

UA: UKRAINE ANALYTICA

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Bilateral

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CANAADA

- BILATERAL RELATIONS
- FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE
- NEIGHBOURS, PARTNERS AND PERSPECTIVES

Bilateral Relations

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TO TURN HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS INTO POWERFUL, PRAGMATIC AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIP

*Interview with H.E. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Canada
Andriy Shevchenko*

What Is, in Your Opinion, The Main Indicator Of The Level And Success In Bilateral Relations?

Charles Darwin might help us with that. As he said, it is the animals that adjust to changes the best, which survive. Therefore

« ***Canadian uniforms and boots for Ukrainian soldiers, satellite images of the war zone, Canadian officers, training Ukrainians on the ground etc. – all of that timely and much appreciated assistance came as quickly as possible***

to have good relations between nations means to be mutually responsive to needs and challenges of the partner.

One good example of successful cooperation is Canada's response to the Russian aggression in the Crimea and Donbas. Canadian uniforms and boots for Ukrainian soldiers, satellite images of the war zone, Canadian officers, training Ukrainians on the ground etc. – all of that timely and much appreciated assistance came as quickly as possible. Canada was also one of the drivers of the international sanctions against Russia. This made Canada a leader of the international coalition in support of Ukraine. And this is exactly what you expect to receive from a good partner.

This 'responsiveness', of course, requires appropriate tools, such as good channels

of communication, legal framework, and a 'win-win' approach to the issue. However, once again it is an ability to react to new challenges that is essential.

In Which Spheres Cooperation Between Ukraine And Canada Is The Most Meaningful?

We are privileged to have a very healthy and beneficial cooperation. It is something that I call 'proactive empathy'.

Firstly, it is defense & security cooperation. We work together to provide more security in Eastern Europe, which has been suffering from Russian imperialistic hostilities. This cooperation includes training of Ukrainian officers by Canadians under UNFIER, support for the new Ukrainian National Police, information exchange etc. It is a mutually beneficial process, as Ukraine can share its experience in fighting the hybrid war against Russia.

Secondly, it is a state building. An impressive part of the 45 million technical assistance package, assigned by Canada to Ukraine in the 2016-17 fiscal year, will go to strengthen governmental and civil society institutions in Ukraine.

Thirdly, it is trade & investment. None of us can be satisfied with the low volumes we have, however, we do have to recognize successful cooperation between businesses, especially in IT or agriculture.

Are There Any Questions In The Ukrainian-Canadian Bilateral Relations, Where Their Opinions Are Completely Opposite?

The only one I can think of is the visa free-regime between the countries. We have never heard 'no' from our Canadian partners; we do not see much progress either. Our visa-free dialogue with the EU, which is getting closer to a happy-end, should serve as an inspiring example.

Politics, Security, Economics Or Humanitarian Issues – What Are Your Priorities For Future Development In The Bilateral Relations?

My top-3 will be the following: security, trade and education.

In terms of security, Ukraine can and should be a Western foothold in the region. That means a lot more cooperation in diverse fields: defense, fighting international crime, and countering money laundering.

We also have to learn from the Russian hybrid warfare in Ukraine. We hope to cooperate with Canada and other NATO partners, breathing life into the idea of launching an excellence center, which will help to consolidate hybrid war knowledge.

Regarding trade, my big hopes are with the Free Trade Agreement that will be signed shortly and which will eventually eliminate 98% of the tariffs. This should give businesses on both sides of the Atlantic good chances to rediscover Ukrainian-Canadian opportunities.

Education is another great hope. We already have some promising projects of cooperation in this sphere, and I believe we can greatly benefit from closer cooperation between the leading academic institutions.

What Are The Main Challenges In The Embassy Work?

Our big challenge is to fight 'Ukraine fatigue' among the partners. There is feasible frustration with no progress on the Minsk agreements and a slow pace of reforms in Ukraine.

This requires very thoughtful and creative efforts in explaining both our challenges and successes. Canada's political class has a decent understanding of the Russian aggression. Now we need to make sure that Canada understands how we are modernizing the country

When Countries Traditionally Have Very Close And Warm Relations – Is It A Challenge Or A Benefit For The Ambassador?

For me it is a great and priceless asset and a huge responsibility. My long-term challenge is to convert our warm cultural and historical connections into a powerful, pragmatic and mutually beneficial partnership. We are on the way.

***Andriy Shevchenko** – Prior to the diplomatic appointment, Mr. Shevchenko had accomplished an outstanding career in politics and media. He is also well known in Ukraine as a civil activist and a human rights defender. A seasoned journalist, he was one of the founders of Ukrainian 5th Channel, the first 24/7 news channel in Ukraine, and a leader of the journalists' movement against censorship. In 2005, he received the Press Freedom Award from 'Reporters without Borders' (Vienna). After that, Mr. Shevchenko won seats in the Ukrainian Parliament 3 times (in 2006, 2007, and 2012). In 2006-12, he served as the Chairman of the Free Speech Committee; in 2012-14, he served as the 1st Deputy Chairman of the Human Rights Committee. He was a Yale World Fellow (2008), a Draper Hills Fellow at Stanford (2009), and a John Smith Fellow in the UK (2013)*

WE HAVE EXPERIENCE THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO UKRAINE

*Interview with H.E. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Latvia to Ukraine
Juris Poikāns*

What Is, In Your Opinion, The Main Indicator Of The Level And Success In Bilateral Relations?

Latvia and Ukraine are traditional partners and friends in various fields. We do not have any open difficult issues or historical disagreements. This makes our relationship free of any prejudice and allows us to constantly build additional bridges of common understanding. It is equally important that both our countries are sparing no efforts in searching for new ways of enlarging and deepening our ties. How to measure the level and success in bilateral relations? There is no clear methodology but I would measure them by whether we have succeeded in making our traditional ties even deeper and stronger. In the field of political co-operation, it should be noted that the President of Latvia R.Vējonis paid one of his first foreign trips to Ukraine in October 2015. The then Prime Minister of Ukraine A.Yatsenuk visited Riga in November 2015. During this visit the prime ministers of two states unveiled a monument to the famous Ukrainian writer T.Shevchenko. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia E.Rinkevičs took part in the annual Kyiv Security Forum in April 2016. These facts show the deep level of engagement on a political level. In the international arena, Latvia has constantly expressed its unequivocal support for the restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine by condemning the illegal annexation of the Crimea. In addition, the Government of Latvia supports the efforts of the Ukrainian Government in



We are traditional supporters of Ukraine's European integration efforts, and view this choice of Ukraine as its natural choice supported by the society

finding a peaceful settlement for the conflict in the East of Ukraine. We are traditional supporters of Ukraine's European integration efforts, and view this choice of Ukraine as its natural choice supported by the society. We want to see the introduction of a visa free regime for short time travels to the Schengen zone as soon as possible.

In the field of **economic ties**, a gradual increase in our mutual trade in 2016 sends a strong signal regarding the recovery of the economic situation in Ukraine. Our brands such as "Olainfarm", "Grindex", "Dzintars", "Latvijas balzāms" are well known beyond Latvian borders and have earned the reputation of quality among Ukrainian customers. The largest enterprise of the Baltic States in the field of telecommunications "Lattelcom" is developing a strategy on connecting our countries closer together. Moreover, we should not forget that the national carrier "Air Baltic" has been offering flight services between the two capitals for more than twenty years.

In addition, this year we have witnessed the development of co-operation in other fields as well. The minister of agriculture of

Latvia has just attended the exhibition Agro 2016 in the framework of which he met his Ukrainian counterpart. The ministers of transportation met in the margins of the Conference in Leipzig. Exchanges in the realms of culture and education were also visible. For example, a modern art exhibition of the Nordic – Baltic countries was high on Kyiv’s cultural agenda for two months from March to May.

In Which Spheres Is Cooperation between Ukraine and Latvia the Most Meaningful?

We have no impediments for developing our relations. Obviously, political ties are and will remain important. We are expecting a visit of the President of Ukraine to Latvia in 2017. The tradition of meetings between three Baltic prime ministers and Ukraine will be continued. Economic ties due to traditional contacts will be high on the agenda as well. Agriculture including forestry and fishing resources caught the attention of the governments. In the field of transportation, the development of the corridor between North and South, the Baltic and the Black Seas, provides an opportunity for new transport arteries. Two latest educational exhibitions in Kyiv attracted the interests of various Latvian universities. Ukrainian students are currently making one of the biggest groups of foreign students in Latvia. Our contacts in the military field are strong and solid. Exchanges of experience between the militaries of two states take place on a regular basis. Culture remains a uniting bridge between the two nations through participation in different cultural festivals, concerts and exhibitions. It should also be stressed that our physicians have helped participants of ATO to recover in our hospitals and receive **medical** assistance.

How Much Do Latvian Membership In The EU And Ukrainian European Aspirations Influence Their Bilateral Relations?

It makes our co-operation and mutual understanding even closer. We have experience that has been accumulated during the accession process to the EU, which might be of interest to Ukraine. By signing the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, Ukraine will need to undertake huge efforts in reforming its legislation and implementing it. Latvia can be there to support. We have so far implemented different projects in the field of agriculture, decentralization and the fight against corruption. A special expert from the Ministry of Agriculture is working currently in Kyiv to advise the Minister on the projects of mutual interest.

Not being a member of the EU, Ukraine, however, is a part of the larger European process. Thus issues such as migration crisis or the British vote on the EU are equally important for both states, which make it essential to look for possible solutions.

What Are The Main Challenges In The Embassy Work?

When you have an active and busy agenda in such type of relations, which exist between Latvia and Ukraine, you usually face two problems – capacities and time. Latvia’s diplomatic missions are usually relatively small and that demands additional efforts in meeting all set targets. During summer season, for example, we witness a steep increase in visa applications, which puts additional pressure on our consular section. You will always want to achieve more but it is important to define realistic aims and goals.

When Countries Traditionally Have Very Close And Warm Relations - Is It A Challenge Or A Benefit For The Ambassador?

It is more of a benefit. When you have a positive agenda, it allows you to work in a positive direction as well. However, any previous Ambassador usually sets high standards, which you want to achieve and even surpass. That makes your work a bit harder and challenging but you always know that there is a reward in feeling that you have been able to build another stone in the traditionally friendly ties between Latvia and Ukraine.

Juris Poikāns is a career diplomat, who started his career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia in 1996. He has previously served as Head of Division of Baltic and Nordic countries, Deputy Director of First Bilateral Relations Department, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Republic of Latvia to the Republic of Belarus, Counsellor, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Latvia to the Republic of Slovenia, Bosnia – Herzegovina and Kosovo, and Ambassador for the Eastern Partnership at the MFA of Latvia. He has additional education at Oxford University Foreign Service Programme, Foreign Service Academy, Islamabad, Pakistan, diplomatic course, and George C.Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, Garmisch – Partenkirchen, Germany.

“UKRAINIAN PRISM: FOREIGN POLICY 2015”: OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF UKRAINE’S FOREIGN POLICY¹

The idea to present a systemic quantitative analysis of Ukraine’s foreign policy stemmed from the sense of renewal, spurred by the Revolution of Dignity achievements. The revolutionary call for deep reforms in every sphere of public

◀◀ ***The politicians finally reached consensus on Ukraine’s external orientation, engraving the absence of alternative to the European and Euroatlantic integration as the main foreign policy guideline***

policy seeking to lay the foundations for new Ukraine, built on the democratic principles of governance, concerned the country’s foreign affairs as well. The politicians finally reached consensus on Ukraine’s external orientation, engraving the absence of alternative to the European and Euroatlantic integration as the main foreign policy guideline. Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has reintroduced the parliamentary-presidential form of government in the Constitution of Ukraine; hence the balance of powers between the state bodies shifted towards the parliament, which demands reconsideration, as foreign policy becomes the matter not only for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Administration of the President, but also for Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and other institutions. Finally, the civil society and

especially foreign policy NGOs have clearly voiced out their will to be active members of agenda setting in Ukraine.

In the view of all this, the authors of the “Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2015” (Scorecards) report firmly believe that a systemic assessment and analysis of the present state of art with regular follow-ups is a requirement to launch a new Ukrainian foreign policy in a renewed state. To this end, the first issue of the annual analytical paper “Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2015” came up. It was created by the team of the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” with participation of independent experts and in partnership with the Regional Representation of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Ukraine. Scorecards conceptualized and quantified the progress in the implementation of the foreign policy of Ukraine in 2015 according to five indicators, identified success and failure stories, issues that need more attention, corrections or even radical change of approaches. Some recommendations for policy makers were prepared. Henceforward, such an annual ranking of foreign policy of Ukraine directions will provide experts and practitioners with a relevant, dynamic, and general picture of foreign policy achievements.

Methodology

In the course of searching for inspiration and its own methodology development,

¹ Brief prepared by Nadiia Koval based on the “Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2015”. 2016. Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”. Accessed at <http://prismua.org/en/scorecards/>

the working group of “Ukrainian Prism” carefully studied the experience of foreign analytical centres in the field of foreign policy assessment. At the end of the day, the priority was given to the projects of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)² and the Czech Association for International Affairs (Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky, AMO)³. However, as a result of methodological consultations, Ukrainian Prism elaborated its own methodology adjusting it to Ukrainian realities.

The research methodology of Ukraine’s foreign policy takes into account actual foreign policy situation, advantages and disadvantages of the constitutional division of powers, established political and institutional practices in the field of international relations, documents of strategic and operational nature in the sphere of foreign policy and security, expert and academic knowledge on optimal models of foreign service, as well as priorities reflected in the relevant mass media materials. Although, methodologically the timeframe is the year 2015, taking into account that it is a “zero year” and a starting point to build a dynamic foreign policy, documents that were adopted in 2014 (official policy statements, manifestos, policy documents, strategic documents, etc.) were also taken into account.

Thus, five indicators to assess Ukrainian foreign policy include:

1. **Political interest or involvement**—the indicator that assesses overall engagement of the whole Ukrainian political class into a given direction of the foreign policy, its place on the list of priorities and its presence in the public and political discourse.

2. **Institutional cooperation** measures effectiveness of cooperation and coordination between Ukrainian state institutions that should carry out foreign policy tasks and their influence on foreign policy.

3. **Strategic vision** measures the strategic or long-term vision of the Ukrainian foreign policy priorities in a particular direction.

4. **Activities** describe the pace and strengths of specific action steps regarding a particular direction during the year.

5. **Results** and achievements are being assessed as well.

Each of five key indicators is assessed using a five-point system, where 1 point is the minimum score and 5 points is the highest possible score. Each point in the assessment of a relevant direction by a specific indicator is linked to the presence or absence of a certain condition and a database was set for each indicator. The score for a country or direction is calculated by means of indicators in a range from A (the highest possible score) to E (the lowest one).

Thematically, “Ukrainian Prism” analysts have chosen 31 directions of Ukraine’s foreign policy. The choice of directions was guided by the key Ukrainian foreign policy directions as presented at the Analytical report to the “State of the Union” address of the President to the Parliament in 2015 and include:

- relations with the key partners (the USA, Canada, China, Poland, Romania, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Turkey);

² The European Foreign Policy Scorecard. 2016. European Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed at <http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard>

³ Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy. 2016. Czech Association for International Affairs. Accessed at <http://www.amo.cz/en/agenda-for-czech-foreign-policy/>

- European integration (the EU, Eastern Partnership, Visegrad Four, the Baltic States, the European Energy Community);
- the Russian Federation;
- Regional cooperation (the Black Sea Region, Asia-Pacific Region, Middle East, the CIS, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa);
- International organizations (the UN, Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO);
- Multilateral initiatives (international security, non-proliferation, climate change, human rights);
- Economic diplomacy;
- Public diplomacy.

Thus, What about Results?

Indicator-wise, the **engagement and political interest** of most domestic policy actors in foreign policy issues was defined by the armed conflict in the East and the need to contain the Russian aggression. The discourse was largely informed by the approval of the European integration and the Euro-Atlantic security initiatives as key priorities of the Ukrainian foreign policy. In the context of credit and reform obligations, the connection between internal and external policy increased substantially and economic diplomacy came to the fore. There was an especially active political interest of key players to Ukraine's relations with the European Union, Poland, France, Germany, Canada, the United States, the Council of Europe, NATO, and OSCE. At the same time, the engagement into regional cooperation, especially in Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, was minimal. Furthermore, despite the activity of particular members of parliament and their associations (e.g. "Eurooptimists")

in the key areas of foreign policy, the interest of political parties to developing a full-featured block of political or election programs and formulating a detailed part on foreign policy of the Coalition Agreement was very low. The average level of political interest/engagement in the foreign policy issues was graded with "C+".

 ***Strong links between domestic and foreign policy agenda contributed to a significantly increased level of cooperation between the MFA, the Administration of the President and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine***

The traditional division of competence in the foreign policy defined **institutional cooperation** in 2015. However, in the war-situation, the role of the National Security and Defence Council increased. Specific forms of inter-institutional cooperation were established in the strategic areas, particularly in the context of creating the implementation mechanism for the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement and the Association Agenda, which were updated in 2015. Some forms of interdepartmental institutional cooperation were stipulated by the Program of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2015, activity plans of relevant ministries to implement the government program, the Coalition Agreement and the Strategy for Sustainable Development "Ukraine 2020" and some MFA regulatory documents on coordination of central executive authorities.

Strong links between domestic and foreign policy agenda contributed to a significantly increased level of cooperation between the MFA, the Administration of the President and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in the institutional context of the National Reform Council, the establishment of working groups on reforms, the institutionalization

of economic and public diplomacy (e.g. the Department of Public Diplomacy in the MFA), and the information policy (project of the State target program on promoting Ukraine's interests abroad and branding of the country in 2016-2018).

The active position of some MPs who acted as heads of the Verhovna Rada committees and participated in the parliamentary delegations to the parliamentary assemblies of the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and NATO in coordination of activities with the executive foreign policy structures, especially with the MFA, brought positive results in promoting Ukrainian interests and consolidated positive cooperation practices in relations with certain states: in 2015, inter-parliamentary groups were established not only with the EU countries (Germany, Poland, France, etc.), but also in other regions (Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Chile). The relevant committee of the Verkhovna Rada and delegations to the international organizations (permanent delegation to the Council of Europe, NATO PA, etc.) worked actively.

At the same time, there were also conflicts and competition, which led to ineffective implementation of certain directions of foreign policy. An important shortcoming problem in this context presented considerable delays in the appointment of ambassadors to many countries and international organizations. The average level of institutional cooperation was graded at "B-".

As to the **strategic vision**, in 2014-2015 Ukraine updated a number of strategic documents in the areas of foreign policy, security, and defence. In 2014, changes were introduced to the Law of Ukraine "On the Foundations of Internal and Foreign Policy" and in 2015, a new National Security Strategy of Ukraine and Military Doctrine of Ukraine were adopted. These documents radically changed the perception of Russia

from a strategic partner to an aggressor state, recognized a long-term character of the Russian threat and the need for Ukraine to move towards NATO and EU membership as the basis for national security.

For certain directions, bilateral documents of medium- and short-term nature were adopted (Declaration of Heads of the State of Ukraine and France, the Action Plan for Ukraine for 2015-2017 in Council of Europe, etc.). The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was implemented according to the Action Plan on the Association Agreement Implementation for 2014-2017. The Strategy on Sustainable Development "Ukraine - 2020" and the corresponding action plan of the Cabinet of Ministers on its implementation in 2015 also paid attention to certain directions and instruments of foreign policy.

However, most geographic and thematic directions of Ukraine's foreign policy are not legislated in such documents, thus they have no long-term strategy. At the national level, there was no comprehensive vision of the foreign policy priorities for the medium term perspective in a form of a systematic document, which could be the basis for developing most geographic and thematic directions of Ukraine's foreign policy. Such situation harms Ukraine's cooperation with the key countries, weakens regional cooperation and implementation of multilateral initiatives.

Despite being prioritized in the Strategy for Sustainable Development "Ukraine - 2020", the diplomatic reform was also not legislated in a single systematic document that would define the direction and task of the reform. Thus, the average level of strategic vision was graded "C+".

Activities during 2015 were quite intense. The main directions of the foreign policy predictably focused on resolving the conflict with Russia (the Normandy format

and the Minsk process, cooperation with the OSCE, the UN, bilateral relations with the United States, Germany, and France). The positive dynamics of political dialogue at the highest level, along with the presence of joint economic and energy projects, and participation in joint multilateral initiatives allowed recording significant foreign policy activity of Ukraine in relations with the UK, Canada, Poland, and the Baltic States. Cooperation with NATO became much more active and the visit of the President to Israel was an important milestone in bilateral relations.

Strengthening of economic initiatives (meetings of intergovernmental commissions on economic and scientific-technical cooperation, business forums, investment forums and economic conferences) is worth noting as well. The measures on information policy and public diplomacy were actively introduced, and the MFA presence in social networks increased.

However, in 2015 Ukraine's participation in the regional security initiatives (e.g. "5+2" talks on Transnistria), its participation in peacekeeping operations, anti-piracy, and tasks within BLACKSEAFOR weakened. Cooperation with the OSCE is actually limited to the Ukrainian issues only and is passive in other directions. The relations within the CIS were frozen and are gradually transforming into bilateral relations with certain countries. Relations with China, India and Pakistan slowed down and the policy on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and climate change was weak and unconvincing. The average level of activities was graded "B -".

As for the **results** of 2015 Ukrainian foreign policy, the greatest success was achieved in the European direction, where Ukraine managed, despite Russian pressure, to ensure the ratification of the EU Association Agreement and the provisional entry

into force of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area since January 2016. Moreover, in late 2015 the European Commission issued a positive final 6th report on the implementation of the Action Plan on visa liberalization, which gave Ukraine a perspective of obtaining a visa-free regime with the EU in 2016. At the key partners' level, Ukraine had a successful year in relations with Canada, Poland and the Baltic states. A significant amount of humanitarian, technical and macro-financial assistance was obtained (EU, Germany, Japan, etc.). The election of Ukraine as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in October 2015 became a success in the context of cooperation with international organizations; and cooperation with the Visegrad countries had a significant impact on reducing Ukraine's dependence on Russian gas due to reverse from Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

However, despite the fact that the existing European sanctions on Russia were preserved, they were not stiffened. In the security policy, there was also a failure to obtain the status of a special US ally outside NATO, ensuring allies' agreement in principle to supply lethal weapons and peacekeepers of the UN or the EU to Donbas, forcing Russia to fulfil its part of the Minsk agreements, achieving significant progress on the occupied Crimea issue and getting clearer commitment of the European partners on the future prospects of the European integration of Ukraine. The trends of Western allies' dissatisfaction with the course of Ukrainian internal reforms intensified.

In terms of economic diplomacy, we would like to mention the agreement on signing the FTA with Israel in the first half of 2016, initialling of the FTA with Canada and the intensification of the talks on this issue with Turkey. However, despite the

course to foreign policy economization and significant efforts in terms of investment and business forums, the objective economic situation showed further decline in foreign trade, foreign investment and so on. At the same time, it was managed to avoid default by restructuring the external debt. The average level of foreign policy effectiveness can be graded “B-”.

