing advanced weapons. Numerous military exercises conducted by Russian armed forces near its western borders and on the territory of Belarus raise concerns in the countries directly bordering the Russian Federation and on the entire European continent.

Russia is actively using the levers of economic influence to pursue its aggressive policy. Suffice it to recall the “gas wars” that have periodically erupted in Russian-Ukrainian relations since 2005 and have had a negative impact on the European energy market. In autumn 2021, European countries also experienced difficulties due to insufficient energy and a significant increase in gas and oil prices, which is the result of unfriendly actions by Russian companies trying to accelerate the implementation of Nord Stream – 2 and gain additional leverage in the energy sector in European countries.

This article aims to consider the security situation in European and the current challenges and threats which the Russian Federation is directly or indirectly involved in. It also looks into the EU's relations with the eastern neighbours, the current state and prospects of cooperation with Ukraine and its impact on European space security.

Current European Neighbourhood Policy in the context of security and defence

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was launched by the European Union in 2003 and developed throughout 2004 to build friendly relations with the countries which became EU's neighbours after its enlargement in 2004. The main ENP objec-

tives have been and continue to be support and promotion of stability, security, and prosperity in the EU's near abroad and prevent the formation of new demarcation lines at the EU's borders.²

In general, the Neighbourhood Policy has become one of the key parts of the European Security Strategy adopted by the European Council in December 2003. The EU's main objective during the ENP implementation is "to make a particular contribution to stability and good governance in our immediate neighbourhood [and] to promote a ring of well-governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations."³

In 2015, the EU revised its Neighbourhood Policy⁴ according to the new conditions that emerged in a number of countries located close to its borders – and the security factor became one of the priorities. This is due to the fact that extremism and terrorism, violations of international law, inciting conflicts, human rights violations and an increase in refugee flows have been increasingly frequent despite the positive transformations in many neighbouring countries. The security situation was significantly affected by Russia's aggressive policy, which led to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict in Donbas. The European Community also had to respond to the escalation of conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East following the Arab uprisings and ISIS' deployment. As a result, this led to uncontrolled flows of migrants causing significant difficulties in many EU countries.

In most cases since the ENP preparation and until today, the European Union has been guided by the principles underlying the Neighbourhood Policy and does not aim to ensure the security of neighbouring countries, but primarily to stabilise the situation around its borders, reduce threats that may arise in the immediate vicinity to the European Community and to establish cooperation with the governments of neighbouring countries in strategic areas. At the same time, the EU actively promotes the development of regional cooperation and integration as one of the mechanisms to

² European Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy*, Strategy Paper, COM(2004) 373 final, May 12, 2004, p. 3. At: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52004DC0373&from=EN>, last accessed September 7, 2021.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ European Commission, *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, JOIN(2015) 50 final, November 18, 2015. At: https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf, last accessed September 10, 2021.

strengthen security and resolve conflicts by involving local and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations and local communities.

The EU's cooperation with neighbouring countries focuses on protecting borders, preventing conflicts, deterring terrorism, combating organised crime, tackling irregular migration and making significant efforts to reform the security sector to become more efficient and predictable.

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) was established in 2005 to ensure reliable protection of the EU's borders and coordinate the activities of the border services of the EU member states. It is worth pointing out that the agency's headquarters is located in Warsaw – the capital of the country of whose eastern border has become the EU's border and, therefore, needs special protection and reliable support of all functions provided for by the Eastern Partnership programme. Today we can say that Frontex is successfully coping with all its tasks: the situation is being monitored along the perimeter of the EU's external borders using the latest information systems, operational support is provided for all measures aimed at maintaining border security, combating border trespassers and monitoring the illegal migration processes and smuggling of goods.

At the same time, it should be noted that Frontex actively cooperates with the border agencies of neighbouring countries, including the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine – as evidenced by numerous joint exercises and communications on an ongoing basis. The main tasks of such cooperation are to coordinate efforts to protect the border, combat cross-border crime, control the flows of irregular migrants entering the EU to timely and effectively respond to violations. Cross-border cooperation aimed at ensuring the reliable operation of the border crossing points and tracking the flow of people and goods is also necessary.