The overall arithmetic measures the value of success of Ukraine’s 2015 foreign policy at 3.6 points that corresponds to the rating “B-”.

Recommendations

The main recommendation of the experts is the need to elaborate a single document—“Priorities of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine towards 2020”, with the help of expert community. Nowadays Ukraine does not have a united strategic document that would determine the key directions of foreign policy in the medium-term perspective, its aim, mission and resources



The main recommendation of the experts is the need to elaborate a single document—“Priorities of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine towards 2020”, with the help of expert community

necessary to the implementation of Ukrainian interests on the international arena. With the aim of the systematic vision of the abovementioned medium-term strategic document, its development has to include public consultations for the project discussion, for example, in specialized academic institutions, during events with the participation of experts from the state and non-governmental analytical centres both in Ukraine and abroad.

With the aim of having better results and a more efficient foreign policy activity, especially concerning building a political dialogue with its key partners and international organizations, the central bodies of the executive power need to focus on reform implementation, which is envisaged by the series of bilateral documents between Ukraine and the EU, the USA, IMF and Energy Community.

Ukraine has to demonstrate more leadership ambitions within the region of the Eastern Partnership, to be precise, regarding forming a joint agenda for Eastern Partnership countries, which signed the EU Association Agreements (Georgia, Moldova) and creating a common economic space in the medium-term perspective. Ukraine should support the initiatives regarding the search for the formats of regional development and cooperation, which are proposed by the neighbouring countries. This can be said regarding wider cooperation within the frames of the Visegrad Group as well as regarding new projects with a wider regional perspective. In this context, it would be appropriate to develop regional strategies (Asia Pacific, Middle East, Africa, CIS, Eastern Partnership region, Black Sea region, and Latin America) that would provide for a complex vision of Ukrainian interests in the regions and mechanisms of their implementation.

Even though, to a greater extent, the situation in the sphere of economic development and trade in Ukraine depends on inner political changes in the country and the success of reforming the economy, from the point of view of economic diplomacy, 2016 needs to see a better concentration of efforts in order to promote the interests of Ukrainian producers of the determined prioritized spheres on world markets. The implementation of the policy supporting exporters has to be done by adopting a

National export strategy and creating an export-credit agency.

Expert diplomacy is a key feature of countries interested in the development of a wide spectrum of instruments promoting their interests abroad. The existence of affiliated analytical centres or expert-discussion formats, which work with the representatives of expert community of other countries can become a solid instrument for better understanding the

situation in our country. 2016 can see an attempt of conceptualizing the vision of which institutional form of expert diplomacy can be used in building the system of foreign relations.

The new social and political reality can be considered as a reference point in establishing a democratic system of foreign relations and diplomatic service, oriented toward national interests.

THE 2016 U.S. ELECTIONS AND THE CRISIS OVER UKRAINE

Dr. Volodymyr Dubovyk

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2016 is the U.S. presidential elections year. In the meantime, Ukraine is still going through its tests of war effort, reforms and fight against corruption. The U.S. assistance to Ukraine is critical; Washington recognizes Russian aggression against Ukraine as a major challenge to the established international order. However, it does not mean that the crisis over Ukraine is looming large on the agenda of the elections. The foreign policy, as usual, is taking a backseat when it comes to the domestic concerns in the election debates. Neither the crisis over Ukraine, nor even the unravelling situation in the broader Middle East (including the Syrian crisis) are rated high in the list of priorities this election year. As for suggestions as to what the U.S. role with regard to the crisis over Ukraine should be, the responses vary from staying out of it and reconciling with V. Putin to taking a tougher stance on Moscow. The nominee from the Republican Party D. Trump sticks to the distancing, isolationist tune. The Democratic Party nominee H. Clinton advocates a more forceful approach and tough line dealing with Russia. However, while it is hard to predict what policies D. Trump will pursue if elected, with H. Clinton, as a new president, there is a high probability of her following the policies of the current administration.

The year 2016 is an election year in the United States. Every elections seem to be a watershed event in the American politicum, a defining moment. However, this time it might become a really decisive moment, perhaps, both for the American domestic

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and foreign policies. Ukraine, in the meantime, has been living in extraordinary and very much strained times ever since the late 2013, when the so-called Euromaidan

protests took place. The acute political crisis, then complemented by an external aggression against Ukraine by the Russian federation created a full-fledged “crisis over Ukraine” with many international actors taking their roles in it. All of this was coupled by the dire situation in the Ukrainian economy, which was hit hard by endemic corruption and consequences of the de-facto annexation of the Crimea and some segments of the Donbas region, as well as by the price of war in the east of the country. As Ukraine is struggling through these manifold tests, it has also embarked on a journey towards ambitious reforms. In all of this – war, fight against corruption and the introduction of reforms – the United States is seen as a vital partner. Even now, when the U.S. often appears as a reluctant

superpower, unwilling global power, there is much it could do to assist Ukraine. The election year is a logical point to assess what place the crisis over Ukraine has in the context of American political life.

In this piece we will look at the following: the role of the foreign policy in the 2016 US elections, the role of the crisis over Ukraine in 2016 elections, including the positions of the candidates on the crisis over Ukraine and, finally, what we can expect from a potential president with regards to the U.S. policy towards Ukraine and the crisis over it.

It often comes as a surprise to an uninformed onlooker that foreign policy rarely makes it big in the U.S. presidential elections. Given the amount of power and influence that the U.S. wields in the world, and considering how much people outside of the U.S. wonder about its international policies, one would expect that this domain take a dominant place in the election years. But it does not. Being the citizens of a superpower, potential voters are primarily focused on issues of social, economic, and domestic nature. Jobs, taxes, immigration matter more than foreign entanglements. This year is no exception. In fact, the last time when foreign policy issues mattered rather significantly was back in J. Carter – R. Reagan contest in 1980. Considering that since 1980 we witnessed the upheaval and then demise of the “cold war”, the emergence of the bipolar world with an outsize American role in it, the events of 9/11, a bunch of pretty long U.S. military engagements abroad, the fact that foreign policy still failed to register among the pivotal issues in the number of presidential election campaigns is rather amazing, but that is how it was.

Most of the people in Ukraine also live in a very much Ukraine-centric world if you look at interests, concerns, attitudes, fears, and expectations. Given the extraordinary

challenge that the country is facing these days it was expected that the rest of the world should be attuned to the Ukrainian troubles on a 24/7 basis and be glued to know what happens in this country and around it. This is far, as bitter as it comes across, from how things really stand. People around the globe, people in the U.S. (and by people we mean broad public, political elites, media, etc.) do not see events in and around Ukraine through the same prism, the same magnifying glass as we do here in Ukraine. When we often iterate that someone ought to do something to help Ukraine, refer to certain (what appears to us) obligations and commitments (Refrain from the threat or use of force against Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, Refrain from the use of nuclear arms against Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine) – say, to the Budapest memorandum of 1994 – on the part of particular actors, including the U.S., this is often not how they see it.

The primaries campaign of 2016 had its share of moments when foreign policy related issues were brought up. However, it did not happen too often, and when it did, there was no exclusive focusing on the crisis over Ukraine. Other issues factored in, including, but not limited, to the situation in the broader Middle East, specifically in Syria, unravelling of post-Qaddafi Libya, Iran nuclear deal, Israel/Palestine knot, Afghanistan, the end of the Cuban isolation, a growing assertiveness of China in the Asia-Pacific area and globally, the rise of the Islamic fundamentalism throughout a number of regions. The situation in and around Ukraine was frequently mentioned but only among other foreign policy priorities and concerns for the United States, and not necessarily as its top priority. The crisis over Ukraine is most typically listed among many various upheavals in today’s world with which the United States would have to deal in one or another manner. This manner might vary from the principled, protracted and close

engagement (H. Clinton calls for US military support for Ukraine¹) to distancing from the problem, ignoring it and/or solving it by some sort of a magic stick (D. Trump has no Ukraine policy yet ²).

Another thing that one can notice is that there were very few significant statements (not to mention full speeches) on the foreign policy as such. In most cases only fragments of candidates' remarks would touch upon foreign policy and, quite frequently, only when prompted by a particular question from the audience. Certainly, there were segments in election debates within both parties that were dedicated to the foreign policy, but here is the point: the candidates had to address this field exactly because that was a required theme. It is quite striking, in our view, that even the most experienced and qualified candidate in the realm of foreign policy, Hillary Rodham Clinton did not feel a need to have a major coherent speech on the subject until June 2nd, 2016³.

The Republican Party position

The Republican Party has had a long and highly calamitous election season. It initially registered a huge number of contenders, many of whom were in the position of a front-runner at some point. The attempt to make GOP a party of a "big tent" (to include various views and platforms) and modernize the party failed utterly. The certain faction is running with a ball, and the one that is hated by the establishment of the party, which, however, found no leverage to prevent that faction from triumphing and, therefore, ultimately

chose to embrace it. From the outset of the campaign, moderate republicans appeared out of fashion and did not stand much of a chance. The previous elections of 2008 and 2012 were naturally seen by Republicans as unsuccessful ones, specifically due to the reason of failing to present a candidate who could be an appealing and unifying force. By that account, obviously now (even if Republicans come to ultimately win the presidency), the party will find itself in a state of unprecedented division. Whether this will come to affect the foreign policy if a Republican candidate is to take the White House is an open question.

As it comes to the positions of the Republican candidates, there was a noticeable divergence of their views on the crisis over Ukraine and the required course of action for the U.S. with regard to that crisis. There was a visible strain of one traditional Republican view, which had its suspicions of Russia and its intentions all along and which saw the Ukrainian case, also, through the prism of the values of the American international policy, that should, in their minds, include a strong, forceful policy of "democracy promotion". The Russian onslaught on Ukraine through such a prism appeared not only as a certain geopolitical or regional security challenge but also as a civilizational one. The United States in such a view emerged not only as an ultimate legitimate guardian and protector of the world order under Russian attack, but also as a leading "force of good" that should preside in a fight with "evil".

There were several Republican contenders for the nomination who subscribed to the

¹ Hillary Clinton calls for US military support for Ukraine. UA Today. 22.01.2015. Accessed at: <http://uatoday.tv/politics/hilary-clinton-suggests-us-military-support-for-ukraine-404369.html>

² Donald Trump foreign policy adviser: Trump has no Ukraine policy yet / Deutsche Welle. 25.05.2016. Accessed at: <http://www.dw.com/en/donald-trump-foreign-policy-adviser-trump-has-no-ukraine-policy-yet/a-19280416>

³ Read Hillary Clinton's Speech on Donald Trump and National Security / Time. 02.06.2016. Accessed at: <http://time.com/4355797/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-foreign-policy-speech-transcript/>

above-mentioned view. Among them, the most notable were the governor of Ohio John Kasich, former CEO of “Hewlett Packard” Carly Fiorina, a senator from Texas Ted Cruz and a senator from Florida Marco Rubio. They had some differences regarding the details but all shared the view that the Russian President V. Putin’s aggressive policies was something that constitutes a major blow against the established world order and international law, puts America’s allies and partners, its interests in the region in a position of harm, and deserves a strong, forceful American response⁴. Over a period of time senator M. Rubio emerged as, perhaps, the most audible voice in this grouping.

This line of thought is nothing new, of course, and is present not just in the ranks of the Republican Party. However, Republicans were most active in peddling this view. This opinion is, also, often associated with the neoconservative program on foreign policy. At the same time, it should be mentioned, that the neocons are frequently mischaracterized and actually do not have a single party homeland. We can also recall those “neocons” in the G. W. Bush administration (R. Cheney, D. Rumsfeld, P. Wolfowitz), and they cooperated quite fine for a lengthy time with V. Putin, when it served their interests, even despite a growing evidence of an authoritarian drive in Moscow.

One other thing that, perhaps, needs mentioning, was an apparent lack of ideas on what else could be done (in addition to the steps taken by the B. Obama administration) to better control V. Putin and help Ukraine. Aside from a call to arm Ukraine with lethal weapons (which was shared by many in Democratic camp, as there was little on offer⁵. It became a sort

of an exercise in rhetoric, a competition as to whose criticism of V. Putin’s behaviour would be the loudest one. Also, perhaps, this endeavour was instrumental in building up credentials in the foreign policy background which could be of use in the future political battles (definitely true in case of M. Rubio).

A specific stand was taken by a senator from Kentucky Rand Paul, who, to his credit, stayed true to his long-expressed libertarian convictions. A libertarian view on both domestic and international matters has always had a strong presence in American discourse. It cuts across both political parties and appeals most definitely to a lot of independents. In foreign policy, it manifests itself as a sort of soft isolationism. In other words, it does not call for a total withdrawal of the United States from the international arena (people like R. Paul surely realize that this would be nonsense) but, instead, calls to lower a number and depth of American foreign entanglements. This certainly includes the US foreign military deployments, the take that would be currently very popular among many Americans on any side of the isle.

Rand Paul’s father, Ron Paul was one of the libertarian flag-bearers for quite a time. He, once a member of the House of Representatives, and, also, one of the presidential hopefuls, brought the libertarian position to its extreme. He was known, among other things, as an utmost sceptic when it comes to any sort of the U.S. involvement with Ukraine. Back in times of the “first” Maidan (2004), a so-called “Orange Revolution”, he claimed that the U.S. was behind it and launched investigations into how much funds had been invested

⁴ Franklin D. Kramer: A Real Response to Russia / US News. 24.03.2014. Accessed at: <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2014/03/24/how-the-us-and-nato-should-respond-to-russias-crimea-invasion>

⁵ FACT SHEET: U.S. Assistance to Ukraine / White House. 07.12.2015. Accessed at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/07/fact-sheet-us-assistance-ukraine>

in carrying out this revolution⁶. Naturally, he was identified as a useful person by Moscow. These days Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity has become a major outlet of the pro-Putin propaganda in the United States. His son Rand is much more careful and restrained in his statements. He has been an overall critic of V. Putin's moves against Ukraine, but, at the same time, questioned how closely involved the U.S. should be in helping Ukraine and on whether the Russian actions are really damaging American interests.

Much of the above-mentioned approach has been incorporated by another candidate—Donald Trump, whose campaign has become, among other things, an operation that is heavily influenced by libertarian views. He has never outlined any sort of a coherent stand on neither domestic nor foreign policy. This remains true paradoxically even now when he has emerged as an apparent nominee of the Republican Party. His campaign has been of a limitless populism and demagoguery, constant effort in avoiding real questions and not providing real answers. D. Trump, as his election motto states, aspires to make “America great again”. This does not include, though, any sort of active role for the U.S. at the international arena. He, perhaps, believes in American exceptionalism, but is fine with keeping it for America only (and in fact destroying many things that truly make America great). He postulates that America should not have a fix for any existing problem in the world.

When it comes to the crisis over Ukraine there could be a multiple choice of how you see it from the U.S.: as a direct threat to the U.S. interests, as an indirect threat to the U.S. interests and as a non-threat. D. Trump fluctuates between options two and three. Moreover, when it comes to what Washington should do about it, his response would most often be – nothing, not our problem⁷. He repeats that Ukraine is in Europe and, therefore, Europeans should deal with this issue by themselves⁸.

◀◀ ***When it comes to the crisis over Ukraine there could be a multiple choice of how you see it from the U.S.: as a direct threat to the U.S. interests, as an indirect threat to the U.S. interests and as a non-threat. D. Trump fluctuates between options two and three***

All this is in the face of reality where Europeans show inadequate capacity and willingness to deal with it. The major mechanism to provide collective security of American allies in Europe – NATO – has also come under D. Trump's attacks. He says that NATO is obsolete and useless, and costs Americans too much⁹. Finally, when it comes to his view on V. Putin, D. Trump stops short of admiring the strong Russian leader and promises that he would be able to get along with him just fine¹⁰. Here, like with any other question, he does not provide any explanation of what does he

⁶ Ingmar Bredies, Andreas Umland, Valentin Yakushik. Aspects of the orange revolution. The content and Dynamics of the Ukrainian Presidential Elections, 2007 p. 222

⁷ Donald Trump: Ukraine Crisis Is Problem of Europe, Not US / Sputnik, 17.08.2015. Accessed at: <http://sputnik-knews.com/us/20150817/1025818360.html>

⁸ Trump says Germany should deal with Russian invasion of Ukraine / UA Today. 15.08.2015. Accessed at: <http://uatoday.tv/politics/trump-says-germany-should-deal-with-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-475633.html>

⁹ Trump: NATO Is Obsolete and Expensive, “Doesn't Have The Right Countries In It For Terrorism” / RealClearPolitics.com. 27.03.2016. Accessed at: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2016/03/27/trump_europe_is_not_safe_lots_of_the_free_world_has_become_weak.html

¹⁰ Damian Paletta. Donald Trump Goes His Own Way With Vladimir Putin / Wall Street Journal. 13.05.2016. Accessed at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trump-goes-his-own-way-with-vladimir-putin-1463172396>

mean by “getting along fine” and at what expenses, and what might be a formula to get to this outcome.

There is no way to predict what D. Trump will do if elected president. This is the scariest thing about him, in fact. He has been constantly flip-flopping, changing his positions on the fly, often within just one short interview. He is “*tabula rasa*”, specifically when it comes to foreign policy. Normally, there is a solid amount of continuity between successive administrations. For example, despite the expectations of “Obama revolution” in the foreign policy back in 2008, nothing of the sort took place. With D. Trump, there is no way of knowing. One might have placed some hopes on him assembling a respectable team, the one that would offset his lack of knowledge and ill temperament, but so far, he is being avoided by each and every seasoned or experienced figure of weight within his own party. Things might change eventually with a Republican establishment very reluctantly and slowly embracing D. Trump as their candidate.

Democratic Party

As for the Democrats, their formal position is actually presented by Barack Obama as a sitting president and a leader of the party. He speaks in the name of all Democrats and any other members of the party are not going to undermine his position unless something really extraordinary happens. However, apparently, B. Obama is a lame duck already not standing on the ballot this year. This means, as we continue to monitor statements and moves of the current administration, that all eyes in terms of the prospects are on the Democratic presidential hopefuls.

A former first lady, a senator from the state of New York, the Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and a senator from Vermont Bernard Sanders quickly established themselves as the only real candidates for the nomination within their party. Originally, it looked like H. Clinton would have the nomination “signed, sealed and delivered” for her, but then the “ghosts” of 2008 re-emerged in this year’s campaign. Back then, of course, her nomination was torpedoed by the current president B. Obama. This time, even though B. Sanders appeared as a formidable contender, it became clear, in a due time, that H. Clinton is going to weather the storm and steer herself to an eventual nomination. As for B. Sanders, the foreign policy domain does not register among his strong feats and his very few crossovers into this sphere only proved this. Now that H. Clinton emerged as the nominee from her party all eyes are naturally directed at her.

There is no shortage of public statements by H. Clinton on the subject of the crisis over Ukraine. There is no ambiguity about her view: she is a consistent critic of V. Putin’s actions vis-à-vis Ukraine and a proponent of strong American support for Ukraine¹¹. The political arena anywhere could sometimes be a place for opportunism, situational stands and flip-flopping, of course. U.S. is no exception. However, there is no reason to believe that H. Clinton’s public stand on the crisis over Ukraine is any different from her actual inclinations or internal views of her campaign. In other words, there is no ground to question her sincerity.

Now, much was made of the “reset” policies that B. Obama administration entertained towards Russia in its first term. H. Clinton, of course, was a public

¹¹ Ben Schreckinger. Clinton urges more financial, military aid to Ukraine / Politico. 21.01.2015. Accessed at: <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/01/hillary-clinton-ukraine-aid-military-financial-114462>

face of “reset” as then the Secretary of State. The architects of “reset” are now often blamed (with a reason, in our view) for misreading Moscow, sending wrong signals to the Russian counterparts, displaying some degree of weakness¹². However, as far as it can be discerned, H. Clinton was never among those architects and, most probably, simply felt that she needs to implement this idea since it was



When it comes to the crisis over Ukraine there could be a multiple choice of how you see it from the U.S.: as a direct threat to the U.S. interests, as an indirect threat to the U.S. interests and as a non-threat. D. Trump fluctuates between options two and three

decided so by the president and his inner circle. This being, in fact, one of the first meaningful tests of her loyalty. The foreign policy of this administration was never, in fact, driven by the Department of State. There is no credible information, either, about her being critical of “reset” or being reluctant in implementing it either, as this administration is quite non-transparent, and B. Obama is still a sitting president of H. Clinton’s party, so understandably we are not hearing any evidence of her disagreeing with him on the issue.

Even previously to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, “reset” planners had admitted that it did not work. After a short interim period since “reset” was gone, the

negativism came to dominate the U.S.-Russian relations. The administration of B. Obama came up with a series of strong moves to challenge V. Putin’s aggression and support Ukraine. It seems that there is not much difference in how B. Obama and H. Clinton see the crisis over Ukraine. She is more prone to more vocal denunciations of V. Putin, being one of the first politicians of her calibre to compare him to “Hitler”¹³, for instance. (However, then, again, B. Obama is a current president and she is on campaign trail, so hence the difference in rhetoric. Also, B. Obama was always very careful in choosing words for his public statements, so no surprises.)

When it comes to the essence of the policies, H. Clinton does not offer any additional actions to what B. Obama has already put in place. She might appear as more sympathetic to the idea of sending lethal weapons to Ukraine, but there could be no confidence that she would actually do this if elected. She tends to lean towards a more “hawkish” faction of the Democratic Party than the president. At several occasions she was close to appear as critical of B. Obama’s inherent caution, particularly when uttering that “not doing stupid stuff” hardly qualifies as a foreign policy doctrine¹⁴. She has distanced herself from that saying since, willing to show her respect to the sitting president. In any case, that statement had nothing to do with the crisis over Ukraine and was aimed, primarily, at the president’s policy in the wider Middle East.

So, we might predict with a certain confidence that H. Clinton’s policy, if she is

¹² Putin Exploits Obama’s Weak Responses / Hartford Courant. 28.08.2015. Accessed at: <http://www.courant.com/opinion/op-ed/hc-op-wire-krauthammer-putin-exploits-obama-weakness-0828-20150827-story.html>

¹³ Hillary Clinton says Putin’s action are like what Hitler did back in the 30’s / Washington Post. 05.03.2014. Accessed at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/03/05/hillary-clinton-says-putins-action-are-like-what-hitler-did-back-in-the-30s/>

¹⁴ Caitlin Macneal. Clinton Knocks Obama’s ‘Don’t Do Stupid Stuff’ Foreign Policy Approach / Talking Points Memo. 10.08.2014. Accessed at: <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/hillary-clinton-obama-foreign-policy>

elected the next president, will be natural continuation of the current policy of the B. Obama administration. There might be some shifts in details, but no major changes. She might come up with some new initiatives, but not of the scale that would be in position to dramatically alter Moscow's course of action. This, perhaps, runs contrary to some unreasonably high and, in our view, unrealistic expectations in Ukraine about her being ready to employ some radical new methods of challenging V. Putin. Our best hope would be for H. Clinton to sustain the pressure on Russia at its current level, not to substantially elevate that pressure. At the same time, we believe

that she is not going to entertain the easing of that pressure until Russia complies with demands of the international community and alters its aggression on Ukraine.

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UKRAINE AND TURKEY IN A NEW SECURITY ENVIRONMENT: BRINGING CREDIBILITY TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

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Obviously, in the last couple of years the difficulties of making the way through the regional turmoil and facing new challenges brought about a completely new background with the embedded unique opportunities for further deepening of strategic partnership between Ukraine and Turkey. The question is, however, whether the intensification of bilateral cooperation is a temporary phenomenon that will end up in nothing, once the Russian threat ceases to exist, or this is a tendency that will reveal itself even more as the countries explore the momentum of crisis to create a new, solid basis for their future relations.

Introduction

Since the establishment of strategic partnership between Ukraine and Turkey back in 2011, both countries have gone a long way in their efforts to implement an ambitious bilateral agenda declared five years ago. Some of the goals, like introducing the visa free regime and creating a mechanism of the High-Level Strategic Council for regular political consultations between the Heads of the State, have been successfully realised. Others, such as reaching 10 billion dollars of bilateral trade turnover and signing the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) are yet to be achieved.

However, for some reason, until very recently, Turkey has rarely dominated

Ukraine's foreign policy agenda or moved to the top of the headlines in its media outlets, and vice versa. There has also been this traditional and deep-rooted conviction in the expert circles that two countries have failed to overcome limitations in the decision-making processes and to make the best use of the existing opportunities, often referring to these relations as "having high potential but low voltage"¹. Some analytics tended to blame official Kyiv for staying entrapped in the bipolar narrative of its East-or-West foreign policy dilemma, leaving the Southern vector without proper attention². The others pointed out the "Russian constant" in the Turkish-Ukrainian equation that had a significant impact on its results.³

¹ Habibe Özdal. Türkiye-Ukrayna İlişkileri: Yüksek Potansiyel, Düşük Voltaj / USAK, 24 January 2011 // <http://www.usak.org.tr/tr/usak-analizleri/avrupa-birligi/turkiye-ukrayna-iliskileri-yuksek-potansiyel-dusuk-voltaj>

² Марина Воротнок. Украина и Турция – (не)случайное партнерство / Украинская правда, 13 апреля 2016 // <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/articles/2016/04/13/7047681/>

³ Владимир Кравченко. Украина – Турция: союз «ситуативный», а не стратегический / Зеркало недели, 11 марта 2016 г. // http://gazeta.zn.ua/internal/ukraina-turciya-soyuz-situativnyy-a-ne-strategicheskyy_.html

The situation has dramatically changed with the Russian illegal annexation of the Crimea, military aggression in the Eastern Ukraine and, most recently, the incident with a downing of a Russian jet on the Turkish-Syrian border. Only within the first five months of 2016, the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko visited Turkey twice, with other high-level visits including



Ukraine and Turkey have been in close cooperation within the framework of the multilateral international organisations, spending joint efforts for the de-occupation of the Crimea, protecting rights of the Ukrainian citizens, including Crimean Tatars

Turkey's Prime-Minister, Minister of Defence, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Head of the Council of Higher Education and numerous economic and military Turkish delegations visiting Ukraine on different occasions, as well as regular visits of the Ukrainian top officials to Turkey.

Apparently, today's bilateral political dialogue between two countries has reached an unprecedented level. At the same time, Ukraine and Turkey have been in close cooperation within the framework of the multilateral international organisations, spending joint efforts for the de-occupation of the Crimea, protecting rights of the Ukrainian citizens, including Crimean Tatars, in the occupied territories and implementing the cease-fire agreement in Donbas region of Ukraine.

Boosting Economic Cooperation: Turning Challenges into Opportunities

Economy is the best litmus test to determine a real state of affairs in any bilateral relations. While heated discussions and high-level visits can create an illusion of active political

dialogue, the field of economic relations admits only a strict and accurate language of figures. This is especially the case if your partner is Turkey, a country that has made economic pragmatism as a part of its official foreign policy strategy.

A general overview of the Ukrainian-Turkish economic cooperation over the last 8 years brings about a rather dull picture – due to the 2008 global financial crisis and the economic stagnation Ukraine has experienced ever since, the trade turnover between the countries has shown more negative than positive dynamics with a slight sign of recovery in late 2015. This makes the expectations of reaching 20 bln USD of trade by 2020 a way too optimistic, if not an unrealistic goal. However, market conditions are not only about figures, they are also about tendencies. And herein one can see a much more favourable conjuncture.

On one hand, a lot of small and middle-sized Turkish enterprises slowed down their activities or had to leave the Ukrainian market in the last 2 years due to the economic crisis and the loss of considerable parts of territories with well-developed industrial and touristic infrastructure. On the other, small firms have been gradually replaced by big companies and large corporations, which were much better fitted to working in the unstable crisis-prone environment. As a result, the number of Turkish companies involved in doing business in Ukraine has decreased, however, Turkish investments to Ukrainian economy have acquired a more sustainable, well-institutionalized structure. The spheres, in which the Turkish companies are most active in Ukraine now, have also undergone considerable changes. Contrary to the traditional focus on textile industry and retail sales, today they include such strategic sectors as construction, telecommunication, aviation, defence and airspace technologies, IT, engineering, logistics, energy, transportation etc.

The first lot for 3G mobile license in Ukraine was won by a Turkish company “Turkcell”, which is now one of the three biggest mobile operators in the country. This victory of a Turkish company in the state tender has not only resulted in more than 3 billion UAH of Turkish investments to Ukrainian economy, but was referred by Turkcell management as a “sign of deep trust and high importance attached to Ukraine” by Turkish investors.⁴ With a new wave of privatization declared by the Ukrainian President P.Poroshenko in his welcome address to the leading Turkish businessmen during his official visit to Turkey on 9-10 March 2016, Turkish companies have recently been exploring new opportunities provided by the future privatization of seaports, coalmines and other strategically important state enterprises in Ukraine.

At the moment, Ukraine’s biggest stadium, the international terminal of the Boryspil Airport, hundreds of kilometres of highways, a number of high-tech business centres and five-star hotels all over the country have been built by Turkish construction companies. Most recently, a leading Turkish constructor “Onur Insaat” has successfully presented to the Kyiv Mayor V.Klichko the completed restoration works in the city’s central Taras Shevchenko boulevard⁵ while another Turkish company “Limak” has won a tender for building metro in Dnepr city and “Güriş Enerji” has already started construction of the country’s biggest wind power station.

According to some experts’ estimations, Turkish contractors have so far completed projects in Ukraine totalling more than five bln USD while the amount of direct Turkish

investments to the Ukrainian economy has reached two bln USD.⁶

With the Russian aggression against Ukraine and sanctions against Turkey, the ongoing military conflicts in the Middle East, inability to preserve economic ties with the traditional partners like Libya or Syria and losing their major foreign markets in the region, both countries have started searching for the new alternative ways to reinvigorate economy and trade. In this respect, there is much room left for boosting Ukrainian-Turkish cooperation. The economies of both countries are, to a big extent, complementary to each other and create a perfect background for mutually beneficial joint projects. Turkey’s successful structural reforms in economic and financial spheres that have ensured country’s quick economic

 ***The economies of both countries are, to a big extent, complementary to each other and create a perfect background for mutually beneficial joint projects***

growth in early 2000’s and its unique experience of creating organized industrial zones are thoroughly examined in Ukraine. On the other hand, the increasing number of Ukrainian-Turkish business associations and bilateral industrial, business and investment forums proves that Ukrainian market is placed high among Turkey’s foreign economy priorities, considerably revised after Moscow’s offensives.

In the light of the recent developments with Russia, both countries seek closer

⁴ Turkcell’den 3G Yatırımıyla Türkiye – Ukrayna Stratejik İşbirliğine Büyük Katkı, 21 March 2015 // http://medya.turkcell.com.tr/turkcellden-3g-yatirimiyila-turkiye---ukrayna-stratejik-isbirligine-buyuk-katki-bulten_7538.html

⁵ Taras Şevçenko Bulvarı’nda inşaat tamamlandı, Türk şirketine Klitçko’dan özel teşekkür, 6 June 2016 // <http://ukrturk.net/taras-sevchenko-bulvarinda-insaat-tamamlandi-turk-sirketine-klitcikodan-ozel-tesekkurl/>

⁶ Burak Pehlivan. Ukrayna’da pazara girmek için doğru zaman / Para Dergisi, 25 Mayıs 2016 // <http://burakpehlivan.org/4861/ukraynada-pazara-girmek-icin-dogru-zaman-burak-pehlivan-para-dergisi-roportaj/>

cooperation with Europe. On January 1, 2016, Ukraine's Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Zone with the EU entered into full force. At the same time, Ankara has recently been involved in the negotiation process with Brussels to revise and expand the scope of the Turkey-EU Customs Union that has not seen any changes since mid-1990's and hardly corresponds to the demands of the day. According to the Turkish then-Minister of Economy Mustafa Elitaş's statements, Turkey is going to complete the revision of the Customs Union Agreement with the EU by the end of 2017 by including ten new sectors, such as energy, tourism, communication, contracting business, agricultural products, service trade, public purchases, environment, taxes and transportation within the framework of the revised deal.⁷ Though in a short-term perspective the problems of transitional period will likely bring about some complaints, in a more distant future developing cooperation within the European legislative framework can prove beneficial in terms of opening new horizons for collaboration, increasing the efficiency of national economies, transferring to modern technologies, improving the competitive ability of national products.

In this context, the negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement between Ukraine and Turkey have been restarted after a long interval. The 10th meeting of the Turkey-Ukraine Intergovernmental Trade and Economic Cooperation that took place in Kyiv in May 2016 gave a new impetus to this process⁸. However, there are still serious problems to be resolved (first of all, reaching mutually acceptable compromise on the

tariff regime for the agricultural goods in bilateral trade), this time Kyiv and Ankara seem to have firm will and determination to proceed with the agreement.

Diversification of Energy Partners as a Key to National Security

The collapse in bilateral relations with the Russian Federation has unfolded existing imbalance in Ankara's traditional relations with Moscow and the high level of dependency on Russia in almost all strategic spheres. The lack of diversification in energy resources and energy suppliers had for a long time been Russia's most valuable leverage in dealing with both official Kyiv and Ankara. The heavy energy dependency on Russian gas had enabled Moscow to apply politically motivated approach to forming its price policies and significantly limited countries' abilities to benefit from the positive trends on global oil and gas markets. Energy blackmailing has traditionally remained one of the Kremlin's major tools in shaping its foreign policy towards Ukraine since the first "gas war" Russia waged against Ukraine in winter of 2005/2006. The same pattern was later used in relation to Turkey when a Russian monopolist Gazprom rejected a request from the Turkish state-owned company Botaş to supply additional volumes of gas during 2008/2009 and 2011/2012 winter seasons.

Paying a high price for these lessons, both countries realized too well that diversification of energy sources and transportation routes is a key factor to their energy and, on a broader scale, national

⁷ Erdiñ Çelikkan. Turkey Moves to Expand Customs Union with the EU / Hürriyet Daily News, 11 January 2016 // <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-moves-to-expand-customs-union-with-eu.aspx?PageID=238&NID=93670&NewsCatID=345>

⁸ Ali Cura. Milli Savunma Bakanı Yılmaz: Anlaşma İki Ülke Arasındaki İlişkilere Yeni Boyut Kazandıracak / Anadolu Ajansı, 13 May 2016 // <http://aa.com.tr/tr/politika/milli-savunma-bakani-yilmaz-anlasma-iki-ulke-arasindaki-iliskilere-yeni-boyut-kazandiracak/571952>

security. Ukraine has solved this problem by steep decrease of gas consumption and gradual substitution of Russian gas by the European supplies. Since January 1, 2016, Ukraine has not received a single cubic meter of gas from Russia. After the recent crisis in relations with Moscow, Ankara has also started its own search for alternative energy sources and suppliers. In February 2016, Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Berat Albayrak announced an updated “road map” for the energy sector, which is based on the concepts of “security of supply, alternative energy resources, resource variety, increasing storage capacities”. According to Albayrak, dependency on a single country must be dropped to at most 50 percent by the end of 2019.⁹ One of the key problems for Turkey’s energy security now is the lack of sufficient gas storage facilities. Despite Ankara’s plans to build new storage capacities in central Turkey, they are too small to cope with its needs.

Considering this background, Ukraine has recently come up with an offer to provide its own gas infrastructure, first of all, its gas storage facilities, for Turkey’s use. At the moment, the capacities of the gas storages in the Western Ukraine are estimated as approximately 33-34 bcm. At least half of them can be provided for Turkey’s needs¹⁰. Though the use of Ukrainian facilities for storing Russian gas now seems problematic from the legal point of view and would definitely arouse Moscow’s protests, once the TANAP pipeline is put into exploitation Ankara can easily arrange storing Azerbaijani (and, potentially, Turkmen)

gas in Ukraine. This will not only help decrease Ankara’s dependency on Moscow but also create a more profitable economic conjuncture on the energy market, allowing Turkey to sell its gas reserves to Europe when market conditions are favourable, or to use them for domestic consumption once or if the situation changes for the worse.¹¹ In this situation, with any single supplier deprived of a possibility to use gas blackmail as an instrument of political pressure or intimidation, both Kyiv and Ankara, as well as the other players on the energy market, would gain significant benefits from this new economic, instead of geostrategic, framework for energy cooperation.

Science, Technology and Industry: Three Pillars of Long-Term Cooperation

With the realization of the nuclear power plants projects and Turkey’s joining a global community of “nuclear states”, the national energy strategy will get yet another reading. Though the first NPP’s to be constructed in Turkey will be exploited on a build-own-operate model, Ankara is well aware of the necessity to create sufficient educational opportunities for preparing its own high-qualified specialists in the field. Sending Turkish students abroad can be a good solution for the moment, but it is important to be sure that similar nuclear research institutions are formed on the basis of Turkish universities in the future. So far, the only foreign University that has been defined for these purposes was the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute (MEPhI) with 300 undergraduate Turkish students enrolled under the provisions of

⁹ Minimizing Dependency Priority, Says Turkish Energy Minister / Daily Sabah, 09 February 2016 // <http://www.dailysabah.com/money/2016/02/10/minimizing-dependency-priority-says-turkish-energy-minister-1455047251>

¹⁰ Murat Temizer: Ukraine Offers Gas Storage Facilities for Turkey’s Use / Anadolu Ajansi, 16 May 2016 // <http://aenergyterminal.com/news.php?newsid=8349240>

¹¹ Interview of Ukrainian Envoy to Ankara Sergiy Korsunsky for Anadolu Agency, 17 May 2016 // <http://turkey.mfa.gov.ua/en/embassy/ambassador/interviews/4525-intervju-posla-ukrajini-v-turechchini-sergija-korsunskyko-go-stosovno-spivrobotnictva-mizh-ukrajinoju-ta-turechchinoju-u-sferi-jenergetiki-informacijne-agenstvo-anadolu-ukraine-offers-gas-storage-facilities-for-turkeys-use>

the Akkuyu NPP contract. However, it is not clear if the education will be endured after the quick deterioration of bilateral relations and Rosatom management's plans to sell 49% of its shares in the Akkuyu Joint Stock Company¹².

Long before that, Ukraine had come up with a suggestion to provide education for Turkish students in Ukrainian universities and to share its experience in such spheres as creating regulatory environment, elaborating safety and security measures, introducing early warning and crisis management mechanisms, etc.¹³ The unique experience of dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy and operating 15 Russian reactors at four different NPP's have roused significant interest of the Turkish side. After a long interval in bilateral contacts, the Head of the Turkish Council for Higher Education Prof. Y.Sarac has recently visited Kyiv to discuss in details the opportunities for collaboration in the sphere of education, including nuclear technologies.

So far, the sides have agreed to sign a Memorandum of understanding that would create a framework for further cooperation in education and scientific research in such strategically important and mutually beneficial areas, as nuclear energy, aviation and space technologies. These will include staff and students' exchange programs, issuing double diplomas by partner Ukrainian and Turkish universities,

providing grants and scholarships for students on bilateral basis, etc.¹⁴ At the moment, there are ongoing negotiations on the issue with Kyiv, Odesa and Lviv Polytechnics, Kyiv T.Shevchenko University, National Aviation University and a number of others.

This agreement comes at a time when two countries have officially announced their decision to engage in joint cooperation on aviation and space technologies. According to the provisions of the agreement signed during the recent visit of the Turkish then-Minister of National Defence Ismet Yilmaz to Ukraine in May 2016, Turkey will work to produce a TAN-158 model passenger plane and a cargo plane based on respective models of the Ukrainian aircraft manufacturing company Antonov.¹⁵ The projects of regional jet construction and aircraft engine manufacturing in aviation go parallel with cooperation in other areas of defence industry. Ukraine possesses unique technologies in construction of tanks and armoured personnel carriers, some of which have been acknowledged as the best national army technology projects. Apart from this, Ukraine has started negotiations on the possibilities of cooperation with Turkey regarding modernizing Ukrainian armoured vehicles, particularly equipping them with the electron-optical devices produced by the leading Turkish defence company "Aselsan".¹⁶

¹² Russian Company Puts 49% of Turkey's First Nuclear Plant on Sale / Hurriyet Daily News, 27 April 2016 // <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/russian-company-puts-49-percent-of-turkeys-first-nuclear-plant-on-sale-report.aspx?pageID=238&nID=98394&NewsCatID=348>

¹³ Sultan Çoğalan. Ukrayna'dan Türkiye'ye nükleer enerji için işbirliği teklifi. Anadolu Ajansı, 9 February, 2016 // <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/ukraynadan-turkiyeye-nukleer-enerji-icin-isbirligi-teklifi/518399>

¹⁴ YÖK'ten Ukrayna ile Nükleer ve Uçak / Uzay Teknolojileri Alanlarında İşbirliği. – 24 May 2016 <http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/guest/yok-baskani-sarac-in-ukrayna-temaslari>

¹⁵ Turkey and Ukraine Sign Joint Plane Manufacturing Project // Daily Sabah, May 15, 2016. <http://www.dailysabah.com/money/2016/05/16/turkey-and-ukraine-sign-joint-plane-manufacturing-project#>

¹⁶ Birol Tekince. Ukraine and Turkey: Strategic Relations, Plenty of Cooperation Opportunities // MSI Turkey Defence Review, January 2016.

Taking into consideration the technological and intellectual potential, as well as long and successful story of the Ukrainian space and defence industry enterprises' participation in the international projects, Ukraine has a potential to become one of the most important partners of Turkey in the aerospace. Both countries regard scientific and technical cooperation in the high-tech spheres of space rocket industry and military-industrial complex as crucial for further development of their strategic partnership, with the prospects to jointly enter the global market with a full cycle of space-related services starting with design and construction of satellites and other aerospace equipment and up to their launch into orbit.

To be precise, cooperation of Ankara and Kyiv in defence sector is not something new. However, it is only now that these sporadic contacts have been complemented by the endeavours to build a strategic industrial alliance that would include joint projects across a variety of military, technological and defence areas.

Military and Security Cooperation: Working for Peace, Preparing for War

A sweeping deterioration of the regional security environment and return of the "hard" power instruments back on the agenda have paved the way to a breakthrough in a military cooperation between the countries. Since mid-1990's, Ukraine and Turkey have been working within the framework of multilateral mechanisms called to strengthen security measures and contribute to stability in the Black Sea region. Over the years both countries have been jointly participating in international peacekeeping operations,

bilateral and multilateral military and naval exercises, like the Black Sea Harmony, Sea Breeze, Sea Shield, BLACKSEAFOR and PASSEX, to name just a few. However, when the existing regional organizations turned out to be inefficient under the conditions of the "hybrid" wars of the XXI century, which require quick reaction, operational mobility and considerable flexibility in decision-making process, Ukraine and Turkey have similarly adopted a new vision of the security arrangements in the Black sea basin. In fact, the new security threats and increased militarization of the region in the aftermath of Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea and its intervention in Syria have revealed considerable breaches in the



***Particularly, since last year
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national security strategies of both Ukraine and Turkey. However, in a curious way, these developments have brought about a growing awareness of their own strengths and, for the first time ever, made Ankara and Kyiv focus on bilateral forms of cooperation as a central part of a new security architecture emerging in the Black sea region.

During his recent visit to Turkey in January 2016, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin stressed in the interview for the local newspaper that Ukraine is open to military cooperation with Turkey in the Black Sea and "any kind of security and defence cooperation between Kyiv and Ankara is possible".¹⁷ The Turkish side seems more than happy to welcome such rapprochement. Experts pay attention that

¹⁷ Yusuf Selman İnanç, Ukraine Open to Military Cooperation with Turkey in Black Sea / Daily Sabah, 31 January 2016 // <http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2016/02/01/ukraine-open-to-military-cooperation-with-turkey-in-black-sea-ukrainian-fm-says>

Moscow's repeated violations of Turkish airspace, countries' divergent positions in Syria campaign, Turkish shoot-down of Russian jet, and the Kremlin's economic sanctions and threats of retaliation have not only spoiled its relations with Ankara, but also contributed to deepening security cooperation of Turkey with Georgia and, especially, Ukraine.¹⁸

Particularly, since last year Ukraine and Turkey have remarkably intensified their naval partnership. In March 2016, during the Ukrainian President P.Poroshenko's official visit to Turkey, Ukrainian "Hetman Sagaidachnyi" frigate and "Balta" vessel launched joint naval exercise with a couple of Turkish ships in the Sea of Marmara after they had visited naval base in Gölcük to accept onboard Turkish humanitarian aid for the Ukrainian army.¹⁹

Less than a month later, Turkey's "Salih Reis" frigate and "Bartın" corvette vessels were reported to practice with Ukrainian Navy tactical manoeuvring, cargo transfer and signal communication at an exercise course in the Black Sea, following a visit by Turkish naval officials to Ukraine's port city of Odessa. Ukraine's Ministry of Defence commented the drill as "another step in the deepening of cooperation of the fleets of the two countries, which aims to strengthen stability and security in the region".²⁰

At the same time, though NATO Defence Ministers have already decided earlier this

year in favour of "continuous rotational" presence in the Black Sea basin instead of establishing new bases in the Eastern Europe²¹, the Alliance's enhanced role in the region is regarded as a key to effective Russia's deterrence and long-term regional stability. Ukraine has repeatedly voiced its readiness to contribute to all kinds of possible naval exercises, joint trainings, maritime patrol and humanitarian operations that might be carried out in the Black Sea within the NATO framework and has got a firm support of its Turkish partners in this regard.