In 2020, the European Commission approved a Common Security Strategy⁵ providing an action plan for the period up to 2025 and developed tools and mechanisms that ensure the security environment's effective functioning (which is something that must stand up against the test of time). The primary focus is on building a security system that will timely and fully respond to the emergence of rapidly changing new threats in today's world. The document identifies the strategic priorities, ways to implement them and ensure integrated actions to successfully address digital and

⁵ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Security Union Strategy*, COM(2020) 605 final, Brussels, July 24, 2020. At: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0605&from=EN>, last accessed September 21, 2021.

physical threats throughout the Security Union's ecosystem and in areas where EU actions can achieve positive results. Generally, the main directions of the EU Security Strategy are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. EU Security Union Strategy



Source: https://euhybnet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/EU_Security_Union_Strategy__connecting_the_dots_in_a_new_security_ecosystem.pdf.

Given that the functioning of government institutions, the transport system, the energy system, the financial and economic system, the healthcare system, the information and communication systems, the activities of large and small enterprises and providing a wide range of daily services to citizens; all of which require close interaction of physical and digital infrastructures, the protection of cyberspace of each member state and the whole EU has become of strategic importance. That is why cybersecurity is one of the key areas of today's security strategy. This area of activity should be aimed at protecting the privacy and personal data of citizens, protecting an intellectual property and trade secrets, combating disinformation campaigns, preventing radicalisation of the political processes, etc.

As in previous years, terrorist attacks in 2021 pose a significant threat to citizens and critical infrastructure. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights notes that one in

five EU citizens is extremely afraid of terrorist attacks that could occur in the coming year.⁶ Such attacks by radical extremists remain possible in the near future, so this type of threat will require coordinated actions from EU countries and will be another area of the European security system in the coming years.

Organised crime causes significant damage to the European community. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction,⁷ more than 83 million people – or 29% of adults (aged 15 to 64) – in the EU have used illicit drugs. In total, the illicit drug market is worth more than 30 billion EUR per year. International trade in counterfeit medication, the proliferation of firearms and human trafficking have increased significantly. The scale of criminal activity in this area has reached tens and hundreds of billions EUR per year. It is beyond argument that the EU security structures will have to direct significant resources to the fight organised crime and prevent its penetration from the outside.

Since 2014, the EU has been dominated by the need to strengthen security forces, develop cooperation in the defence industry and ensure closer cooperation between defence agencies in the event of conflict escalation near the external borders. The European Defence Industrial Complex Programme⁸ has come into effect and European Defence Fund has been established; it began to provide funding for defence research and development of technological projects in 2021. A coordinated review of defence issues according to the new EU Capability Development Plan is carried out on an annual basis, and a plan of funding for the member states' defence sectors in line with EU defence priorities are regularly approved. All these joint defence planning processes are carried out under the auspices of the newly established EU authority called the Military Planning and Conduct Capability.

An important way to increase the level of the EU security and defence continues to be activities aimed at developing the capabilities of the EU partner countries through the organisation of joint exercises and provision of the defence advisory support.

⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Your Rights Matter: Security Concerns and Experiences*, Fundamental Rights Survey, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union 2020. At: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-survey-security_en.pdf, last accessed September 24, 2021.

⁷ European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, *European Drug Report 2021: Trends and Developments*, June 2021. At: https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/edr/trends-developments/2021_en, last accessed September 5, 2021.

⁸ European Commission, *European Defense Industrial Development Programme*, 2018. At: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/2019-calls-proposals-european-defence-industrial-development-programme-edidp_en, last accessed September 5, 2021.

According to the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence (2017) as part of CSDP, 23 EU member states have agreed to implement a programme of closer cooperation in security and defence called Permanent Structured Cooperation. Currently, 25 of the 27 EU member states have joined the programme, and the programme contains 46 projects in the following categories: training, land, maritime, air, cyber, space and joint enablers,⁹ most of which have already been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

Systematic approach to the organisation of security and defence by EU countries deserves great respect and gives hope to citizens for protection and timely assistance in case of attacks, accidents, natural disasters or other hazards. Institutional mechanisms and the coordinated actions of such respected and powerful organisations as NATO, OSCE, Europol, Eurojust and others, together with the implementation of numerous strategies and programmes, serve to protect the European space in accordance with its area of responsibility.