Romania has recently come up with a new initiative to increase NATO's presence in the Black Sea basin by creating a permanent alliance fleet in order to counter Russia's increasing military involvement in the region²². The general problem with this initiative is the restrictions of the 1936 Montreux Convention, prohibiting warships of countries not littoral to the Black Sea from spending more than 21 days at a time there. To solve the issue, the regular flotilla might include ships from the Black Sea littoral countries, namely Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey whereas other NATO members' vessels might stay in the Black Sea basin on a rotating basis. During his recent visit to Romania in April 2016, President P.Poroshenko stressed that under the conditions of the lasting Russian aggression Ukraine, though not a NATO member, is willing to join the flotilla in case such a decision is approved

¹⁸ John Herbst. Estranged From Russia, Turkey and Ukraine Join Forces / Newsweek, 15 April 2016 // <http://europe.newsweek.com/estranged-russia-turkey-and-ukraine-join-forces-447473>

¹⁹ V Odessu posle uspeshnogo vipolneniya zadach u beregov Turtsii vernulsya otryad korably VMS Ukraini / UNIAN, 13 March 2016 // <http://www.unian.net/society/1288560-v-odessu-posle-uspeshnogo-vyipolneniya-zadach-u-beregov-turtsii-vernulsya-otryad-korably-vms-ukrainyi-fotoreportaj.html>

²⁰ Damien Sharkov. Ukraine and Turkey Launch Black Sea Naval Drill Amid Russia Tensions / Newsweek, 7 April 2016 // <http://europe.newsweek.com/ukraine-and-turkey-launch-black-sea-naval-drill-amidst-russia-tensions-444882>

²¹ Andrew Rettman. U.S. and Germany Say Poland 'No' on NATO Base / Euobserver, 16 April 2016 // <https://euobserver.com/foreign/133084>

²² Joshua Kucera. Romania Pushing for Permanent NATO Presence in Black Sea / Eurasia.net, 17 January 2016 // <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/76866>

by the Alliance.²³ If this happens, NATO's framework might become an additional platform for deepening Ukrainian-Turkish naval cooperation and exerting joint efforts to restore peace and stability in the Black Sea region.

On a larger scale, the General Staffs of the Ukrainian and Turkish Armed Forces have recently signed a "road map" for military cooperation that envisages direction and scope of military cooperation between two countries until 2020, a year, which has been set as a deadline for the wide-scale reform process in the Ukrainian Army. Among other things, it focuses on strategic planning, military education and training of troops, consultative and advisory assistance, cooperation between the respective branches of the Armed Forces, information sharing, etc.²⁴ In fact, this document is a detailed implementation plan of practical measures on military cooperation, aimed both at strengthening bilateral ties and getting Turkish support in preparing Ukrainian Army in accordance with NATO standards. Interestingly, the experience of military and technical collaboration between Ukraine and Turkey has become one of the most vivid examples of how the countries can turn security threats existing in their regional environment into major opportunities for speeding up the pace of bilateral cooperation, with the results that are likely to have impacts for the whole region.

Recreating Missing Parts of the Picture, or Why Humanitarian Dimension Matters

The return of security concerns to the top of the regional agenda naturally predefines

the dominance of the military and defence issues in bilateral relations. However, it is important to remember that winning over the hearts of Turkish people should become a key consideration for any state that wants to achieve a durable and sustainable partnership with Turkey. Generally true for all countries, this is especially the case when the Ankara's approach to establishing foreign partnerships is concerned – it is not only about making a "strategic" choice, but rather about preferring "confident" and "trustworthy" partners with a clear and transparent set of values and goals. That is why public diplomacy, close interpersonal ties, humanitarian cooperation and popularization of a country's profile in such spheres as culture, education and tourism play an important role in creating favourable atmosphere that enables the development of other, strategic dimensions of bilateral relations.

In the current situation, when the recent crisis in relations with Russia has shattered Turkish-Russian relations and the general aggravation of the security environment in the region has led to a substantial downfall in Ankara's overall trade and tourism turnover, ironically Ukraine and Turkey have got unique opportunities to boost their touristic ties and transform their traditional security-focused strategic agenda into a more balanced intersocietal dialogue. The positive images of the countries in the nations' public opinion and the absence of unresolved problems or historical burden of deep-rooted hostilities in bilateral relations have created a solid basis for close social ties while the introduction of the visa free regime in 2012 has facilitated mutual travel and tourism. Most recently, a principal agreement has

²³ Ukraine and Romania Stand for Establishment of Flotilla under NATO Auspices to Enhance Security in Black Sea Region. April 21, 2016 // <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayina-ta-rumuniya-vistupayut-za-stvorennya-flotilyi-pid-37013>

²⁴ Ukraine and Turkey Ink Military Cooperation Road Map, 17 May 2016 // <http://24today.net/open/663932>

been reached to increase the term of an uninterrupted stay for Ukrainians in Turkey and Turks in Ukraine up to 90 days²⁵. Despite the overall negative dynamics in regional tourism, the amount of Ukrainian tourists visiting Turkey has shown a 57% increase in the first five months of 2016. While the unstable regional environment and presumably high level of terror threats have made Turkey one of the least desirable touristic destinations for Israeli, German, British and other European tourists and the number of Russian tourists has plunged more than 96% after the jet crisis²⁶, Ukrainians, much less sensitive to potential security threats, have chosen Turkey as their favourite touristic destination after the Russian occupation of the Crimea.

During his recent visit to Kyiv in March 2016, Turkish Minister of Tourism and Culture Mahir Unal said Ankara was expecting a record number of about 1 mln of Ukrainian tourists this year.²⁷ The goal seems quite achievable. At the moment, Turkey is the number one foreign destination for Ukrainians with its national flag carrier, Turkish Airlines (THY), being the biggest foreign airline company in Ukraine (Ukraine rates second after Germany with the largest number of flights served by THY outside Turkey). Together with the other airlines, there are now more than 100 regular flights from Istanbul to seven different cities of Ukraine²⁸. During the summer season, this number becomes even higher with the charter flights to Antalya, Dalaman and other touristic destinations in Turkey. These dynamics

are likely to preserve sustainability in the future, creating solid social and economic basis for the implementation of agreements reached on a high political level.

Concluding Remarks

As the long international practice of strategic partnerships has proved, a key to successful and effective bilateral cooperation is not in inventing new partnership models but rather in filling the existing frameworks with real content. The non-conventional threats of the modern “hybrid” warfare have revealed new unexplored opportunities to bring more credibility and tangibility to the traditional Ukrainian-Turkish strategic partnership and paved way for the diversification of bilateral cooperation. In today’s regional turmoil, shared security concerns create a common footing that keeps the partners together. With much attention paid to the current strategic environment and immediate steps taken to mitigate the direct impacts of Russian aggressive policies in the Black Sea region, deepening strategic partnership between Ukraine and Turkey possesses necessary political, military and diplomatic potential to become a cornerstone of the new regional security structure.

Of course, there is still a long way to go. A way, which is neither straight nor simple, and hides its own risks and obstacles. The asymmetry of bilateral trade balance and a righteous desire to protect the most sensitive sectors of national economies from strong foreign competition cause serious

²⁵ Türkiye ile Ukrayna vizesiz kalış süresini 90 güne çıkarıyor / NTV, 23 May 2016 // http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/turkiye-ile-ukrayna-vizesiz-kalis-suresini-90-gune-cikariyor,nyVESX4xx0m7n10muBmW6w?_ref=infinite

²⁶ Number of Russian Tourists Visiting Antalya Plunges 96 Percent / Hürriyet Daily News, 07 June 2016 // <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/number-of-russian-tourists-visiting-antalya-plunges-96-percent.aspx?page-ID=517&nID=100183&NewsCatID=349>

²⁷ Turkey Eyes One Million Tourists From Ukraine / Anadolu Agency, 30 March 2016 // <http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-eyes-one-million-tourists-from-ukraine-/546564>

²⁸ Ukraynalılar En Çok Türkiye’ye Uçuyor / QHA, 13 Ocak 2016 // <http://qha.com.ua/tr/turizm/ukraynalilar-en-cok-turkiye-ye-ucuyor/141974/>

contradictions regarding the classification of goods that should be eligible to the free trade regime and complicate signing of the Agreement. In the military and defence spheres, positions of the third parties still have a considerable impact on the regional state of play and the countries will, obviously, face a strong opposition of major stakeholders that will counter the emergence of a new strategic alliance in the Black Sea region, which includes three NATO countries, Ukraine and potentially – Georgia and Azerbaijan. Finally, the developments of domestic political agenda and strong influence of the external forces create additional risks of destabilization in the countries and make them focus on resolving their internal problems, often at the expense of boosting partnership relations and developing international cooperation.

However, probably for the first time in many years, Ankara and Kyiv seem both ready and willing to exert enough effort to overcome these limitations and develop the narrow politically and security-focused strategic agenda that has traditionally dominated their relationship into a full-fledged and comprehensive partnership based on long-term and well-specified joint projects in different areas where the countries share common and mutual interests. Today, the range of projects on the bilateral agenda varies widely from creating joint enterprises in defence and space industries to common use of gas pipeline infrastructure, cooperation in nuclear energy sphere, conducting joint naval and

military exercises, exchanging information and experience in countering terrorism, and signing the free trade agreement and memorandum in the educational sphere. Though this cooperation has obviously got a new strong impetus for development after both countries' relations with Russia experienced a serious blow, it would be wrong to regard it as a reactive measure to the Russian policies in the region. The projects recently launched between Ukraine and Turkey are aimed at a long-term perspective and are unlikely to cease to exist with the occasional changes in the international conjuncture. While the current crisis has become a trigger for rapid development of the Ukrainian-Turkish strategic cooperation in new directions, these relations have gone a way too far to be called a "situational" or "tactical" alliance. On the contrary, over the last several years Ankara and Kyiv have succeeded in making a huge step forward, moving from hollow political declarations to a more pragmatic, result-oriented and multifaceted partnership.

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COMMON SENSE IN KAZAKHSTAN AND UKRAINE RELATIONS: INCENTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Despite the negative impact that the Ukrainian Crisis has had on bilateral relations with Astana, in terms of mutual trade, it has become a reference point to enhance cooperation in different areas, including aviation industry, infrastructure, fuel and energy complex, agriculture and tourism. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's official visit to Astana in October, 2015 outlined prospects and mutual benefits for Kazakhstan-Ukraine relations against the backdrop of the 'Russian factor'.

Public Opinion on Ukraine's Crisis: Undivided but Supportive

The situation in Ukraine has become a kind of marker that outlined different approaches to the prospects of regional integration under the aegis of Russia. There are three positions in the region with regard to Russia: i) *centrist* (traditional), ii) *extreme* (the concept of 'Russian World' and the Great Russia), and iii) *sceptical* (weakening position in Central Asia and the probability of inter-state and inter-ethnic escalation).

According to the National Poll ('Strategy' Public Fund, 2014)¹, the vast majority of Kazakhstan population (85%) was informed about the deteriorated Russian-Ukrainian relations. In 2014, 56% of the respondents were tracking daily news on this topic. As a result, based on the answers to such questions as "Are you aware of the events?", "Which TV channels do you prefer to watch?", "How do you evaluate the positions of Russia and Ukraine?", it

appeared that 61% of the respondents approved of the Russian position, 23% could not answer the question, and only 5% supported the Ukrainian position. If we look closer at the sources, which influenced public opinion, it turned out that out of those who received information from Kazakh media, 54% actually approved of Russia, 20% disapproved, and 26% were not able to answer. However, if respondents received information from the Russian media, 84% of them approved actions of the Russian Federation, and only 4% did not support them. It is quite clear that the position broadcast by the Russian sources did not imply any nuances and opinions. If we consider the situation regarding the support of the Ukrainian side, among those who received information from the Kazakh national press – 29% were undecided, and 66% disapproved of the Ukrainian side. Russian media audience is almost unequivocal: 80% did not approve of the position of Ukraine. As for the Internet audience, 48% still approved of the position

¹ 86% казахстанцев волнует развитие российско-украинского конфликта // <http://www.diapazon.kz/kazakhstan/kaz-politics/60278-86-kazhstancev-volnuet-razvitie-rossiysko-ukrainskogo-konflikta.html>

of Russia, while 35% could not answer the question. Among those respondents who watch and read Western press, 31% approved of the Russian position, 39% did not approve, and 31% were undecided².

If we consider the sources of information that contributed to the choice, Kazakh media have helped to develop a more balanced view and understanding of the situation. The audience of national press tried increasingly to advocate detachment from the conflict (60%), to promote reconciliation of the parties – 54%, and to support Ukrainian territorial integrity (60%) with only 40% of those who believed that it was necessary to support Russia. The audience of the Russian media considered it necessary for Kazakhstan to take the side of the Russian Federation (46%).

Thus, it is quite obvious, how actively propaganda was working. Even more, post-Crimean Russia has introduced the discourse of war in terms of hybrid information provocation and propaganda. A recent case with the interpretation of 'Eurasia First Channel' TV program³ on Land protests in Kazakhstan (TV hosts tried to prove that people were paid 50-150 USD for participation in the protests throughout the country) and disinformation on paid ambulance in Kazakhstan by 2017 was the first example of Russian-style propaganda and hybrid war in Kazakhstan and Central Asia after the Ukrainian crisis.

In February 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimea, this move was interpreted

as a warning to other post-Soviet states, including Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics. The Russian President Vladimir Putin's comments that "before 1991 Kazakhs had never had statehood," just reinforced the phobias and fears that Russia could do something to Kazakhstan what it had done to Ukraine⁴. Moreover, after the Land protests, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev mentioned, "The people of Kazakhstan do not want Ukrainian scenario in Kazakhstan", so he warned those, who might bring about those events, that they will be severely punished⁵. It is quite obvious that rather frequent comments in mass media about Ukraine as an example of a 'country of mass riots' seems to be one more proof of how certain media are seriously infected by the Kremlin propaganda. Yuri Lazebnyk, Charge d'Affaires of Ukraine in Kazakhstan, has clearly stated such kind of propaganda in an interview to Azattyk, Kazakh Edition of *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*⁶.

Despite such kind of support for Russia in a different public survey, the government acted in a more pro-Ukrainian and impartially neutral way. In 2015, Kazakhstan was among those, who refused to support the Russian idea to terminate Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS) Free Trade Zone Agreement with Ukraine. Moreover, Astana has promptly chosen the tactics of a 'mediator' between Kyiv and Moscow as well as Moscow and the European Union member-states.

² Казахстанцы об Украине, России и интеграции. Интервью с Гульмирой Илеуовой, президентом ОФ ЦСПИ «Стратегия» // <http://www.nomad.su/?a=10-201404250025>

³ Kazakhstan: State TV Hatchet Job Sparks Indignation // <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/78791>

⁴ Putz C. Kazakhstan Deftly Balances Relations with Ukraine and Russia // <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/kazakhstan-deftly-balances-relations-with-ukraine-and-russia/>

⁵ Назарбаев предупредил тех, кто хочет повторения украинского сценария в Казахстане // <https://www.nur.kz/1120984-nazarbaev-predupredil-tekh-kto-khochet-p.html>

⁶ Риторика Ак Орды об «украинских» беспорядках // <http://rus.azattyq.org/a/ukrainskie-strashiki-kazakhstan-skikh-vlastey/27723403.html>

Humanitarian assistance to eastern regions of Ukraine received lively public interest in Kazakhstan. On January 10, 2015, there was an official transfer of humanitarian aid to representatives of Ukraine EMERCOM in the zone of the antiterrorist operation in the city of Severodonetsk, Luhansk region. The event was attended by the leaders of the Luhansk Regional State Administration, the State Service for Emergency Situations of Ukraine and representatives of international organizations. In addition, on April 28, 2015, Kazakhstan has allocated 1 mln euro of financial assistance for 'Shelter' project at Chernobyl nuclear power plant⁷.

Later in 2015, Kazakhstani courts have begun to initiate criminal proceedings against those who went to fight for militia in Donbass and returned home. Two men (from western and northern cities) were admitted guilty for involvement in armed conflicts and hostilities (Article 162-1, part 1, Criminal Code of Kazakhstan) on the territory of a foreign state and sentenced to three and five years of imprisonment⁸.

It is also worth mentioning that according to the official statistics, Ukrainians are among the three largest ethnic groups in Kazakhstan (1, 64% of total population) after Russians and Uzbeks.

Current State of Bilateral Relations

Recent land protests and militant attacks in Aktobe⁹, Western Kazakhstan, in 2016 were mainly perceived by the government as an attempt to implement 'Ukrainian scenario'

in the country. Kazakhstan National Security Committee interpreted Aktobe attacks as a part of a coup d'état under Tohtar Tuleshev leadership, a very controversial personality with deep expertise and experience at the Center for Terrorist Threat Analysis of 'Nur Otan' ruling party, several journalists' unions, Cossack organizations of Kazakhstan (Advisor of the Supreme Ataman) and Shymkent Beer Company.

The Crimea's annexation has resulted in numerous fears and myths predominantly applying to the same scenario within Kazakhstan northern and eastern territories, which used to be Russian-speaking ethnic majorities. Obviously, such kind of parallels may seem quite logical (Budapest Memorandum violation) while in reality it is still quite impossible to imagine same actions taken place in Kazakhstan. At the same time, it should be accepted that the Crimea has become a marker for Astana to revise its national security strategy and defence capabilities (70% of the army weapons are to be upgraded in the upcoming years¹⁰).

In 2014, Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev spoke in favour of a peaceful settlement of the situation in Ukraine, preserving the country's sovereignty, while adding that he had been sympathetic to the Russian position, aimed at protecting the rights of the national minorities in Ukraine, as well as the interests and national security¹¹. According to Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry, Astana perceived the referendum in the Crimea as the free expression of the will of its population. At the same time, Kazakhstan

⁷ Kazakhstan Embassy to Ukraine and Moldova // <http://kazembassy.com.ua/show/3550.html>

⁸ Воевавшего на стороне ДНР казахстанца приговорили к 3 годам в Атырау // <http://newskaz.ru/regions/20150427/7926802.html#ixzz4A9Qgk5aK>

⁹ Three killed in attacks on Kazakh army base and gun shops // <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/05/three-killed-attacks-kazakh-army-base-gun-shops-aktobe>

¹⁰ Назарбаев: В ближайшие годы будет обновлено не менее 70% всего вооружения армии // http://forbes.kz/news/2016/05/06/newsid_111444

¹¹ Назарбаев высказался о ситуации на Украине // https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/nazarbaev-vyiskazalsya-o-situatsii-na-ukraine-252486/

abstained from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution on the Crimea in 2014 along with other 92 member states. Later Kazakhstan's Counsellor received a protest note from the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which reflected the concerns over bilateral strategic partnership between the two states¹².

In spite of certain difficulties after the Ukrainian crisis, political cooperation between Astana and Kyiv tends to increase. Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev was acting as a mediator within Minsk Group negotiations and the OSCE activity in the region. Official visits aside, there is still huge potential in Inter-parliamentary collaboration and Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation. Since 2013, there are special working groups within two respective Parliaments for interaction with each other.

During Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's visit to Astana in 2015, Action Plan for 2015-2017 (Roadmap – 5) and a Joint statement of the Heads of the States were signed, which included a number of specific areas of cooperation:

- 'Kazakhstan's aviation industry' LLP' agreed with 'Ukrspetsexport' to establish a service centre for aviation equipment of Ukrainian production on the basis of Astana Aviation Technical Centre;
- 'National Agency for Export and Investment KAZNEX INVEST' JSC and 'Tatra-Yug' LLC are to build tram tracks and to adjust the supply of Ukrainian tramcars;
- 'Astana EXPO-2017' JSC gained support of 'Monaco Ukraine Group' to attract tourists from Ukraine at EXPO-2017;

- Parties to establish Kazakhstan-Ukraine Business Council to enhance mutual trade;
- Joint projects in aircraft construction, mechanical engineering and aerospace areas, particularly 'Antonov' serial production in Kazakhstan, participation in the Ukrainian projects such as 'Dnepr' and 'Zenith', and shared purchase of 'Kosmotras', Russian-Ukrainian space company¹³;
- Ukrainian enterprises, in particular 'Novokramatorsky Machine-Building Plant' CJSC, participation in the field of mechanical engineering and supply of equipment for metallurgical plants;
- Cooperation in nuclear energy sector in the framework of 'UKRTVS', a Ukrainian-Kazakh-Russian enterprise, to produce nuclear fuel.

While economic cooperation remains one of the main priorities of the Kazakhstan-Ukraine relations, the 12th Meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation outlined several issues of future prospects, including a transit route through the Southern Caucasus and Aktau port with Ilyichevsk – Poti ferry, comprehensive cooperation in energy field, including supply of Kazakhstan uranium and coal to Ukraine's market, space industry, high-tech joint ventures and service centres in the fields of aviation, machinery and agriculture.

At the same time, geopolitical situation and the global economic crisis have had a negative impact on mutual trade. By the end of 2015, foreign trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Ukraine,

¹² Из-за позиции РК по Крыму МИД Украины вручил ноту Казахстану // http://forbes.kz/process/iz-za_pozit-sii_rk_po_kryimu_mid_ukrainyi_vruchil_notu_kazakhstanu/

¹³ Ukraine Embassy to the Republic of Kazakhstan // <http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.ua/ru/ukraine-kz/trade>

according to the State Revenue Committee under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan¹⁴, reached 2 003.5 million USD while decreased by 30.5% in comparison to the same period of 2014. The export volume of Kazakhstan production amounted to 1 176.4 million USD and overall decreased by 29.7%, compared to the same period in 2014. Import of Ukrainian production to Kazakhstan reached 827.1 million USD and drastically decreased by 31.5% in comparison to the same period of 2014¹⁵.

The main items of Kazakhstan export to Ukraine include fuel and energy products (93.4%). Kazakhstan in return imports Ukrainian equipment and devices (33%), food (20%), and metal products (15%), etc. Currently there are 539 joint ventures: 415 are registered in Ukraine, while 124 – in Kazakhstan.

Export from Kazakhstan to Ukraine includes mineral commodities – 92.9%, metals and corresponding products – 4.6%, machinery and equipment – 0.5%, chemicals and related industries – 0.3%, products with a plant and animal origin – 1.4%, etc. At the same time, main export commodities of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Ukraine are natural gas (74%), coal coke (6%), crude oil (4.8%), and all kinds of sulphur (5.3%). Kazakhstan also exports tobacco products, mineral fertilizers, fish and garments to Ukraine¹⁶.

Import from Ukraine to Kazakhstan includes metals – 18.1%, machines and

equipment – 31.4%, chemicals and related industries – 9.2%, products with a plant and animal origin – 27.3%, wood and timber – 4.9%, and construction goods – 2%. Electricity generation systems (9.8%), pipes for oil and gas pipelines (9.8%), food products (6.9%), paper, wallpaper and wall covering made of paper (2.6%), and carbon (2.2%) dominate in import from Ukraine. The structure of import also consists of medicines, dairy products, doors, windows, sugar, and alcohol. Moreover, Ukraine exports corn, vegetable oils and fats, vegetables, graphite, bricks, liquid pumps, and pottery¹⁷.

Opportunities for Further Cooperation and Lessons Learnt

As economic cooperation is perceived as the main priority in bilateral relations, it is quite necessary to focus on joint ventures and to enhance foreign trade turnover, which drastically decreased due to the Ukrainian crisis, Russian-Ukraine relations and contradictions within Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and WTO. For example, in 2016 Ukraine accused EEU member states of systematic violation of the WTO rules and regulations (Art. 2 (Determination of Dumping), Art. 3 (Determination of Damage) and Art. 5 (*Initiation and Subsequent Investigation*) of the WTO Agreement on Application of Article VI of GATT 1994¹⁸) in the course of anti-dumping, anti-subsidiary and special protection investigations, requiring termination of such malpractice. According to the *Ministry of Economic*

¹⁴ State Revenue Committee under Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan // <http://kgd.gov.kz/en>

¹⁵ Kazakhstan Embassy to Ukraine and Moldova // <http://kazembassy.com.ua/show/3550.html>

¹⁶ Украина, Россия и Казахстан: как менялись экономические отношения в этом треугольнике и как изменятся в 2016 году? // <http://kazdata.kz/04/2016-01-export-import-ukraine-kazakhstan-russia.html>

¹⁷ Что Казахстан и Украина продают друг другу // <http://lsm.kz/chto-kazakhstan-i-ukraina-prodayut-drug-drugu>

¹⁸ Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 // https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/19-adp_01_e.htm

*Development and Trade of Ukraine*¹⁹, such kind of violations have led to legally and economically unreasonable restrictions on access of the Ukrainian goods to the markets of the EEU member states (including Belarus, which has an observer status in the WTO). This particularly concerns rods, ferrosilicon manganese and steel pipes of Ukrainian origin.

As for bilateral economic cooperation, interaction between regional business communities seems to be a good starting point. There is a need to boost economic cooperation within the Chambers of Commerce of two countries. E.g. in March 2015, two delegations of South-Kazakhstan region paid a visit to Ukraine. As a result, three agreements were signed, including:

- 1) Administration (Akimat) of Southern Kazakhstan region and Administration of Zhytomyr,
- 2) Administration (Akimat) of Southern Kazakhstan region and 'Ukr mashstroy', League of Machine Builders and Employers of Ukraine²⁰, and
- 3) Roadmap for joint engineering production on coupler release for a tractor plant in South Kazakhstan region.

Later on, in July 2015 businessmen from Northern Kazakhstan region paid a visit to Ukraine in order to enhance cooperation in agriculture. The parties signed several Memoranda of cooperation between the enterprises of Kazakhstan

and 'Ukr mashstroy', League of Machine Builders and Employers of Ukraine and launched a project on constructing agricultural machinery in Akmola region.

Conclusion

Apart from the economic cooperation, which is quite obviously needed and requested by Astana and Kyiv, there is a huge gap and lack of other kind of interaction e.g. in culture and education, between expert and academia communities, regular political dialogue (except for constant presidential phone talks), etc. Despite such kind-hearted emotions and feelings of Kazakhstan society, academia, and expert community that were demonstrated after the Crimea and Donbass, there is still an informational gap of what is going on in Ukraine, how the country is trying to start over, what actions and steps Ukrainian political leadership undertake in order to strategically re-assess the past several years of bilateral relations with Russia and what independent foreign policy and economic ties mean in terms of participation in integration projects.



Kazakhstan is 'a window to Asia' for Ukraine and Ukraine is 'a window to Europe' for Kazakhstan

The upcoming official visit of the Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Kyiv, expected in 2016, would rather focus on overcoming difficulties in economic cooperation, mainly aimed at finding new supply routes

¹⁹ Україна вимагає від країн-учасниць Євразійського економічного Союзу припинити систематично порушувати норми СОТ під час проведення антидемпінгових розслідувань // <http://www.me.gov.ua/News/Detail?lang=uk-UA&id=c6cf85d4-b8de-4042-96e0-58bfabf9f7bd&title=UkrainaVimagaVidKrainuchasnitvraziiskogoEkonomichnogoSoiuzuPripinitiSistematichnoPorushuvatiNormiSotPidChasProvedenniaAntidempingovikhRozsliduvan>

²⁰ Kazakhstan-Ukraine Relation // <http://www.mfa.kz/index.php/en/foreign-policy/kazakhstan-s-relations/kazakhstan-cis-cooperation/16-materials-english/6124-kazakhstan-ukraine-relations>

of goods to Kazakhstan particularly due to the Russian sanctions on Turkey and Ukraine for transit. At the same time, according to the Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko, "There is a huge potential for bilateral relations as Kazakhstan is 'a window to Asia' for Ukraine and Ukraine is 'a window to Europe' for Kazakhstan."²¹

There is a need and demand to discuss the issues of Eurasian integration and WTO rules and regulations within the anti-crisis plan to minimize the risks, associated with the Russian economy, sanctions regimes and global energy market, which has direct impact on the economies of EEU (fall turnover, pressure on national currencies), and their relations with Russia (trade wars, etc.).

It is obvious that Kremlin substitutes the agenda with the 'great geopolitical war' of Russia with the West. It is clearly recorded in official statements and behaviour of the Russian political and military establishment, which resulted in militarization of Russian politics and strategy. Meanwhile, each crisis Russia is somehow involved in negatively affect Kazakhstan and Central Asian states. If the case of Ukraine was not a final indicator, the situation with Turkey (warplane incident, trade and tourism wars, and sanctions) has become a challenge for Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in terms of strategic partnership with Ankara. 'Cold war' paradigm will dominate in Russia within

both Information and Communications Strategy and National Security Strategy. With intentions for leadership on international arena and recession in 2016, the Kremlin is no longer capable of strategic foresight within the EEU, CSTO and Russia-EU-US dialogue, which means that it is high time to discuss the challenges and learn the lessons by its Central Asian partners.

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²¹ Poroshenko: Kazakhstan is a 'window to Asia' for Ukraine, while Ukraine is a 'window to Europe' for Kazakhstan // <http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/1895612-poroshenko-kazakhstan-is-window-to-asia-for-ukraine-while-ukraine-is-window-to-europe-for-kazakhstan.html>

UKRAINE-MOLDOVA: COMPLICATED BUT PROMISING RELATIONS

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The article touches issues of Ukraine-Moldova relations and considers pros and cons of the realism-oriented and liberalism/constructivism-oriented approaches in the bilateral relations. The author argues that liberal constructivist approach will result in win-win results whereas the realism-oriented approach can be counterproductive and thus a task of the civil society is to invigorate governments to make joint efforts grounded on common values instead of behaving using the perspective of rational egoism.

For the Ukrainian government the relations between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine have quite often been overshadowed by relations of Ukraine with bigger players e.g. the United States, the EU and Russia. Quite regularly Moldova was perceived by the Ukrainian experts and officials as a state too tiny to influence regional developments and too weak to shape the agenda of the bilateral relations. In relations with Chisinau, Kyiv often perceived itself as a regional power able to impose its own agenda and to be rather a mentor and custodian than an equal neighbour.

However, such an approach is false due to a number of reasons.

First, despite Moldova's small size, relatively weak economy and arguably little influence in the region, Moldovan government is a tough negotiator, often guided by the rational egoist approach. Therefore, a number of issues in the bilateral relations of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova remain unresolved, e.g. long lasting property issues related to resorts inherited from the USSR and a hydroelectric station, an issue of the

border demarcation etc. These existing issues are harmful for the relations and in the middle-term perspective might have a "spill over effect" – deterioration of the relations in the field of joint efforts for the European integration, misunderstanding in the process of the Transnistrian conflict settlement, economic tensions and joint participation in the regional projects.

Secondly, there are too many similarities in Ukrainian and Moldovan politics: they are both corrupted and the system of justice is underdeveloped. In addition, fights between pro-European political parties in Moldova give ground for increased ratings of the revanchist political powers and discredit the idea of the European integration itself, and it might become a case for Ukrainian pro-Europeans as well. Thus, better understanding of Moldova gives some clues for understanding Ukraine and vice versa.

Thirdly, Moldova for more than 20 years has faced a challenge of separatism inspired by the Russian Federation in Transnistria (which has about 450 km of border with Ukraine, not controlled by Moldovan

authorities). Moreover, Moscow still keeps military forces in the separatist region of Transnistria and prevents any attempts of peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian frozen conflict. Hence, the Kremlin keeps the Moldovan authorities hooked and making any decisions without negotiating with the Transnistrian separatist leadership remains a complicated task for Chisinau. The Russian Federation clearly stated that it does not want to lose Moldova from its sphere of interests and instead of the European perspective, it promotes another destination for integration – the Customs Union. Russian authorities manipulate Moldova's dependence on gas supplies and efficiently use this leverage each time Moldova is making any progress in relations with the EU. Moreover, Moscow is quite good in manipulating sentiments of the Russian-speaking population and suggests the idea of "russkiy mir" (Russian World), as an alternative for further integration with the Western world. Therefore, lessons learned by Moldova in the Transnistrian conflict as well as lessons coming from the Russian manipulation with public opinion in Moldova in this regard can be of immense importance for Ukrainians.

Moreover, it is fair to assume that Moldova is a sort of a "shooting range" for a hybrid warfare for the Kremlin where Moscow is testing methods of discrediting its opponents, invigorating conflicts and fights between pro-Russian and patriotic-oriented forces, undermining Moldovan statehood. Therefore, better understanding of Russian methods alongside with testing remedies in Moldova can be helpful for preventing and counterweighing similar scenarios in Ukraine.

In order to fill the existing gap in understanding these factors and to have better understanding of the possible future developments in the bilateral relations it makes sense to take a look at all the mentioned issues in detail.

Bilateral tensions

There are a few issues that have caused tensions in the bilateral relations. One of the illustrations is border dispute. Despite the agreements reached back in the 1990s on the exchange of a territory near the village of Giurgiulesti, according to which Moldova gained a status of the littoral state and received a possibility to build up a transport hub on the site, Ukraine in exchange has not received the jurisdiction over the land near Palanka village, although it was a part of the deal. Ukraine had to agree to a compromise according to which the road near Palanka remains Ukrainian property on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, Ukraine is facing a problem of access to some of the Dniistrovska Hydro-electric power plant, which since the Soviet times has some of its technical buildings on the Moldovan side of the border. (Geographical information was the key source for setting and administering the state borders. However, in this case it did not guarantee avoiding misunderstandings and tensions between the states. The delimitation of the Ukrainian-Moldovan border was grounded on the outdated topographical maps with the scale 1:50000 and 1:10000, on which the Hydro-electric plant built in 1985 was not marked at all.)

Another issue that causes concerns of the Ukrainian side is a problem of imposing customs duties to the Ukrainian products, in particular to dairy products, meat and cement. The problem is caused by the fact that the volume of Ukrainian export to Moldova after its reorientation from the Russian market has reached 9,3% of its import in 2015 including 12% of the dairy products (following only Romania and Russia and leaving behind Germany, China and Turkey). The outcomes were protests of the local Moldovan producers, who requested the Ministry of the Economy of the Republic of Moldova to hold anti-dumping investigation since prices for

the products imported from Ukraine were much lower than prices suggested by the local producers¹ (that has become possible due to the significant devaluation of the Ukrainian hryvna and possibility to avoid VAT taxation for foreign companies in the Republic of Moldova). In response, the Republic of Moldova imposed customs duties and quotas until the end of 2016. The customs duty is increased by 10–20%² and therefore Ukraine, which believes Moldovan measures violate the WTO rules and CIS Free trade agreement, is planning to bring the issue to the consideration of the WTO and to impose reciprocity measures.

Besides, Ukraine is wary regarding Moldova's current negotiations with Russia on lifting Russian sanctions to Moldovan products. Kyiv suspects that the visit of Rogozin – Russian Vice-PM and the Special representative of the Russian president on Transnistria, planned for July 2016³ and the expected task-list for eliminating restrictions on the Moldovan goods export for the Russian market might include some concessions that Ukraine will have to pay for and thus the outcome can be further deterioration of the bilateral relations between Ukraine and Moldova.

One of the initiatives that is under in question is launching a railway connecting Ukraine and Moldova bypassing Transnistria. The launch of this initiative was expected in summer 2016, including a plan to build the railway segment Berezyne-Besarabka and the repair of Artsyz-Berezyne segment.

Such an initiative would result in connecting Moldova with the Odessa port bypassing the Transnistrian secessionist region, uncontrolled by the government of Moldova. However, if relations between the countries deteriorate, the project can be suspended.

The same is true regarding the implementation of the Black Sea Highway Ring initiative. According to the previously reached agreements, some segments of the Highway are to be built in order to connect Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. The initial idea was to connect Odessa and Bucharest by two branches of the highway: via Reni-Giurgiulesti-Galati and via Chisinau and Ungheni⁴. Like in the previous case, in case the relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova deteriorate, the project can be suspended (in particular Giurgiulesti segment).

There are high chances that the future of these initiatives and the Ukrainian role in their implementation may be used by Ukraine as arguments to change Moldovan positions and to persuade Moldova to fulfil its commitments. By applying such an approach, both countries are behaving realistically in the international politics though. However, if the negotiations on sensitive issues continue within the realism pattern they will definitely result in the lack of trust between the governments, a decreased level of cooperation and cooperation in the field of the European integration, and the lack of solidarity in negotiations regarding the Transnistrian conflict settlement.

¹ Українські виробники м'ясомолочки загрожують виробникам у Молдові — Слусар / Agravery. 20.01.2016 Accessed at: <http://agravery.com/uk/posts/show/ukrainiski-virobniki-masomolocki-zagrozuut-virobnikam-u-moldovi-slusar>

² Молдова ввела мита на імпорт м'яса, молока і цементу з України / Ukranews. 28.04.2016. Accessed at: <http://ukranews.com/ua/news/425528-moldova-vvela-myta-na-import-m-yasa-moloka-i-cementu-z-ukrainy>

³ Russia open to economical cooperation after Rogozin visits Moldova / Moldova.org. 05.07.2016. Accessed at: <http://www.moldova.org/en/russia-open-economical-cooperation-rogozin-visits-moldova/>

⁴ Ukraine, Romania, Moldova finalize Black Sea ring highway route / Ukrinform. 18.04.2014. Accessed at: http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-economics/1650817-ukraine_moldova_romania_finalize_black_sea_ring_highway_route_320427.html

Both countries would definitely benefit more if they applied liberal and constructivist patterns. Liberal understanding of the relations between Ukraine and Moldova would result in a win-win approach whereas a constructivist approach would also provide the added value of common identity which is rooted in similar for both countries understanding of the European integration and Western values. Basically, the leadership of both countries has to come to understanding that they are “in the same boat”, to develop the perception of each other grounded on the common values/common goal approaches, to implement joint strategies in interacting with the third parties acting in the region, etc.

Therefore, what is needed for the improvement of the relations and efficient resolution of the issues in the relations between Kyiv and Chisinau is switching from realist to liberal and constructivist agenda setting and understanding that two nations will benefit much more from cooperating on bilateral issues if such cooperation is grounded on the common values and friendly relations.

Risky similarities in political behaviour and wrongly perceived messages of the Western powers

Current political turmoil in the Republic of Moldova alongside with activities of the Moldovan well-known oligarch and politician Vlad Plahotniuc aimed at “stabilizing” the state, reflect numerous similarities of the political systems in Moldova and Ukraine. The key similarity is that frequent street protests in Moldova and a high level of the protest potential in Ukraine are rooted in the weak and corrupt state institutions.

The key catalyser for the mass protests in the Republic of Moldova was the Moldovan banks theft money affair, which happened back in 2014, when Unibank, Banca de Economii and Banca Sociala got from the National Bank of Moldova the loan of about one billion dollars – which was later transferred to offshore accounts through complex transactions whereas the banks went bankrupt⁵. In February 2015, a group of civil society activists declared the Manifest of Civic platform “Truth and Dignity” in which it blamed the governmental officials in being involved in the “one billion affair” and for imitation of the implementation of the reforms in the country.

Although none of the EU officials supported the demands of the Platform explicitly, the initial idea of the protests was beneficial for the idea of European integration process. The leaders of the Platform often voiced the same concerns regarding developments in Moldova that the EU officials shared. Furthermore, the activities of the Platform resulted in investigation of the “one billion affair” and even led to the arrest of the former prime minister of the Republic of Moldova Vlad Filat. However, simultaneously with some impact on fighting corruption in Moldova, the protests of the Platform gave impetus for the development of another sort of protests. Other political forces that tried to get benefits from social unrest and protest mood of the electorate were on the pro-Russian side of the political spectrum: the Red Block, Socialist party headed by Igor Dodon and “Partidului Nostru” – the party headed by Renato Usatii joined the protests.

All three players started to combine their efforts in organizing the protests. Whereas

⁵ Vanishing act: how global auditor failed to spot theft of 15% of Moldova’s wealth / The Guardian. 01.07.2015. Accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/01/global-auditor-moldova-wealth-franchise-grant-thornton-banks-embezzle>

the Platform reached a certain victory in its fight with the government, which, in the opinion of protestors, was only declaring European values⁶, pro-Russian forces reached their goal in compromising the idea of European integration itself. Whereas the key demand of the protestors was that the corrupted officials should leave, many of these officials happened to be, at least declaratively, pro-Western and pro-European.

Under such circumstances, the steps of the West (the United States in particular) were designed in a pragmatic way. Since Western powers were not in favour of the early elections, which would most probably result in gaining the majority of the seats in the parliament by the pro-Russian forces, they allegedly agreed on the proposal of Mr. Plahotniuc to stabilize the political situation by appointing the government totally controlled by him and his political force. A few days before Moldova's parliament nominated Plahotniuc's alleged proxy Pavel Filip to the prime minister's position, Victoria Nuland, a top-ranking US State Department official, visited Bucharest, the capital of neighbouring Romania, where she declared that Washington was supporting the current government, which was dominated by Plahotniuc's Democratic Party⁷. The key reason for such a decision arguably was the desire to preserve the government, which is at least declaratively pro-European and thus appears to be less evil than the possible pro-Russian alternative. (It is noteworthy that the Ukrainian government did not release any sound statement on the developments in neighbouring Moldova).

Such approach of the United States

seems to be understandable from the perspective of realism. However, looking deeper into the problem we can discover some negative outcomes. The first one is the disappointment of many Moldovans. They do not perceive the conflict between the opposition and the government as geopolitical, but rather the one related to corruption that threatens democracy. If the West does not recognize this fact, it may lose the credit of trust of Moldovan people.

Another negative impact is the fact that the message of Western powers delivered in Moldova can be wrongly perceived in Ukraine. The Ukrainian politicians might assume that if just declaring yourself pro-European works in the Republic of Moldova, the same pattern might be applicable for Ukraine. That would cause the declarative pro-European policy supplemented though with the significant lack of reforms.

Finally, the belief that Moldova should choose the lesser evil, which is Plahotniuc, if shared by the Ukrainian expert community and civil society, would undermine its close ties with the civil society of the Republic of Moldova. During the days of the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, the civil society in Moldova sincerely supported Ukrainian counterparts and expressed their solidarity. If the Ukrainian civil society leaders do not support their Moldovan counterparts these days, that will cause damage for solidarity of civil society *per se* in the region.

Containing these challenges is possible by intensified dialogue between the expert communities of Ukraine and Moldova and joint efforts aimed at ensuring the civil society's function of a democracy watchdog. Besides, the West also has to

⁶ Manifestul Platformei Civice Demnitate Și Adevăr (DA). 24.02.2015. Accessed at: http://www.demnitate-adevar.md/Platforma_Civica_DA.pdf

⁷ Piotr Oleksy. Moldova. Values and geopolitics / New Eastern Europe. 17.05.2016. Accessed at: <http://neweastern-europe.eu/articles-and-commentary/1996-moldova-values-and-geopolitics>

contribute to the further development of civil society movements and their transformation into the influential political force that would create an alternative to the existing, often corrupted and compromised “pro-European” forces in both Ukraine and Moldova. The respective policies have to be implemented promptly; otherwise, the existing “lesser evil” will be soon substituted by revanchist powers that will result in the failure of European ideas in the region and the decline of the Western influence.

Transnistrian edge of the bilateral relations and the challenges it causes

Obviously, the current crisis in the Republic of Moldova has some impact on the developments in the Transnistrian settlement as well. Transnistria is extensively using “destabilization” and the “Romanian threat” discourse to consolidate its society. Since 1990-s the authorities of the breakaway region have been exploiting the thesis about unstable Moldova and the “Romanian tanks” to prove the necessity of being “independent from Moldova” and expecting support from Moscow.

Meanwhile, Moscow is actively playing both with the sentiments of Transnistrian voters and with a geopolitical situation in the region. For example, on 31 March 2016, Russia held the drills for the Operative Group of the Russian military forces in Transnistria, although Moldova is constantly demanding to withdraw Russian troops from the Transnistrian region and the respective declaration was made by the Moldovan authorities on the same day⁸.

Russia also illegally recruits the soldiers in the Transnistrian region, which is de-jure a territory of Moldova, whereas the conscripts are Moldovan passport holders⁹. That does create the problem of violated international norms, de-facto demonstrates Russian sovereignty over the region, and may potentially cause the situation when Moldovan citizens (passport holders of the neutral state) will be indirectly involved in the military clashes with the third countries.

On 10 April 2016, the Ukrainian media also published information that alongside with other Russian officers, under the pretext of alleged inspection of troops at the Transnistrian territory, the general colonel of the Russian Army Aleksandr Lentsov arrived to Moldova¹⁰. He is known for participation in operations in Chechnya, Syria and the East of Ukraine. Although the details of his assignment are not clear, his appearance in Moldova is nevertheless a worrying sign.

On the other hand, Russia is pushing for the acceptance of its interests as the founding stone for the continuation of the 5+2 negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict settlement. According to the diplomatic sources, the Kremlin is considering support of a special status for Transnistria within Moldova’s borders. The respective changes in the rhetoric of Russia are believed to be a result of the efforts of the German Chairmanship at the OSCE as well as the desire of Russia to improve its relations with the EU. However, if it is again guided by the principles of liberalism and constructivism in the bilateral relations, Ukraine will support a decision that would be acceptable for the Republic of Moldova, but in case the realist approach prevails,

⁸ Молдова вызвала посла РФ из-за информации о наборе военных / Украинская правда. 1.04.2016. Accessed at: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2016/04/1/7104160/>

⁹ Moldova Asks Russia’s Army To Stop Recruiting Its Citizens / Newsweek. 22.06.2016. Accessed at: <http://europe.newsweek.com/moldova-asks-russia-separatist-army-stop-recruiting-citizens-473155?rm=eu>

¹⁰ A dangerous example: Moldova being split between Russia and the West / Ukrainian Prism. 28.04.2016. Accessed at: <http://prismua.org/en/dangerous-example/>

Ukraine is likely to be very cautious, in case concessions made by Moldova would undermine the interests of Ukraine. First, Ukraine will definitely insist on the preservation of the existing format of 5+2 talks, since the conflict in Transnistria occurred in the direct neighbourhood of Ukraine and thus its solution with the consideration of the Ukrainian interests belongs to the priorities of the Ukrainian government. Besides, if there is a lack of trust between the governments of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine may play a card of the Ukrainian minority in Transnistria and bargain with the other parties of negotiations on those issues. Therefore, it does matter if Kyiv and Chisinau work together on solving the issues emerging in the bilateral relations. If each party plays its own game, that would make the relations much more complicated and it is a task for the civil society to invigorate the governments to act in the friendly and good neighbourly manner.