In general, when assessing the EU Security Union Strategy 2020–25, it is worth pointing out that the main focus here is on the civil security within the EU, and most measures and resources are aimed at improving the protection of citizens, their rights and freedoms, democratic principles and infrastructure.

The adopted strategies, programmes and plans are jointly aimed at forming a comprehensive system of cooperation in planning and implementing the security and defence tasks and protecting themselves as much as possible from new threats, including unforeseen threats. We can estimate the effectiveness of such a system by its response to overcoming new threats in the nearest future.

European Neighbourhood Policy – East

The European Union's cooperation with partner countries in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy covers 16 countries in the eastern and southern directions. Eastern European countries such as Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, and the countries of the South Caucasus such as Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, all participate in the Eastern Partnership programme launched in 2009 (based on the initiative of Poland and Sweden and aimed at strengthening and deepening the political and economic relations between the European Union, EU member states and partner countries in

⁹ Permanent Structured Cooperation. At: <https://pesco.europa.eu>, last accessed September 15, 2021.

the bilateral and multilateral formats). A website¹⁰ and virtual representations in the most popular social networks have been created to monitor the news and state of the implementation of the cooperation projects between the European Union and partner countries to inform citizens and establish communication with them.

Many important projects have been implemented in each country after the implementation of the Eastern Partnership initiative; they have contributed to the democratisation of the political system, the civil society and economic development. At the same time, it is thought that important changes in EU policy strategies often occur after major regional security crises.¹¹ Thus, the Eastern Partnership was launched after Russia's aggression against Georgia, and the EU's Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were signed after Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

The EU has many examples of successful coordinated action to combat past crises. Fiscal and political measures by European governments to overcome the financial and economic crisis that swept the world more than a decade ago have been successful. It is also worth noting the effective financial and organisational support of individual EU countries that have faced domestic economic problems. Positive examples include joint efforts to resolve the migration crisis in recent years, although many countries have had different views on the resolution mechanisms. However, when the Covid-19 pandemic began to spread around the world in 2020, Wolfgang Ischinger, the Chairman of the Munich Security Conference, had justly noted that "in response to the biggest crisis since World War II, national leaders first resorted to the policy of 'my country first' and only later were solidarity mechanisms introduced to combat the spread of coronavirus."¹²

With regard to the implementation of the Eastern Partnership programme, it should be noted that not all plans have been implemented in full and there are a number of objective and subjective reasons for this. One of the most significant reasons is the fact that there are conflicts of various activity in five countries: from the frozen conflict in Moldova, to hot one with active hostilities in Ukraine. All of these conflicts are, more or less, provoked and fueled by the Russian Federation.

At the same time, it should be noted that (in 2020) a large-scale armed conflict broke out between two members of the Eastern Partnership, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

¹⁰ EU Neighbours East Website. At: <https://euneighbourseast.eu>, last accessed September 15, 2021.

¹¹ Razumkov Centre, *The EU-Ukraine Security Partnership: Status and Prospects*, Kiev 2020. At: <https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/other/БЕЗПЕКОБЕ%20ПАРТНЕРСТВО%20УКРАЇНА-ЄС.pdf>, last accessed September 25, 2021.

¹² T. Bunde, "Beyond Westlessness. A Readout from the Munich Security Conference. Special Edition 2021", *Munich Security Brief*, no. 1 (2021). At: https://securityconference.org/assets/02_Dokumente/01_Publikationen/Munich_Security_Brief_Beyond_Westlessness_MSC_Special_Edition_2021_210224.pdf, last accessed August 25, 2021.

Now, relations between these countries remain strained and it is no great surprise that the EU has not been very active in resolving this conflict.