Approbation of the Russian methods in Moldova

Notwithstanding the fact that Russia, and the EU likewise, did not interfere into the Moldovan domestic affairs directly, arguably the key challenge for Moldova is rooted in Russian foreign policy, specifically its "Russian World" concept (although Moldovans are not even Slavs, the heritage of Sovietization and Russification left its impact on the self-identity of many people of Moldova and Russia exploits this fact as long as there are pro-Soviet sentiments among the population of Moldova). The Kremlin considers Moldova (alongside with Ukraine) to be an integral part of its geopolitical and cultural space, and thus invests a great deal in preserving and increasing its influence in

the country. It exploits its soft power to gain control of assets and public opinion support. Russian media, which is widely common in Moldova (that's another similarity to Ukraine), serves as an instrument for wider dissemination of the Russia's official propaganda.

Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea caused challenges to the inviolability of state borders, while the hybrid war tactics seen in eastern Ukraine – arguably an explicit expression of the Russian revolutionary expansionism – together with the Kremlin's policy of promoting "controlled chaos" in the region, makes the stakes even higher for the Republic of Moldova.

Even in the unlikely case, when the EU and pro-European forces win the battle over the majority in Moldovan parliament and over the personality of the new Moldovan president, the Russian Federation will still have its leverage to interfere in order to keep the Republic of Moldova in its orbit.

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin back in 2013 openly declared that: "Moldova's train en route to Europe would lose its cars"¹¹. The growing tensions between pro-Russian population and the so-called "unionists" – supporters of the re-union of Moldova with Romania, also cause vulnerability of the Republic of Moldova, and give formal justification to additional Russian interference in the domestic affairs of the republic.

Therefore, Russia will continue to question the European choice of Moldova. The scenario that is being applied to Moldova should be perceived as an approbation of its methods. In case any of them or their combination are effective in regaining

¹¹ Repercussions of the Ukraine Crisis for Moldova / Institute of World Policy. 16. 07.2014. Accessed at: <http://iwp.org.ua/eng/public/1176.html>

control over Moldovan establishment, Russia will spread the same strategies to a wider range of countries including Ukraine – some steps in this direction are already visible in Ukraine and many further ones can be forecasted both in Ukraine and other vulnerable countries.

Regrettably, even the EU membership can hardly prevent the threat of the Russian expansionism if the membership is not accompanied with reforms in the political sphere, fighting corruption, and efficient policies in the sensitive territories with high secessionist potential.

Therefore, these very fields should be the subject of close cooperation between the governments of Ukraine and Moldova and their European partners. The exchange of information on the Russian hybrid operations, consolidated approach in counteracting Russian initiatives violating the interests of any of the countries in the region, a constructivist approach to the bilateral relations based on the common values, goals and identity can be the main tool for counterweighing challenges produced by Russia. At the same time, realism-oriented rational egoism of the countries can be counterproductive and the task for the civil society of both countries is to channel the respective messages to the governments of both countries.

To conclude with, although big players matter in international politics, bilateral relations between neighbours also remain important – in particular, when the countries have similar features and thus common solutions may be of mutual benefit. In case of Moldova and Ukraine, these relations are complicated and rotten due to the heritage of the Soviet past, unresolved issues in the borders, dangerous activities of Russia in

both Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. Furthermore, the relative failures of the political elites to deliver appropriate results in the field of reforms and European integration cause the obstacles for the European path of both countries.

The leadership of both countries has the choice whether to look for solutions jointly or to approach them from a position of national egoism. Although the latter looks like the easiest way, it can create deeper divisions between Ukraine and Moldova that would be harmful for both states and that only Russia – the main troublemaker in the region – can benefit from.

The challenging task for both the political elites and civil society (in a broad sense) of both countries is to put aside their diversities and elaborate a solidarity-oriented approach for the solution of existing problems.

At the same time, the challenging task for the West (mainly for the United States but also for the European Union) is to keep a value-based approach prevailing over realist approaches. Otherwise, the civil society will be disappointed in Western allies and both Europe and the US may lose their traditional ally in the region.

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UKRAINIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITY IN GERMANY: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND ITS ENGAGEMENT FOR ITS HOME COUNTRY

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During Euromaidan and its aftermath, the Ukrainian community in Germany experienced the emergence of new non-state actors: civically engaged Ukrainians, forming a new diasporic community. Based on the research project “#EngageEUkraine – Engagement of Ukrainians in Poland and Germany”, the paper examines selected aspects of the study. By asking if the diasporic community could act as a new homogenous non-state actor, the analysis shows that such potential exists: with their activities, the diasporic community does not only indirectly contribute to the democratization of Ukraine, but at the same time acts as a cultural bridge between German and Ukrainian societies, thereby potentially contributing to the improvement of relations between both states. Therefore, its support should also be of interest to Ukrainian government.

The Euromaidan protests in 2013 and 2014 in Kiev can be regarded as an initial trigger for the formation and engagement of a civil society not only within Ukraine but also in Ukrainian communities in Germany. In addition, the annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Federation and the war in Eastern Ukraine raised a common feeling, a sense of belonging to Ukrainian community, which led to the support of Ukraine in a vast number of diasporic activities, from political demonstrations and cultural events to military and humanitarian aid. This tendency was further increased by the interconnectedness of Ukrainians in different parts and regions of the globalised world. The constant, immediate flow of information about the developments in Ukraine has resulted in strong ties between the “homeland” and its diaspora. This raises the question whether and how the Ukrainian diaspora can contribute to the stabilization and democratization of Ukraine.

Focusing on this question, this paper gives an overview of the history of Ukrainian diaspora in Germany since 1945 up to the emergence of new Ukrainian non-state actors since November 2013, forming a new diasporic community. From a historical and empirical perspective the paper explains how and why the evolution of the “old Ukrainian diaspora” has led to a “white spot” in the mental map of Germans concerning Ukraine and Ukrainian matters and asks whether the diasporic community can fill this gap. In order to answer the question whether this diasporic community can be viewed as a new homogenous non-state actor, this paper will focus on the content and development of its engagement as well as on connecting factors within the community. It will also analyse the two main forms of its engagement: humanitarian aid in Ukraine on one side and cultural and informative activities in Germany on the other side.¹ Thereby, the paper gives an overview of

the potential influence on both states. It concludes with policy recommendations for Ukrainian government in order to support and strengthen Ukrainian diaspora.

Research Project und Design

This paper stems from a larger research project “#EngageEUkraine – Engagement of Ukrainians in Poland and Germany” that was conducted in 2015 and 2016 by the *Institut für Europäische Politik* (IEP), Berlin, and the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA), Warsaw and funded by the German Polish Science Foundation. The results of the project were published in May 2016.² The joined project of IPA and IEP dealt with the civic engagement of Ukrainians living in Germany and in Poland. The main objectives of the project were:

1. Mapping the fields, intensity and structure of Ukrainians’ engagement as well as its potential contribution to the process of democratization in Ukraine;
2. Exploring how Ukrainian diaspora has been influenced by recent developments in Ukraine since November 2013;
3. Providing recommendations on how public and private actors on the EU level as well as in Poland, Germany and Ukraine can support Ukrainian civic engagement in both countries to indirectly support the process of democratization in Ukraine.³

For this purpose, 88 structured interviews, 44 in each country, were conducted. The interviewees were Ukrainians who are civically engaged either individually, in formal organisations, or in non-formalised initiatives. Besides civic engaged interviewees, a group of “experts” was interviewed, consisting of people who are well informed about Ukrainian diaspora in these two countries. In order to guarantee a high degree of heterogeneity in terms of age, gender, place of activity etc., and to include people from the whole range of civic engagement, the first selection of interviewees was identified in a desk research. To control the criterion of heterogeneity, the following interviews were conducted in waves, using the snowball system to identify further interviewees.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed following Mayring’s (2003) qualitative content analysis using the software “f4transkript” and “f4analyse”. The initial code system was systematically and inductively extended during the process of coding.

Main facts about Ukrainians in Germany

According to the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, there were around 128.000 Ukrainians with Ukrainian citizenship living in Germany in 2014.⁴ Therefore, comparing the numbers of Ukrainians of 1995 (30.000) and 2014, significant growth can be observed. The largest groups

¹ At the beginning of the Ukrainian engagement in Germany in the end of 2013/beginning of 2014, solidarity demonstrations were playing a major role. Nevertheless, in the following we will concentrate on engagement that was mainly pursued during the interview phase (August-November 2015) and still remains important, in order to analyse the potential long-term effects of the engagement of the diasporic community.

² Katrin Böttger/Agnieszka Lada (Eds.): “#EngageEUkraine – Engagement der Ukrainer in Polen und Deutschland”, published in May 2016.

³ Melnyk/Patalong/Plottka/Steinberg (2016): How the Ukrainian Diasporic Community in Germany Contributes to EU’s Policy in its Home Country, p. 3.

⁴ Federal Statistical Office Germany (2015): Statistisches Jahrbuch. Deutschland und Internationales 2015. Accessible at: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/StatistischesJahrbuch/StatistischesJahrbuch2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile [27.03.2016]

of Ukrainians are found in North Rhine-Westphalia (28.000), in Bavaria (24.000) and in Baden-Wuerttemberg (14.000).⁵ The main reasons to move to Germany are family (18.810), education (5.830) and work (4.550).⁶

Due to historical circumstances, Southern Germany can be regarded as a center of the Ukrainian diaspora. About three million Ukrainians were driven to Western Europe during and after the Second World War.⁷ Around 2.3 million Ukrainians were deported as forced labourers to Germany.⁸ After the end of the war, many Ukrainians returned home either voluntarily or were forcibly repatriated to the Soviet Union. A small part of them remained in German and Austrian camps for Displaced Persons (DPs), with an estimated number of 140.000 Ukrainians living in German DP camps in 1947.⁹ By autumn 1945¹⁰, 50 percent of Ukrainian refugees remained in the US Zone (mainly in Bavaria), 25 percent in the British Zone and 5 percent in the French Zone of West Germany.¹¹ At the end of 1951, only around 22.000 Ukrainians remained in West Germany whilst the majority migrated to other western countries.¹² The DP camps were both a political and social asylum for Ukrainians.

The inhabitants organized many cultural, educational, social and political activities. In order to protect the rights of Ukrainians and to coordinate the life in DP camps, the official Central Representation of the Ukrainian Emigration¹³ was created in 1945. In addition to official international institutions, medical assistance was also provided by institutions like the Ukrainian Red Cross, which was not officially recognized but worked as an independent body.¹⁴ Furthermore, a lot of educational institutions such as kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education were established, for example the Ukrainian Higher School of Economics (Munich), the Ukrainian Free Academy of Science (Augsburg) or the Ukrainian Free University (Munich). However, with the migration of most Ukrainians to other western countries in the end of the 1940s and in the beginning of the 1950s, many institutions of higher education also moved to other countries. The only exception is the Ukrainian Free University, which still exists in Munich today.

With the emigration of the majority of the Ukrainian DPs, including many scientists, writers and journalists, the short period of

⁵ Federal Statistical Office Germany (2016): Ausländer: Bundesländer, Stichtag, Geschlecht, Ländergruppierungen/Staatsangehörigkeit. Accessible at: https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online/data;jsessionid=5180E542575D4996027CEF8379A13ED3.tomcat_GO_1_2?operation=abrufabelleBearbeiten&levelindex=2&levelid=1463484116805&auswahloperation=abrufabelleAuspraegungAuswaehlen&auswahlverzeichnis=ordnungsstruktur&auswahlziel=werteabruf&selectionname=12521-0021&auswahltext=%23SSTAAG6-ST166&nummer=5&variable=3&name=STAAG6&werteabruf=Werteabruf [27.03.2016]

⁶ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees Germany (2016): Migrationsbericht 2014. Accessible at: https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Broschueren/2016/migrationsbericht_2014_de.pdf?__blob=publicationFile [27.03.2016]

⁷ Kubijovyč, Volodymyr (1984): Encyclopedia of Ukraine. Toronto, p. 822.

⁸ Dyczok, Marta (2000): The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees. New York., p. 18.

⁹ Jacobmeyer, Wolfgang (1985): Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum heimatlosen Ausländer – die ‚Displaced Persons‘ in Westdeutschland 1945–1951. Göttingen, p. 271.

¹⁰ First statistical data on Ukrainians living in Germany can only be found for the year 1945.

¹¹ Dyczok (2000): The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees, p. 76–77.

¹² Marunjak, Volodymyr (1985): Ukrajinska Emihracija v Nimeččyni i Avstriji po druhij svitovij vijni. Munich, p. 116.

¹³ In Ukrainian: „Centralne Predstavnytvo Ukrajinskoho Emihraciji“

¹⁴ Dyczok (2000): The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees, p. 70.

Germany as a center of Ukrainian cultural and scientific life in Western Europe ended. The consequence of this development was not only a lack of Ukrainian scientific institutions in Germany but also a lack of bilateral institutional platforms. Thus, Ukrainians neither participated directly in the public debate about Ukraine in Germany nor did they comment on other historical events from a Ukrainian point of view after early 1950s. Along with the general post-war circumstances in Germany, this lack of Ukrainian perspective and Ukrainian players in the German public sphere led to a certain “invisibility” of Ukrainians and Ukrainian matters. This effect was further enhanced by the fact that Ukraine was not an independent state and the Soviet Union was mostly perceived as

 ***Within the framework of the Ostpolitik, it was not in the main interest of the West German government to get involved with particular Soviet republics in order not to complicate the relations with the Soviet Union***

a homogenous political actor. The policies pursued by the German government, particularly the so-called Ostpolitik (new Eastern policy) of Willy Brandt that aimed at easing tensions between West Germany and Eastern Europe, could be regarded as an additional factor for this “invisibility”.¹⁵ Within the framework of the Ostpolitik, it was not in the main interest of the West German government to get involved with

particular Soviet republics in order not to complicate the relations with the Soviet Union. Consequently, Ukraine, for many years, became a “white spot” in the German society. This perception remained after the collapse of the Soviet Union, leading to Ukraine still being frequently regarded as a part of the Russian sphere of influence.

Ukrainian diasporic community in Germany – the rise of a new non-state actor?

While this “white spot” on the mental map of many Germans regarding Ukrainian matters still exists today, this “gap” might slowly be filled in. This mainly results from the emergence of a possible new non-state actor, the Ukrainian diasporic community. This community includes a considerable number of Ukrainians living in Germany who are not a part of the “old diaspora”¹⁶, as described above, and who can be characterized by a high level of interconnectedness with other Ukrainians both on a national and international levels. This group mainly consists of labour migrants, students and Jewish Ukrainians¹⁷ who came to Germany in the last decade as well as (German) spouses of Ukrainians. During the interviews, it became clear that many of them do not consider themselves as part of Ukrainian diaspora. Instead, they rather see themselves as Ukrainians living abroad for a certain time or indefinitely. Quite often they show high willingness to integrate into the German society, and are characterized by low levels of interconnectedness amongst each other and low civic engagement with regard to Ukrainian issues before Euromaidan.

¹⁵ Kappeler, Andreas (2001): Die Ukraine in der deutschsprachigen Historiographie. In (Hrsg.): Jordan, Peter et al.: Ukraine: Geographie – Ethnische Struktur, Geschichte – Sprache und Literatur, Kultur – Politik – Bildung – Wirtschaft – Recht. Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Berlin, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien, p. 216.

¹⁶ In the context of this paper the “old diaspora” is defined as a rather homogenous group of people of Ukrainian decent living in Germany in the first, second or third generation. Further explained in the section “Main facts about Ukrainians in Germany”.

¹⁷ Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Jewish persons and persons of Jewish heritage are accepted to migrate to Germany as so called quota refugees (Kontingentflüchtlinge).

As the events of Euromaidan in Kyiv led to mobilization and manifestation of a civil society within Ukraine, a similar development can be observed in Germany. Euromaidan was the initial trigger for networking among Ukrainians in Germany and for their engagement leading to the emergence of a diasporic community. The perceived necessity to help and a growing sense of belonging to a Ukrainian group in Germany motivated many to take part in solidarity protests and common activities. Whereas Euromaidan triggered the emergence of a new diasporic community, the annexation of the Crimea and the war in Ukraine were additional drivers for the formation and civic engagement of this new community. In late 2013 and early 2014, a plethora of political initiatives was started, which since then have experienced a continuous change concerning intensity, organization, goals and means. The interviews showed that many engagements are undergoing a process of further institutionalization and professionalization since their formation.

The use of social media considerably facilitated this process not only as a tool to initiate protests and common activities but also as a means to establish new contacts and to extend personal networks. Besides social media, another factor that played a decisive role for networking among members of the diasporic community was the Church. Before Euromaidan, the Church (especially the Greek-Catholic Church) provided the only platform for Ukrainians in Germany to meet, discuss and share ideas. This exchange became even more important during Euromaidan. Furthermore, the process of networking was actively promoted by Ukrainians themselves, e.g. by holding so-called “*Stammtische*” (regular’s tables). Additionally, since 2014, the Ukrainian embassy and the consulate generals in Germany have been increasingly focused on connecting Ukrainians in Germany, e.g. through the organization of

joint events. Furthermore, the interviews revealed that a major factor uniting the members of the diasporic community and their different forms of engagement are common values as a group. Especially, “Euromaidan values” or “European values” as listed in art. 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), i.e. human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, were named. For the interviewees, this overlap also creates a constant link to Euromaidan in Kyiv and the civil society in Ukraine.

With regard to the variety and ongoing institutionalization of the engagement of Ukrainians in Germany, a stabilized diasporic community has the potential to function as a non-state actor in the long term. To date, we can observe the mobilization of new individual actors starting to establish a homogenous community. This becomes not only evident in their transnational activities with Ukrainian civil society, but also in their interaction with the German society, thus acting as an intercultural link between Ukrainians and Germans. Recently, bilateral activities between Ukrainians and Germans have gained in importance. As such joint activities are increasingly initiated by the German side, it can be assumed that Ukrainians finally are becoming more visible in Germany. The next section will elaborate on the two main forms of civic engagement – humanitarian aid in Ukraine and engagement in Germany – and their potential internal and external influence.

The engagement of the diasporic community

Starting in November 2013, the first Ukrainian diasporic initiatives, which emerged in Germany, were mainly focusing on political protest and information activities (e.g. Euromaidan Wache Berlin). Not only did the engagement during this time focus on showing solidarity with the protests in Kiev, but many informative

initiatives were aimed at the German public as well. The interviewees describe that along with the first violent incidents on Euromaidan and the following war in Eastern Ukraine many of the formerly political initiatives broadened their range of activities – now mainly focusing on activities aimed at Ukraine, e.g. humanitarian aid for Ukrainians suffering from the outcomes of the war in Eastern Ukraine or military support for the Ukrainian army. At the same time, with the manifestation of the situation in Ukraine, cultural and informative activities in Germany are gaining importance again with the intention to explain Ukraine and Ukrainian matters to the German public, thus trying to fill in the “white spot” on the mental map of Germans.

The engagement in Ukraine

Humanitarian and military aid plays a major role in the engagement of the diasporic community. The main activities include supplying hospitals and social institutions like orphanages with equipment and drugs, the support of families and the bereaved of soldiers and displaced persons and – at the beginning of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine – the provision of equipment for the Ukrainian army, such as uniforms and protective vests. This engagement was deemed necessary as the state itself, suffering from the consequences of the war in the East and the economic crisis, did not seem fit to provide these services. Therefore, the diasporic community indirectly contributed to the stabilization of the Ukrainian government, especially in the beginning of the conflict – which potentially, by reducing reform pressure in some fields, could also support the process

of democratization in Ukraine.¹⁸ At the same time, there is a risk that the reduction of reform pressure will only have positive effects in the short term. In the long run, reversed consequences could occur, with the continuous support of the diasporic community leading to the omission of needed reforms.¹⁹

The indirect stabilization of Ukraine is not the only process contributing to democratization. To provide humanitarian aid, Ukrainian activists in Germany often cooperate with civil society in Ukraine. The interviewees pointed out that this does not only serve as a control mechanism to ensure that donations reach their recipients, but is also crucial to receive information from Ukraine. Furthermore, the members of the diasporic community sharing European values as described in the section before, strictly insist upon these values in their activities and in their cooperation with Ukrainian partners. For example, engagement is structured in a democratic way, as decision-making is often based on discussions where everyone can participate. Furthermore, the interviewees follow rules of transparency in their activities, e.g. by making financial expenses public and publishing reports on their activities – not only to gain trust from German partners, but also to support the underlying normative concept. This also influences their work with partners in Ukraine – interviewees describe that they are not only making sure that their partners are reliable, but also expect transparency from their side. In the long term, the advocacy of democratic norms and the demand that partners in Ukraine adjust to these norms can considerably influence civil society in Ukraine, leading

¹⁸ Melnyk/Patalong/Plotka/Steinberg (2016): How the Ukrainian Diasporic Community in Germany Contributes to EU's Policy in its Home Country, p. 9.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 9.

to the democratization of Ukraine from the bottom up.²⁰

The engagement in Germany

While an important part of the Ukrainian activities in Germany aim at the support and stabilization of civil society in Ukraine, therefore indirectly contributing to the democratization of the country, the trend of activists to refocus on cultural and informative activities in Germany can be observed. These are not only addressing the members of the diasporic community, but also the German society – to close the gap between the German society and Ukrainians and to counter their limited visibility, as interviewees often highlighted. This gap is of historical origin as described in the historical overview. For example, active Ukrainians feel that Euromaidan was incorrectly perceived by the German society as it was often equalized with a right wing movement in the German public debate. They actively tried to change this view, e.g. by translating Ukrainian news into German, using their slogans in German during numerous demonstrations and the organization of informative events to explain that the Euromaidan was not about nationalism but about European values.

At the same time, the interviewees expressed the feeling that Ukrainian culture and history is often associated with the Russian one. This seems to be mainly due to the historical perception of Ukraine as being merely a “post-soviet” state, which remains a part of the Russian sphere of influence. The close links between Germany and Russia enhance this understanding of Ukraine as well as the large impact of Russian propaganda in Germany, as the interviewees describe. To counter

this perception, activists are organizing different events to promote Ukrainian culture and history.