As for Belarus, the situation also looks difficult as there is an ongoing political crisis provoked by the current government's actions following the rigging of the 2020 presidential election and the suppression of mass protests due to the dissatisfaction of citizens with the announced results. The Belarusian authorities began harshly persecuting the political opposition and dissatisfied citizens – many of whom were imprisoned for political reasons. In response to this situation, the European Union imposed sanctions against its partner and relations with Belarus deteriorated significantly. As a result, the Belarusian political authorities have intensified the process of rapprochement with the Russian Federation, which has greatly facilitated the implementation of its aggressive foreign policy. In the autumn of 2021, the large-scale military exercises Zapad 2021 (West 2021) were held on the territory of Belarus with the participation of a large number of troops and heavy weapons of the Russian Armed Forces. According to many observers, these troops remained in Belarus after the exercises, reasoning that they had to protect against “threats from the West.” The European Union, mostly the Baltic states and Poland, is also facing difficulties on its borders with Belarus due to border violations by migrants who, under the auspices of local authorities, are trying to enter the EU illegally. As a result, many of the EU's cooperation programmes with Belarus have been frozen or severely restricted.

An action programme called “20 Deliverables for 2020” was adopted in 2017 as part of the Eastern Partnership;¹³ the programme was focused on such areas as strengthening the economy, governance, relations and society.

In July, EU countries adopted a joint staff working document “Recovery, Resilience and Reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities”¹⁴ which identifies the following main areas of joint activity:

- together for resilient, sustainable and integrated economies,
- together for accountable institutions, the rule of law and security,
- together towards environmental and climate resilience,
- together for resilient digital transformation,
- together for resilient, fair and inclusive societies.

¹³ European Council, *20 Deliverables for 2020*, 2020. At: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/20-deliverables-for-2020>, last accessed September 21, 2021.

¹⁴ European Commission, *Recovery, Resilience and Reform: Post 2020 Eastern Partnership Priorities. Joint Staff Working Document*. At: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/swd_2021_186_f1_joint_staff_working_paper_en_v2_p1_1356457_0.pdf, last accessed September 21, 2021.

The programme implementation is based on two components: investment and public administration. It is planned to take the Investment and Economic Plan as its basis, which will attract 2.3 billion EUR from the EU budget in the form of grants, mixed financing and guarantees. In total, up to 17 billion EUR of private and public investment can be used to implement the programme. For each of the Eastern Partnership countries, the plan provides a number of flagship initiatives and components for public administration to support investment and promote the consolidation of the sustainable and equitable society that leaves no one behind.¹⁵

The following Eastern Partnership priorities are on the agenda for 2020–25:

1. Investments in a competitive and innovative economy – support for 500,000 small- and medium-sized businesses;
2. Investments in strengthening the rule of law – all high-ranking officials must declare their assets and their reports will be audited;
3. Investments in sustainable and “smart” transportation service – construction and modernisation of 3,000 km of major roads and railways;
4. Investments in people and the knowledge society – 70,000 opportunities for individual mobility for students and teachers, researchers, youth and young workers;
5. Investments in security and cyber resilience – strengthening the structure to detect and eliminate hybrid threats; strengthening the capacity of partners to increase cyber resilience and fight cybercrime;
6. Investments in sustainable energy – 250,000 households will reduce energy consumption by at least 20%;
7. Investment in environment and climate – another 3,000,000 people will have access to safe water supply; control and improvement of the air quality in 300 cities;
8. Investments in health care – vaccination of 850,000 health care workers, improvement of their working conditions, equipment and means of therapy;
9. Investments in an inclusive, gender-equal and diverse society and strategic communications – support for 2,500 local civil society organisations, 120 independent media organisations and 2,000 journalists;
10. Investment in digital transformation – 80% of households will have access to high-speed internet.

This list looks quite ambitious, and the citizens of each partner country are interested in this plan being implemented as much as possible.

¹⁵ EU Neighbours East Website. At: <https://euneighbourseast.eu/uk/policy>, last accessed September 21, 2021.

Ukraine's achievements in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership Security Programme

When assessing Ukraine's achievements in the implementation of plans and programmes adopted under the Eastern Partnership, it should be noted that significant work has been done and considerable achievements have been made in all areas in Ukraine. The results of the activity are periodically presented at high-level meetings between Ukraine and the European Union. In particular, the Ukraine-EU summit is held annually, where problems related to the implementation of the Association Agreement, bilateral and multilateral cooperation are solved, and topical international issues are discussed. An important mission to control and monitor the implementation of the Association Agreement is entrusted to the Association Council, which includes the representatives of the EU Council, the European Commission and the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers. In addition to the above, it is worth noting such bodies as the Association Committee, which includes the representatives of the government agencies, and the Parliamentary Association Committee – which consists of deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Supreme Council of Ukraine) and the European Parliament. A special place is given to the Civil Society Platform composed of the representatives of the Ukrainian public and members of the European Economic and Social Committee, which performs rather advisory and supervisory functions on the implementation of objectives and compliance with agreements.