Another problem perceived by the diasporic community is the indifference of many Germans regarding the engagement of Ukrainians. Even though Euromaidan, the annexation of the Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine were present in German media over a long period of time and Germans supported humanitarian aid to Ukraine, many interviewees described a lack of support for the activities of the diasporic community. This became also apparent in the low interconnectedness between the diasporic community and other German actors, e.g. civil society, media and political institutions. This problem does not only result from the missing or critical perception of Ukrainian engagement in the German society, but also from a lacking platform for joint initiatives. Only few German institutions

 ***Ukrainians feel that Euromaidan was incorrectly perceived by the German society as it was often equalized with a right wing movement in the German public debate***

have been working with Ukrainian actors within the country itself or in Germany. The few organizations mentioned by the interviewees most often only organize annual conferences or hold round tables, but are not pursuing long-term activities, e.g. in capacity building in Ukraine, where skills and intercultural competence of Ukrainians living in Germany could contribute as well. With only some exceptions like the “Kiev Dialogue”, bilateral initiatives

²⁰ Melnyk/Patalong/Plottka/Steinberg (2016): How the Ukrainian Diasporic Community in Germany Contributes to EU's Policy in its Home Country, p. 8.

like the Ukrainian-German Historical Commission, the UKRAINE Network or the UkraineLab-Forum were founded only after Euromaidan, mainly providing a platform for networking. Despite these initiatives, the overall cooperation between German and Ukrainian civic actors remains limited. Overall, the attempts of Ukrainians to find access to the German public are predominantly lacking long-term success. Nevertheless, with their engagement the diasporic community actively tries to influence the German perception of Ukraine, which – in the long-term – has the potential not only to fill in the “white spot” in the German mental map, but also positively influence bilateral relations between Germany and Ukraine.

Conclusion

Ukrainians are looking back on the mixed history in Germany. While after the World War II the Ukrainian diaspora was in the process of institutionalizing its activities, the emigration of the majority of Ukrainians interrupted this development. Ukrainians became an invisible community, a „white spot“ on the mental map of the German public. Euromaidan led to the emergence of a new group: the diasporic community. Characterized by a high interconnectedness amongst its members and common European democratic values, this group has the potential to act as a new non-state actor if the process of institutionalization and professionalization of their engagement continues. To estimate this potential, two main fields of engagement were analyzed. The analysis showed that the activities have the potential to support the process of democratization of Ukraine in the long term – both through the indirect stabilization of the Ukrainian government and the diffusion of norms in the cooperation with Ukrainian civic actors – besides the risk of a reduced reform pressure. At the same time, the diasporic community in Germany is experiencing a new trend: more and more

activists are working in German projects that aim at capacity building in Ukraine. Thus, they are not only contributing their expertise but also serve as a bridge between the German and Ukrainian civil society through their intercultural competence.



diasporic community indeed can be perceived as a new non-state actor acting as an intercultural link between Ukrainians and Germans

These trends show that the diasporic community indeed can be perceived as a new non-state actor acting as an intercultural link between Ukrainians and Germans.

Recommendations

Due to the diasporic community’s potential, it becomes apparent that its support should also be of interest to Ukrainian government – not only as a contributor to stabilization and transformation of the state but also as a bridge between Ukrainian and German societies.

- Therefore, Ukrainian government should support the diasporic community by setting up a Ukrainian cultural institute in Germany. Ukrainians in Germany often complain about the lack of a “Ukrainian House”. Such a “Ukrainian House” could not only provide a platform for networking and space for joint activities, but would also strengthen both the visibility of Ukrainian culture and the diaspora in Germany – thus supporting the diasporic engagement both in Ukraine and in Germany.
- Ukrainian government should also invest in the establishment and support of bilateral forums – both between the diasporic community and German civic actors as well as between the diasporic

community and Ukrainian civil society. First, bilateral forums between Ukrainian diasporic and German civic actors would foster their interconnectedness. The engagement of Ukrainians, often still lacking institutionalized structures, could gain expertise and resources from the cooperation with German organizations and initiatives, thus contributing to the formalization and professionalization of their activities. This, in turn, could lead to the extension of their engagement, both in Germany and Ukraine. Second, the engagement of the diasporic community might gain in credibility and visibility when working in joint projects with established German actors and organizations.

- The Ukrainian government should also foster bilateral platforms between the diasporic community and civic actors in Ukraine. Especially the latter would considerably profit from extensive interconnectedness and exchange between both groups, as they could learn from the experiences of diasporic activists and thus professionalize and extend their activities in Ukraine. Furthermore, the above mentioned mechanism of norm diffusion could take place when actors from both states cooperate – thus leading to the bottom-up democratization of Ukraine in the long term.

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REBIRTH OF UKRAINIAN-ROMANIAN FRIENDSHIP: NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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This research paper aims to provide a complete analysis of Ukrainian-Romanian relations after 2004. Here, challenges that Romania and Ukraine have faced will be highlighted. Namely, their territorial dispute and the status of the Romanian minority in the Western part of Ukraine. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the relations between the states after 2014 will be provided. In order to do so, public discourse and political statements made by the Presidents of both countries will be used. This can be considered an efficient theoretical instrument to better comprehend the relations between the states. To end with, after giving an overview of the perplexing relationship in the context of Russian aggression, we would like to outline the opportunities to rebuild trust between Ukraine and Romania that we have today.

Introduction

It is well known that Ukraine and Romania are neighbouring European states, sharing similar historical background, national transition and possessing common cultural heritage. Ideally, these two countries are supposed to have strong ties and fruitful diplomatic communication. However, exactly like two neighbours living next to each other, Ukraine and Romania are facing many challenges.

It is worth mentioning that immediately after Romanian Revolution, the relations between The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and Romania were also tense. According to Irina Angelescu, the fall of the Soviet Union brought territorial disputes to the forefront, as well as the

issue of protecting Romanian minority in the country's biggest neighbour and the condemnation of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. Despite that, the credit for positive progress in bilateral relations should be given partly to the prospects of Euro-Atlantic integration. As part of the accession process, Romania had to have basic treaties with all its neighbours. As a result, in June 1997 Romania and Ukraine signed the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation. Two years later, in May 1999, President Constantinescu paid an official visit to Ukraine, which was the first official visit of a Romanian President to Ukraine.¹ It could have been a promising start in Ukrainian-Romanian relations. However, things went a different way.

From January 2005 until February 2010 the President of Ukraine was a pro-Western

¹ I. Angelescu, *New Eastern Perspectives? A Critical Analysis of Romania's Relations with Moldova, Ukraine and the Black Sea Region*, "New Perspectives", Vol.19, No.2, pp.133-134.

politician – Viktor Yushchenko. Because of the uncertain focus of the Ukrainian foreign policy, Ukraine and Romania had a *distant relationship*.

There have been many initiatives and projects regarding the cooperation of the two countries, but these projects were never conducted properly. For instance, in 2006 President Yushchenko met his counterpart President Basescu in Bucharest, in order to discuss Ukrainian- Romanian relations in the economic and political spheres, as well as forming a mixed Ukrainian – Romanian presidential commission, which aimed at solving the most challenging issues between the two states. Among other matters, two Presidents also focused on trans-border cooperation.²

The next visible step in Ukrainian-Romanian cooperation was made in 2009, when President Yushchenko held phone talks with President Basescu. This time, Ukraine and Romania had to solve the long dispute regarding the maritime delimitation in the Black Sea.

According to *UNIAN*, Ukrainian Information Agency, both leaders affirmed that Ukraine and Romania accepted the decision of the International Court of Justice on maritime delimitation of Ukrainian-Romanian border in the Black Sea, approved on February 3.³ We can conclude that it was a fruitful discussion, taking into account the fact that both parts recognized their responsibility regarding this matter.

All these steps made by both parties were a promising beginning of a new

optimistic period in Ukrainian-Romanian relations. However, everything changed in the priorities of Ukrainian-Romanian cooperation with the newly elected Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2010. Many political analysts agree that Yanukovich's presidential term was a damaging one for Ukrainian foreign policy and especially for relations with neighbours.



Ukraine and Romania had to solve the long dispute regarding the maritime delimitation in the Black Sea

Vladlen Makoukh and Artem Filipenko described Ukrainian – Romanian relations perfectly at that moment in the context of constructing a new foreign policy strategy. Particularly, they claim that after adopting the Law of Ukraine „On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy” (July 1, 2010), which claimed Ukraine's policy of non-alignment, the issue of joining NATO was removed from Ukrainian foreign policy agenda, while cooperation on Ukraine's implementation of Euro-Atlantic integration was halted. Signing the Ukrainian-Russian agreement on prolongation of the Russian Black Sea fleet's location in the Crimea (April 21, 2010) caused a negative reaction from the Romanian side. In particular, President Traian Basescu said in October 2010 that „the fact of Russia's prolongation of agreement on basing its fleet in Sevastopol does not suit Romania”. A similar position

² President Viktor Yushchenko and his Romanian counterpart Traian Basescu discuss economic cooperation, continental shelf delimitation and construction of Danube – Black Sea Shipping Canal, “UKRINFORM”, [http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ukrnews/363471president_viktor_yushchenko_and_his_romanian_counterpart_traian_basescu_discuss_economic_cooperation_continental_shelf_delimitation_and_construction_of_danube_black_sea_shipping_canal_76567.html access: 13 May 2016].

³ Yushchenko holds phone talks with Basescu, “UNIAN”, 6 February 2009, [<http://www.unian.info/world/188177-yushchenko-holds-phone-talks-with-basescu.html> access: 13 May 2016].

was repeatedly expressed by Romanian politicians and experts.⁴

It is a well-known fact that Viktor Yanukovich was a pro-Russian politician and his close ties with the Russian Federation caused major distancing from Romania. As stated in his profile on *BBC channel*⁵, Viktor Yanukovich's closest ties and support have always come from mainly Russian-speaking eastern and southern Ukraine. Mr. Yanukovich tried hard to shed the image of being "Moscow's man" and when he became president, he pointedly made his first foreign trip as president to Brussels, rather than to Moscow. However, with Ukraine's finances in a parlous state, he argued that free trade ties with the EU would jeopardize Ukraine's existing trade with Russia. The EU refused his demand for substantial compensation.

Taking into account a pro-Russian foreign policy distancing the country from its integration with the EU, and a halting partnership with NATO, Ukraine "has put on hold" bilateral cooperation with Romania. As a result, all the initiatives and projects developed by Viktor Yushchenko and his team regarding Ukrainian-Romanian cooperation were erased from the Ukrainian foreign policy agenda.

The next stage of Ukrainian-Romanian relations started in 2014, and this was a year of drastic changes for Ukraine. The Euromaidan or Revolution of Dignity shifted the political course of the country and the vector of its foreign policy. In 2014, Ukraine officially started to pursue NATO and EU Membership. Current events in Ukraine

have opened a window of opportunity for improving Romanian-Ukrainian relations. In this sense, our neighbouring country, Romania, can be seen as an example of the EU accession.

In terms of policy and strategy, it is worth mentioning that in 2014 preparations for the launch of one of the biggest projects aiming to improve Romanian-Ukrainian cooperation were finished. The countries started to work on a joint project entitled *The Joint Operational Program Romania-Ukraine 2014-2020*, financed by the EU⁶. This project focuses on four objectives, envisaged by European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI):

1. Support for education, research, technological development and innovation;
2. Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage;
3. Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of transport and communication networks and systems;
4. Common challenges in the field of safety and security;

The Joint Operational Program Romania-Ukraine 2014-2020 contributes to the achievement of the overall ENI objective of "progress towards an area of shared prosperity and good neighbourliness between Member states and their neighbours". As we can see, the instruments of the EU offer opportunities for further cooperation between Ukraine and Romania.

⁴ V. Makoukh, A. Filipenko, Ukraine-Romania: issues and challenges of bilateral relations, [available at http://www.umk.ro/images/documente/publicatii/Buletin222/makoukh_filipenko.pdf access: 13 May 2016].

⁵ Profile: Ukraine's ousted President Viktor Yanukovich, "BBC Europe", 28 February 2014, [<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25182830>, access: 13 May 2016].

⁶ Romania Joint Operational Programme Romania – Ukraine 2014-2020, "Managing Authority Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration", [available at <http://www.ro-ua-md.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/0-Romania-Ukraine-JOP-approved.pdf> access: 13 May 2016].

Meanwhile, some drastic changes in Ukrainian internal policy were made as well. After Revolution of Dignity, Ukrainians chose a new president, a well-known pro-Western businessman, Petro Poroshenko. The newly elected President of Ukraine made a few important announcements regarding Ukrainian-Romanian relations, stressing the importance of bilateral cooperation.

Particularly, the first step was made in November 2014 when Klaus Iohannis became the President of Romania. According to the President's press service, Petro Poroshenko congratulated Klaus Iohannis with a victory during the presidential elections, and also thanked for the firm support of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Besides, Poroshenko also said he hoped for good-neighbouring relations with Romania: "Romania was the first country, which ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, and its support of our European integration aspirations is very important," he said and invited Romanian President to visit Ukraine. For his part, Iohannis returned thanks to the Ukraine's Head of state for his congratulations and assured of backing Ukraine on its way to Europe.⁷

Very soon we saw that President's statements were put into action. On March 17 2015, Klaus Iohannis paid an official visit to Kiev where he voiced his firm support for Ukraine's getting closer to the European Union. Iohannis announced back then that he agreed with Poroshenko on two countries enhancing the visibility of Romanian

communities in Ukraine and Ukrainian communities in Romania:

*"We agreed that Romanian minority in Ukraine and Ukrainian minority in Romania should become a positive factor which has to help us in order to maintain an excellent neighbourly relationship. We would like to see a positive outcome from our collaboration in the near future. Moreover, we would like to underline that one of the most important points on Romanian-Ukrainian agenda will be the rebirth of political dialogue between our countries and Romanian support for the solution finding process in the conflict in the Eastern part of Ukraine."*⁸

It is important to mention that these statements are not on paper only. In a very short time, these declarations became a real policy. Two Presidents met on April 21, 2016 in Bucharest. During this Presidential meeting, Klaus Iohannis and Petro Poroshenko signed a protocol on the relaunch of the *Romanian-Ukrainian presidential joint committee*.

Iohannis asserted that this protocol allows taking steps to solve old files on the bilateral agenda:

*"The committee will be an instrument of imprinting the political will and the necessary impulse to solve the issues on the bilateral agenda, allowing us to fully capitalize the cooperation potential that exists between our countries. Therefore, we will be able to make steps forward to resolve some files that have been on the bilateral agenda for a long time, one of which is the Bystroe Channel."*⁹

⁷ Poroshenko hopes neighborly relations with Romania to be developed in the future, "Interfax-Ukraine", 25 November 2014, [http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/236069.html, access: 13 May 2016].

⁸ Iohannis, vizita in Ucraina in contextul tensiunilor cu Rusia. Romania si Germania, tratament medical pentru soldatii raniti (Iohannis, visit to Ukraine in the context of tensions with Russia. Romania and Germany, treatment for soldiers), "ProTV", 17 March 2015, [http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/politic/klaus-iohannis-merge-in-ucraina-in-contextul-tensiunilor-dintre-rusia-si-nato-cu-cine-se-va-intalni.html access: 14 May 2016].

⁹ Presidents Iohannis, Poroshenko sign Protocol on Romanian-Ukrainian joint committee's relaunch, "Nineoclock", 21 April 2016, [http://www.nineoclock.ro/presidents-iohannis-poroshenko-sign-protocol-on-romanian-ukrainian-joint-committees-relaunch/ access: 14 May 2016].

Romania's President pointed out that it is intended to intensify cooperation between the two countries both in the cultural and the educational field, and expressed hope that the Romanian Cultural Institute (ICR) will start to operate as soon as possible in Kiev, alongside its branch of Chernivtsi. Iohannis said that talks with his Ukrainian counterpart also focused on better enforcement of the border traffic agreement, the progress of the infrastructure projects and the opening of new border crossings. Iohannis said that such measures have a strong impact upon the life quality of the citizens of the two countries and upon the tightening of connections among them. In this respect, a fast opening of the Romanian consulate in Solotvino is very important. The Head of state also said the bilateral economic relations should be fostered.¹⁰

« ***In terms of analysing political statements, we can underline that words like cooperation, political dialogue, contribution, intensification, collaboration were used several times in both Presidents' statements. This is a clear sign of a new stage in Romanian-Ukrainian relations***

Petro Poroshenko on his side made some very important announcements as well. According to the President of Ukraine's website, Petro Poroshenko held negotiations with the President of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania Valeriu Zgonea. The parties discussed the role of the parliamentary groups of friendship of Ukraine and

Romania in enhancing and developing bilateral relations. Petro Poroshenko urged the Romanian Parliament to provide expert assistance in the harmonization of national legislation with the EU legislation in the framework of the European integration of Ukraine. The President of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania called Ukraine's path to the EU a path to the welfare of Ukrainians. He also expressed full support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and condemned Russian aggression against Ukraine.¹¹

Another important discussion was held between President Poroshenko and the Prime Minister of Romania Dacian Cioloş during the official visit. The parties agreed to develop the opportunities related to the functioning of the free trade area between Ukraine and the EU. The President noted the importance of the experience of Romanian companies in entering the EU market and attracting foreign investments in the national economy. The parties discussed a series of bilateral issues, particularly their cooperation in agriculture, mechanical engineering and transport. Both parties noted a significant progress in the enhancement of transport connection between Ukraine and Romania. The interlocutors also urged airlines to establish direct regular flights between the capitals of the two countries. In addition, the parties discussed the importance of developing transport connection in the Danube Delta, particularly the construction of new bridges. Following the meeting, the parties agreed to accelerate the signature of documents necessary for natural gas supplies from Romania to Ukraine.¹²

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ President of Ukraine meets with President of Chamber of Deputies of Romania: Parliamentary dialogue plays important role in enhancing bilateral relations, "President of Ukraine. Official website", 21 April 2016, [http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/parlamentskij-dialog-vidigraye-vazhlivu-rol-u-zmicnenni-dvos-37018 access: 14 May 2016].

¹² Petro Poroshenko meets with Dacian Cioloş: Ukraine and Romania have great potential to develop economic cooperation, "President of Ukraine. Official website", 21 April 2016, [http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayina-i-rumuniya-mayut-velikij-potencial-dlya-rozvitku-ek-37016 access: 16 May 2016].

In terms of analysing political statements, we can underline that words like cooperation, political dialogue, contribution, intensification, collaboration were used several times in both Presidents' statements. This is a clear sign of a new stage in Romanian-Ukrainian relations. The context of the speeches indicates the intensification of the collaboration process between the countries.



In his opinion, Bucharest tries to counter-balance Russian influence by bringing Ukraine closer in terms of social exchange

Another challenge for bilateral relations was the annexation of the Crimea and Russian aggression in the Eastern part of Ukraine. These events were mentioned by many political analysts as a sign of the end of the "cold era" in Ukrainian-Romanian relations. As an illustration, Tomasz Dąbowski and Tadeusz Iwański in their analysis for The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) stated the following:

"The main cause for this change is the two sides' concurrent perception of risks in the Black Sea region since Russia's annexation of the Crimea. Another impetus to this thaw is the change in the domestic political situation in both countries: the strong pro-Western course of the new authorities in Kyiv, and Klaus Iohannis's assumption of the Romanian presidency in December 2014. Although there is still a catalogue of unresolved issues, a long-time barrier of

*distrust has been broken, and this paves the way for the development of Ukrainian-Romanian cooperation."*¹³

Ukrainian Revolution and the war in the Eastern part of the country pushed forward the collaboration of its neighbours in foreign policy. In the situation of crisis, it was clear that Ukraine needs active support and strengthened cooperation with the border countries. Political analysts from both sides agreed that this situation gave the green light to the "rebirth" of Romanian-Ukrainian friendship.

As we can see, Jan Mus highlighted in his research paper the fact that Romanian approach to the Ukrainian crisis transforms into *active diplomacy*. In his opinion, Bucharest tries to counter-balance Russian influence by bringing Ukraine closer in terms of social exchange. The Ukrainian crisis and its consequences resulted in strengthening pro-European elements and anti-Russian attitude among Romanian elites. It has also had a stimulating effect on Romanian foreign policy.¹⁴

Another political analyst, Olexandra Zasmorzhuik, in her article for UNIAN stated that today the twenty-year stagnation period in the relationship between the two countries has ended. Romania joined the countries that condemned Russian aggression against Ukraine and expressed its support. The dialogue and the opinions exchange has begun. Hopefully, it is only going to develop.

¹³ T. Dąbowski, T. Iwański, Breaking through distrust in relations between Romania and Ukraine, "The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)", 27 April 2016, [<http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2016-04-27/breaking-through-distrust-relations-between-romania-and-ukraine>, access: 16 May 2016].

¹⁴ J. Mus, Before the Curtain fall in the Balkans. The Ukrainian crisis from the Peripheral Perspective, 2014. Crisis in Ukraine. Perspectives, Reflections, ASLAN Publishing House: December 2015, p.215.

¹⁵ O. Zasmorzhuik, A New Friend of Ukraine, "UNIAN", 16 April 2015, [<http://www.unian.info/politics/1067966-a-new-friend-of-ukraine.html>, access: 30 May 2016].

Conclusions

Ukraine and Romania had difficulties in the past and many thought that these countries are unable to find solutions to their disputes and a common ground for further cooperation. Recent events, which took place in 2014-2015 showed a road to rediscover the potential for both countries. At this moment, Klaus Iohannis and Petro Poroshenko are very proactive in this regard; and it looks like the path of mutual distrust was left behind.

Today, it is crucial to remember and to highlight the importance of a good neighbourly partnership between the countries. Especially when we have a perfect opportunity to do so in the present context of political and economic situation. It is time to reload Ukrainian-Romanian friendship and hopefully, the good start of this collaboration

will continue to achieve new levels of trust between the two nations.

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SLOVAKIA AND UKRAINE: EASTERN PARTNERS

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Slovakia and Ukraine are geographic neighbors, which have independently sought a path for integration with the rest of Europe and strategic partnerships. While Slovakia successfully integrated joining the European Union, the Eurozone, and NATO, Ukraine is still involved in the process. The main research questions the author covers in the article are the relations Ukraine has had with the Slovak Republic since 2014, with the illegal annexation of the Crimea by Russia, and continued unrest in the Donbas region following. What, if any, regional cooperation exists between the two nations? And how much Slovakia aids Ukraine?

Introduction

There is a similar story to Slovakia and Ukraine. Their individual histories have some similar threads, yet the outcomes for each in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century are very different. Both nations spent most of their history ruled by someone else. For centuries, Slovakia known then as Upper Hungary was ruled from Budapest. Then it was a piece of the Hapsburg Empire. It is the seventy-five years as a part of Czechoslovakia that most people remember, though admittedly this union was a troubled one from the start, with Slovaks chafing at being 'ruled' from Prague, while many Czechs saw Slovakia as a poor neighbour and financial burden. Ukraine for centuries was divided and ruled by three external powers¹: Poland (and for a period of time, this included the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), Russia, and the Crimean Khanate; a successor to the Mongolian Golden Horde, and Turkic vassal state of the Ottoman

Empire. After the partition of Poland and conquest of the Khanate, Ukraine had been ruled until 1918 by both Tsarist Russia and the Hapsburg Empire. After the Revolution of 1917, Ukraine was ravaged by civil war, emerging to become a founding

« ***While their individual stories continue to share the common link of post-communist nations navigating the political and economic waves of new times and trends, the outcomes have proven different***

republic of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, Ukraine became independent and Slovakia became independent on 1 January 1993 with the peaceful split of the 'Czechoslovak nation'; a fragile construct according to a sociologist Olga Gyárfášová.

¹ An extraordinary good book on Ukrainian history, Anna Reid's *Borderland: A Journey through the History of Ukraine* is recommended though the authoritative history of Ukraine written in English arguable remains *Ukraine: A History* by Orest Subtelny.

The transition to a market economy has produced different results for Slovakia and Ukraine. While their individual stories continue to share the common link of post-communist nations navigating the political and economic waves of new times and trends, the outcomes have proven different. While Slovakia initially struggled in the mid-1990s by the early 2000s, due to a pro-Western government, and visionary leaders, Slovakia underwent the necessary reforms to join the European Union and NATO in 2004 and met the criteria necessary to adopt the euro in 2009. Moreover, since the mid-2000s Slovakia has seen foreign investors such as Samsung and Deutsche Telekom and major international corporations such as Volkswagen and Kia make Slovakia home due to the nations low labour costs, well-trained labour force, and membership in the Schengen area that has no border controls and passport checks. While Ukraine can boast of significant FDI², French and German companies taking advantage of low wages and high-skilled workers, and international firms such as Japan's Fujikura, an automobile parts maker, investing in 2015 (with the promise of hiring up to 3,000 Ukrainians), it is not a part of Schengen and does have border and custom controls.

Moreover, economically, Ukraine has not been as fortunate as Slovakia. Ukraine suffered eight years of recession in its efforts to transition to a market economy and when GDP growth was significantly increased, it was nearly wiped out in the 2008 financial crash. This fact, along with rampant political corruption and political unrest further stymied efforts to transition the Ukrainian

economy and meet criteria necessary for ascension to the European Union. A prolonged crisis started in November 2013, continued with the Russian annexation of the Crimea and further aggression in Donetsk and Luhansk. The result has been further negative influence on the Ukrainian economy and undetermined timetable for Ukraine to join the European Union.

Nevertheless, Ukraine has continued positive relations with members of the European Union in spite of these difficulties. Ukraine and Slovakia have regional cooperation in the form of a shared gas pipeline, with Slovakia assisting Ukraine in its broader relations with the E.U. Since 2014, Slovakia has been a supporter of various peace initiatives to end the violence in the Donbass region. To understand Slovak diplomacy with its eastern neighbour, it is best to describe it within post-ascension priorities.

Slovak Foreign Policy towards Ukraine

Slovak foreign policy within the last twenty years can be defined in two periods: Pre-Ascension and Post-Ascension, where in the former membership in the EU and NATO were the goals and in the latter – the instruments. The Slovak Republic's key challenge is to take advantage of the membership in both and utilize as tools in its foreign policy advancing national interests. These tools may be efficient enough, if using Brussels rather than the respective individual capitals. Therefore, defined as post-accession priorities of Slovak foreign policy,³ the Western Balkans and Ukraine have been evaluated as significant topics

² see Robert Kirchner, Vitaliy Kravchuk, Julian Ries. Policy Paper Series [PP/02/2015]. "Foreign Direct Investment in Ukraine: Past, Present, and Future" Available at: http://www.beratergruppe-ukraine.de/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/PP_02_2015_en.pdf

³ Relations with Ukraine and countries of the Western Balkans were publicly defined for the first time as priorities of Slovakia's foreign policy after entering NATO and EU by Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda at the Evaluation conference of Slovak Republic's foreign policy in March 2004. See: "Appearance of Prime Minister of Slovak Mikuláš Dzurinda", in: Brežáni, Peter (ed) Foreign policy of Slovakia after NATO and EU accession. Starting points and strategies. 2003. Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava 2004, pp. 11-17.

for the foreign policy since they hold rather obvious characteristics:

1. Each is a priority interest for both the European Union and NATO
2. Slovakia has its own vital interest in these areas.

Regarding its relations with Ukraine, for example, Slovak foreign policy uses NATO and the European Union as instruments, while also Slovakia may assume some of the responsibilities of NATO and the European Union towards Ukraine. In truth, there are not many issues in the foreign policy in which the interests of Slovakia and the EU and NATO⁴ coincide as closely as they were promulgated priorities of the Slovak Republic's foreign policy in March 2004 by then Prime Minister, Mikuláš Dzurinda.

The positive reputation of Slovak diplomacy during the Dzurinda's era produced results for the Western Balkans that represent the superior quality in Slovak foreign policy since 1999, with some examples such as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eduard Kukan's successful diplomatic mission 1999–2001 as a special representative of the UN Secretary General for the Balkans in the post-war years; support by the Dzurinda's government of accession negotiations between the European Union and Croatia in 2004; and Miroslav Lajčák's success as a special representative of the EU High Representative CFSP Janier Solana in the Montenegro referendum in March 2006, allowing for the peaceful division of Montenegro from Serbia.

Unfortunately, the second half of Slovakia's post-ascension period lacks vision towards Ukraine. It remains this way despite the efforts by the Slovak Republic in 2005 to

offer bilateral support in fulfilling goals of the Action plan with the European Union and having had the Slovak Embassy in Kyiv as the contact embassy for NATO since 2007. However, a positive public opinion towards Ukraine and positive indicators with the Slovak government are not enough for a long-term strategic vision. Moreover, continuity was lacking between the Dzurinda (1998-2006) and Fico (2006-present) governments, which resulted in the absence of meaningful convergence between Ukraine, the European Union and NATO. Efforts made have been ruined by the Fico's government following the 2009 gas crisis. What is most telling is the unilateral decision by the Prime Minister Robert Fico to support Russia in the Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute, accuse Ukraine of being the actor at fault and hold it responsible for the disruption of supplies, and most importantly a stated intent to re-evaluate support for Ukraine in its aspirations to join the European Union.

The answer to this is simple: economic cooperation. This cooperation remains the reason to maintain positive relations with Moscow. Gas deliveries come from Russia. Nuclear fuel for Slovakia's Russian-built nuclear power plants come from Russia and a significant part of its defence equipment remains procured by Russian manufactures. Yet, a contradictory and at times confusing shift started after the Euromaidan protests.

In 2014, Slovakia started supplying gas to Ukraine through reverse gas flow, despite advocating a softer approach towards Russia, explained by Gazprom announcing 'Turkish Stream' project, which would radically shift Russian gas away from Ukraine and Slovakia thus depriving Bratislava the lucrative transit fee. Slovakia was listed as a 'friendly pragmatist' in European Council

⁴ See Lukáč, Pavol, Tomáš Strážay, „Regional responsibility of Slovakia“, in: Duleba, Alexander a Pavol Lukáč (ed) Foreign policy of Slovakia after NATO and EU accession. Starting points and strategies. Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava 2004.

for Foreign Relations' 2007 power audit of the EU member states relations with Russia, and was listed on the European Foreign Policy scorecard as a leader in two out of five areas of the European Union's relationship with Russia by 2015.⁵ Since the start of the Ukrainian crisis, the Slovak government has pursued a somewhat confusing course of diplomacy.

The Slovak government and its prime minister in particular continue to publicly oppose further sector-specific sanctions against Russia. An explanation of this is both a security and political calculus for Slovakia; fear of counter-sanctions from the Kremlin, and a very selfish decision-making process by the prime minister. For Fico, the former communist party member and Putin, the former KGB agent it is about strong interpersonal relations and loyalty (Walter, 2016)⁶. More to the point, Martin Bútora, Slovakia's former ambassador to the US, does not think Fico's actions can be taken so lightly. According to Bútora, Fico is ideologically closer to the political regime in Russia than to the democracies of the West. "At present, press freedom in Russia is limited, as well as the freedom of assembly and many more freedoms that are typical in Western democracies," said Bútora. He also had an issue with the fact that Fico openly defended Russian demands at a time when relations with Russia are being reassessed in the EU and NATO because of the tense relations between Russia and Estonia as

well as Putin's threats." The European Union is seeking a common policy towards Russia," said Bútora. "This issue has been discussed in various European forums. So there has been a certain surpassing of mutual relations on Fico's part, which could be at the expense of a common European policy."⁷ What may be characterized as a post-Atlantic Age, those nations on NATO's eastern flank appear decidedly unconcerned by the Russian belligerence in Ukraine.

In truth, the Ukrainian crisis exposes a fractured Visegrad Group making it difficult

 ***the Ukrainian crisis exposes a fractured Visegrad Group making it difficult for both the EU and NATO to adopt a unified response to Moscow***

for both the EU and NATO to adopt a unified response to Moscow.⁸ Robert Fico's visits to Moscow (June 2015), his publicly stated opposition to sanctions – because they hurt national interests – the sooner removed, the better – indicates a perception that is different from Poland and other European allies. Moreover, for Fico, while his personal preference arguably is Putin's Russia, the economic considerations for Slovakia also drive foreign policy calculations. Edward Lucas, senior editor at *The Economist* and author of *The New Cold War: Putin's*

⁵ According to the ECFR, these are supporting the strong line of the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade on compliance issues with Moscow and for pushing for the diversification of gas supplies away from Russia

⁶ The author presented a paper along a similar theme at the first Annual Tartu Conference on Russia and East European Studies, Europe under Stress: The End of a Common Dream? 12–14 June 2016. University of Tartu, Estonia.

⁷ L. Lesná. Fico Finds Common Cause with Putin "The Slovak Spectator", 14 May 2007, [<http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20005088/fico-finds-common-cause-with-putin.html>]. Access 20 May 2016].

⁸ In July 2009, a group of former politicians and leading intellectuals from Central and Eastern Europe, including the Visegrad countries, wrote an open letter to U.S. President Barack Obama, warning Washington not to take the region's "transatlantic orientation" for granted. The writers warned the region could cease to be a "pro-Atlantic voice within the EU" under pressure from a "revisionist" Russia that is "pursuing a 19th-century agenda with 21st-century tactics." Russia "uses overt and covert means of economic warfare, ranging from energy blockades and politically motivated investments to bribery and media manipulation in order to advance its interests and to challenge the transatlantic orientation of Central and Eastern Europe," the letter stated.

Russia and the Threat to the West, agrees. "Poland is taking a tremendous lead as the unquestioned leader of the ex-Communist world," Lucas says. "Elsewhere, it is a very different picture. Slovakia seems to have taken, initially, a kind of almost pro-Putin line or, at least, anti-sanction..." The Slovak newspaper *Nezavisle Novini* criticized Fico, claiming softening the sanctions would be a victory for the Russian President Vladimir Putin. Rationally speaking, some observers are right to point out the difficult balance that Slovakia, and Fico, as a prime minister, faces i.e. belonging to the European Union, yet maintaining economic benefits from trade with Russia⁹. Fico has criticized the 'hypocrisy' in several EU nations for example France selling naval ships to Russia, and western firms signing a deal on a pipeline from Russia to Austria. As Grigorij Meseznikov, a co-founder of the Institute for Public Affairs, an independent Slovak think tank, explains, "[Fico] He comes from the idea, and it seems to be finding some resonance in Slovak society, that simply the question of one's own benefit is more important than strategic considerations."¹⁰ This is a risk given the potential of undermining Slovakia's position within the European Union, especially on the eve of it assuming the rotating presidency in the second half of 2016. Slovakia's own political and security interests and a growing awareness of this risk have allowed for some change. An adjustment has taken place as Bratislava has seen the potential liability of its closeness to Russia. While skepticism remains, the arch of national self-interest

prevails and Slovakia has begun to diversify its defense, economy, and energy away from Russian sources¹¹. This may indicate for some observers the arrival, finally, of some form of sympathy to Ukraine. In 2015, it appeared that Fico took a page from the *Dzurinda* playbook, dispatching a veteran diplomat and then Foreign Minister Lajčák to Ukraine. Within his diplomatic mission, Lajčák offered Ukraine a symbolic check in the amount of €10,000 for the children's neuro-surgical center in Kiev, almost three tons of predominantly medical material for military surgeons and the Health Ministry, worth €50,000. The total value of Slovak development aid to Ukraine in 2014 was approximately €750,000, while in public remarks it was accentuated that the Slovak Government wants to see a stable, democratic and prosperous Ukraine, though admittedly painful, yet necessary reforms must take place first as prerequisites for both stabilization and growth. Moreover, Slovakia has publicly stated its willingness to help Ukraine with its expertise in the transformation process, which in turn will help in the agreement on political association and economic integration between the EU and Ukraine leading to eventual ratification and implementation of the Association Agreement.¹² In addition to assisting Ukraine in its own pre-ascension process, the biggest area of cooperation remains within energy security.

Slovakia supports Ukraine with gas. In doing so, Slovakia has become an important ally. In September 2014, an upgraded pipeline

⁹ Slovakia PM condemned for pro-Russian stance, opposition to EU sanctions, "Ukraine Today", 24, February 2015, [<http://uatoday.tv/politics/slovakia-pm-condemned-for-pro-russian-stance-opposition-to-eu-sanctions-411462.html>. Access 20 May 2016].

¹⁰ Slovakia nurtures special ties to Russia, despite EU sanctions. "EurActiv", 23 May 2014, [<http://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/slovakia-nurtures-special-ties-to-russia-despite-eu-sanctions/> Access 20 May 2016].

¹¹ J. Kobzova, Slovakia Changes Course on Russia, "European Council Foreign Relations", 9 March 2015, [http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_slovakia_changes_course_on_russia311312 Access 20 May 2016].

¹² The Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Kiev. Lajčák: Ukraine looks toward reforms; Slovakia is ready to help with its expertise, 12 September 2014 [https://www.mzv.sk/web/kyjev-en/news/-/asset_publisher/olsKsldtEfpB/content/lajcak-ukraine-looks-toward-reforms-slovakia-is-ready-to-help-with-its-expertise-/10182 Access 20 May 2016].

connection between Slovakia's Vojany power station and Uzhgorod in western Ukraine began operating. This had an immediate effect of reducing Moscow's ability to influence Kyiv. More to the point, Ukraine had, because of Slovakia, a better energy negotiating position with Russia on a temporary natural gas deal in October 2015 and a three-month deal reached in early April 2016. Slovakia has the largest capacity and is a loyal supplier, despite Moscow's warnings that reverse flows are illegal. Slovakia's willingness to go beyond Russian objections is a piece of this contradictory shift. For a while, such a move by Slovakia confirms that its energy interest determined its foreign policy.

Slovakia and Ukraine; Slovakia and Russia

When Russia illegally annexed the Crimea and then supported separatist groups in the Donbas region, what is arguably considered an invasion with Russian weapons and troops, the lack of condemnation from the prime ministers of Slovakia and the Czech Republic was most unfortunate and ironic. More to the point, their responses did not match the significance of the events, taking into account of their own countries' history.

In 1968, Russian troops, then operating as the Soviet Army invaded former Czechoslovakia. Therefore, it is with certain ambivalence that Slovakia has been cautious in its public remarks. For Slovaks, many of whom are from the Prague Spring generation, and whose country borders Ukraine, the rhetoric from politicians and the prime minister's public comments have proven

most apathetic. Perhaps business interests took precedence; a fear that hawkish rhetoric towards the Kremlin would hurt Slovak business, but for the prime minister, Robert Fico to state that he would not "make vain gestures for [the sake of] gestures"¹³ indicated the unwillingness to anger Russia over an issue like Ukraine. This position is in stark contrast to his predecessors. Domestic critics, such as the former Prime Minister, Mikuláš Dzurinda, called Prime Minister Fico's foreign policy timid in an interview with daily newspaper *Sme*. This timidity may come from a personal decision to be closer to Russia despite the structural and institutional integration Slovakia has with the European Union. It is also contradicted by public opinion polling¹⁴ indicating that the majority of Slovaks believe that Ukraine should decide its future independently and that Russia has no right to interfere. Furthermore, the poll revealed that Slovaks felt their country should help Ukraine on its difficult road to prosperity and democracy. So, while Prime Minister Fico may criticize the sanctions and publicly state his view that the Ukrainian situation is a 'duel' between the United States and Russia,¹⁵ Slovakia nevertheless operates within the integration mechanisms established by its European partners. Other integration mechanisms that Slovakia can effectively use to help Ukraine are in gaining membership to Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). CEFTA membership is widely considered an intermediary step to the EU accession and would help Ukraine with its trade liberalization.

Slovakia and Ukraine also cooperate through the European Neighborhood program. This

¹³ Czech and Slovak views on Ukraine: More timid than the Poles, "The Economist", 6 May, 2014. [<http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2014/03/czech-and-slovak-views-ukraine> Access 20 May 2016].

¹⁴ Ako to vnímame slovaci na strane ukrajincov (How are Ukrainians Perceived by Slovaks), 24, June 2014, [<http://www.ivo.sk/7467/sk/aktuality/ako-to-vnimame-slovaci-na-strane-ukrajincov> Access 20 May 2016].

¹⁵ Fico vojenska zakladna odmietnutie SR (Fico would refuse military base in Slovakia), 7 September 2014. [<http://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/fico-vojenska-zakladna-odmietnutie-sr/97092-clanok.html> Access 20 May 2016].

partnership is an instrument for a deeper social and economic cooperation between the regions of Ukraine and the EU member states. There is in particular, the Hungary – Slovakia – Romania – Ukraine European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument Cross-border Cooperation program that was implemented in 2007-2013, serving a wide range of possibilities from economic and social development and increasing border efficiency to people to people cooperation.

Energy cooperation is regularly referred to in public remarks by top politicians, as a point made by then Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk meeting Prime Minister Robert Fico, and referencing the reverse gas supply from Slovakia to Ukraine that helped Ukraine during the winter months. Such public remarks are confirmed by the memorandum on cooperation in fields of energy efficiency, energy saving, and renewable energy within the framework of energy cooperation¹⁶. At the same time, economically, Slovakia enjoys the benefits of Russian gas supplies to Europe, since forty percent goes through Slovakia via Ukraine and thus gives Slovakia a decisive role. Additionally, as explained in the above section, Robert Fico is outspoken in his view that trade ties and imports are more important than punishing the Kremlin.

There is still an awkward division of loyalties within European member states and a clear disagreement over how to respond to Russia. For Slovakia, with its strategic geopolitical position, it remains the European Union's best placed member nation to assure that gas supplies continue, and perhaps more importantly, by assuming the E.U. presidency

this year, Slovakia can assist in diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine; finding a satisfactory end to the crisis.

People to people contacts and increased border efficiency are supported by the reconstruction and re-opening of the pedestrian crossing 'Mali Selmentsi-Vel'ke Slemence', which connects Ukraine and Slovakia. The checkpoint was constructed under the Cross Border Cooperation Program entitled "European Neighborhood and Partnership" as a part of the larger project, "Modernization and reconstruction of the crossing points on the Slovak-Ukrainian border¹⁷." Additionally, in Michalovce, another cross border project is on, supporting tourism and information flows between the regions of Uzhhorod in Ukraine and Zemplin in Slovakia. Finally, scholars have pursued bilateral events, such as the 2014 conference in Košice sponsored by the Carpathian Foundation and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association where the current developments in Ukraine, expected trends, and the threats of future cooperation for national and local stakeholders were examined. Moreover, Slovakia's Minister Lajčák was present at the 11th Yalta European Strategy Annual Meeting, speaking on energy security issues.

Membership in NATO is a badge of honor for the Eastern European states. Slovakia obtained it in 2004 and Ukraine similarly seeks membership. It is an issue that Slovakia can help Ukraine with. While talks for deeper cooperation between Ukraine and NATO took place and new standards for the Ukrainian Army were set out at the NATO-Ukraine Summit held in Wales in 2014,

¹⁶ Ukraine, Slovakia sign a memorandum on energy efficiency cooperation. "Victor News", 11 September 2015 [http://en.vnews.agency/news/world/13014-ukraine-slovakia-sign-a-memorandum-on-energy-efficiency-cooperation.html Access 20 May 2016].

¹⁷ A new border crossing point was opened between Ukraine and Slovakia, "Uzhgorod.In", 26 September 2014 [http://uzhgorod.in/en/in_pictures/2014/a_new_border_crossing_point_was_opened_between_ukraine_and_slovakia Access 20 May 2016].

since then significant events have occurred. The security situation changed after the Russian aggression in Donbas. Thus, there is a renewed urgency to cooperate with the Alliance since the summer of 2014. While membership in NATO and mechanisms of ascension to the European Union are in progress, that places additional pressure on the foreign policy that Ukraine continues to hold with Russia, but also the relations that Slovakia and Russia have, which go beyond history.

This may be the reason why several weeks after Slovak diplomats were unsuccessful in keeping key Russian officials off the sanctions list, the Slovak Foreign Minister, Miroslav Lajcak met without fanfare with the Russian deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin.

Conclusion

Slovakia has a delicate balancing act. A channel between the West and the East that includes Ukraine and Russia. Bound by commitments and ideals, Slovakia, despite occasional contradictions, continues the principle of solidarity in Europe. And as the European Union continues its cautious progress towards common identity, despite the identity crisis, which followed 2007 enlargement and 2009-2010 Greek bail-outs, as well as 2015 migration crisis, Slovakia is uniquely positioned to aid both its fellow member-states and its neighbour to the East.

With its success in the first half of the post-accession period, Slovakia showed that within foreign relations, it could be an active and relevant actor. Since 2004, while an argument can be made that a lack of vision persists, Slovakia's domestic construct and foreign affairs with Russia and Ukraine, may be used effectively for the argument that the European Union offers more than a bond of economic advantages.

Strategically, both Slovakia and Ukraine may continue to cooperate in developing their roles as key transport routes for energy resources from the East to the West. Likewise, a closer coordination of the policies of the two countries in this area allows a better utilization of their strategic geographic locations, enhanced diversification of energy supplies and since 2014, decreased one-sided dependency.

Regional cooperation exists between the two nations and Slovakia continues to aid Ukraine as it pursues integration with the West. Cross-border cooperation improved bilateral cooperation and assisted in building mutual trust and confidence.

Moreover, personal political factors indicate that Slovakia often has contradictory rhetoric acting as an agent for the EU in its relations with Ukraine and with Russia. However, the process of European and transatlantic integration as well as the creation of new geopolitical alliances in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space point to certain realities; geographic proximity, historical, cultural and linguistic similarity, common national interests and foreign policy orientations create a strong cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia. Therefore, Slovakia remains the best EU member nation because of its strategic geopolitical position to assure energy security, and perhaps more importantly, by assuming the E.U. presidency this year, Slovakia can assist in diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine thus finding a satisfactory end to the crisis.

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