Regular military-political dialogues regarding security and defence take place between Ukraine and the European Union at the level of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Chairman of the EU Military Committee, as well as the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the EU military headquarters.

According to the results of an analysis of the Ukrainian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum,¹⁶ Ukraine's main achievements in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership include the following:

1. Cooperation between Eastern European countries under the auspices of the European Union and without Russia's participation has been strengthened; it allowed intensifying cooperation between the post-Soviet countries on a mutually beneficial basis following European norms and traditions and opened a mechanism

¹⁶ Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. At: <http://eap-csf.org.ua>, last accessed September 18, 2021.

for establishing and developing political contacts with EU countries at the bilateral and multilateral level;

2. Signing the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and growth of trade with the European Union opened new opportunities for the business environment, in terms of exports of goods and services and investment in Ukraine's economy, contributed to the successful implementation of economic and political reforms;

3. The implementation of EU standards has contributed to significant results in public administration reform, small- and medium-sized business development, environmental protection, strengthening security and fighting corruption;

4. A visa-free regime with the European Union has made it easier for Ukrainian citizens to visit EU countries, which has significantly increased awareness of European values, culture and the life of EU citizens;

5. Access to EU programmes has given Ukrainians the opportunity to participate in projects aimed at developing small- and medium-sized businesses, educational initiatives, cultural programmes, research and innovation, expanding academic mobility, developing the infrastructure of Ukrainian cities, etc.;

6. Growing awareness of the EU and its activities in Ukraine has made it possible to increase confidence in EU structures and better understand the principles and mechanisms of political and socio-economic relations between EU countries;

7. Ukrainians' feeling and awareness of belonging to the single European space contributes to the growth of understanding of the need for reforms, socio-economic transformations and the introduction of European values in all spheres of activity;

8. Establishment of the Eastern Partnership institutions for intergovernmental, inter-parliamentary and business cooperation has opened mechanisms for establishing and maintaining contacts between state and non-state structures of Ukraine and EU;

9. Establishment of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum for interaction between citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries and strengthening their influence on national governments and EU institutions;

10. Support by the European Union for greater involvement of non-governmental organisations and citizens of partner countries in implementing the Eastern Partnership policy.

Under current conditions, one of the most essential areas of Ukraine's cooperation with the European Union is joint activities in resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Of special note is the great political support of Ukraine by EU countries, the provision of significant financial and material assistance, military and technical support and the introduction of sanctions against the Russian Federation.

It is also worth noting the interaction of Ukraine with European structures in the security activity outside its borders. These include Ukraine's active participation in the negotiation process for the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, repeated accession to the operational duty in the EU combat tactical group "Helbrock", participation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in military exercises in Ukraine and EU countries, etc. It is important to note the successful cooperation of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine with the European Defence Agency in several multinational projects on material standardisation, logistics, training, the establishment of the single European sky, etc.

Ukraine has made significant progress in its partnership with NATO, where a significant number of "NATO standards" have been introduced. It is worth noting, among others, the achievements in the following areas: democratic and civilian control over the defence forces, ensuring transparency in management decisions at all levels, the introduction of the defence planning process in accordance with Euro-Atlantic principles and approaches, etc. The greatest cooperation was achieved in security activity and strategic planning, operations and hostilities, preparation of the state territory for defence, intelligence (information and psychological operations; military communications), development (testing of armaments and military equipment; strategic communications), gender issues, etc.¹⁷ In general, the implementation of NATO standards will enable the Armed Forces of Ukraine to achieve technical and operational compatibility with European security agencies and to interact effectively during training, peacekeeping or combat missions. A perfect example of Ukraine's cooperation with EU member states is the creation of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade named after the Grand Hetman Konstantin Ostrozky, known as LITPOLUKRBRIG, which includes units from the armed forces of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine.

An important area of Ukraine's relations with the European Union is the development of military and technical cooperation in providing access to financial resources and defence innovative technologies. Such cooperation contributes to the modernisation of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies of Ukraine, the development of the military-industrial complex and security and defence upgrade. At the same time, it is important to note the growth of the share of European countries in the regional structure of exports of arms and military equipment of Ukraine which increased from 3% in 2013 to 16% in 2020.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, *NATO Standards: Mechanism and Pace of Implementation, Adaptation to Ukrainian Realities*, February 12, 2021. At: <https://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2021/02/12/standarti-nato-mehanizm-i-tempi-vprovadzhennya-adaptacziya-do-ukrainskih-realij>, last accessed September 25, 2021.

¹⁸ Razumkov Centre, *The EU-Ukraine Security...*, p. 27.

An important step towards building a collective security system and defence on the European continent will be Ukraine's accession to cooperation within the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) after adopting the EU Resolution on the participation of third parties countries. Ukraine's representative to the EU announced Ukraine's intention to join more than 20 PESCO projects.¹⁹ Ukraine sees participation in projects for the development of military equipment, military training, interoperability and cybersecurity as one of its priorities. Such cooperation will not only achieve results in strengthening security and increasing Ukraine's defence capabilities, but will also significantly strengthen the EU's security and defence system in the eastern areas.

Summary and recommendations

Ukraine's cooperation with other countries of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus within the Eastern Partnership programme is an important and, as practice has shown, an effective mechanism for the implementation of reforms and socio-political transformation of society in partner countries. When implementing the plans under the partnership programme, all countries have achieved significant progress, especially Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as evidenced by the signed Association Agreements with the European Union.

Ukraine's greatest achievements include the development of civil society which is evidenced by the high activity of citizens in political processes at the local and national levels, the influence of non-governmental organisations on governmental and parliamentary structures and local governments, support for gender equality and combating violence. Strategic communications with European institutions in many areas have reached a new level. It should be noted the progress in the development of small- and medium-sized businesses and their support by the central government and local state administrations. Reforms in the areas of the judiciary and public administration have been launched and still need to be successfully completed.

Significant results have been achieved in the digitalisation of relations between citizens, business and state bodies. The established Ministry of Digital Transformation has implemented a large number of programmes and projects aimed at facilitating the receipt of public and administrative services by citizens, simplifying the mechanisms for starting and running a business, providing access to education and development of

¹⁹ Y. Šejko, "What Will Give Ukraine Participation in EU Defense Projects", *Deutsche Welle*, November 11, 2021. At: <https://p.dw.com/p/3l6Zm>, last accessed September 25, 2021.

cultural institutions. Ukraine has made significant progress towards integration with the EU Digital Single Market.

It should be noted that the progress in the development of the EU-Ukraine trade which is governed by the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between Ukraine and the EU entered into force in early 2016. Significant work has been done in the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency and in the implementation of state environmental policy. Ukraine actively cooperates with European partners in cybersecurity, civil protection and integrated border management.

Ukraine is making great efforts to deter Russian aggression and resolve the conflict. Given the desire to restore sovereignty and territorial integrity by peaceful means, an emphasis has been put on measures aimed at involving international partners. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission has been established under the auspices of EU countries and institutions, quadripartite meetings in the “Normandy format” are being held, a Trilateral Contact Group is working and, in 2021, a new Crimean Platform initiative was launched in 2021 with the support of the European Parliament. In general, such activity in conjunction with international legal institutions should have a systemic influence on Russia to stop the aggression against Ukraine and leave Crimea.

When assessing Ukraine’s contribution to the development and strengthening of the collective security system, it is safe to say that despite the uneven dynamics of implementing the cooperation programmes in some areas, such cooperation generally benefits both Ukraine and the European Union and certainly improves the security situation on Europe’s eastern borders.

Therefore, concerning the recommendations concerning the Eastern Partnership, it is necessary to point out the legitimacy of a more comprehensive inclusion of programmes related to security issues in the scope of implemented activities, as well as the intensification of the above-mentioned effective cooperation in the field of civil society development, relations between citizens, business and government structures – together with reforms in economic policy and an increase in mutual trade turnover.

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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.



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