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STRATEGIC PARTNERS OF UKRAINE (realities and priorities in war)

Project Summary



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The Strategic Partners of Ukraine project was carried out by the Razumkov Centre with the support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ukraine and consisted of the analytical report «Strategic Partners of Ukraine», materials of the remote roundtable (a series of thematic interviews with government officials and independent experts), results of expert and nationwide surveys, and a number of original articles.¹

INTRODUCTION

The topic of strategic partnership is particularly relevant due to the new war-induced priorities and goals of Ukraine's foreign policy, and to dynamic geopolitical trends and processes.

The Ukraine war has generated new challenges and threats, triggered a dangerous polarisation of the international community, escalated conflict and unpredictability both globally and regionally. Amidst Russia's

large-scale aggression, Kyiv is undergoing complex processes of establishing war diplomacy, improving and transforming its goals, objectives and priorities in key foreign areas, including the principles and motives of strategic partnership.

Ukraine's actions in the global arena are now generally focused on ensuring the country's defence capability, integrating into the EU and NATO, acquiring security guarantees, gaining support for the country's reconstruction, etc.

¹ In this paper, the name of the aggressor country is spelled differently – «rf», «RF», «russia», «Russia», etc. This is due to the internal convictions of each individual expert. The editors respect the position of the authors and preserve the original writing.

In the settings of the ongoing war, there are ambiguous processes of countries' positioning in relation to Russian aggression and determining relevant models of behaviour. In general, the international community can be divided into a coalition of Ukraine's allies; states in solidarity with our country; «neutral» countries distancing themselves from the war; and supporters of the aggressor. In the meantime, these positions evolve, with more countries becoming in solidarity with Ukraine in its fight for freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The realities of war have affected the nature of Ukraine's partnership with other nations and necessitated an inventory of the foreign relations system. Therefore, the most important indicators of bilateral relations in terms of

priority and strategic nature include support for Ukraine's resistance to Russian invaders and condemnation of the aggressor's crimes; mutual long-term interests based on the values of democracy and the rule of law; and promotion of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

The war-related processes and trends call for updating the circle of states whose relations with Ukraine are defined as priority and strategic, according to the current Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine. Obviously, the respective position of a particular country in this critical period for Ukraine will determine the level and model of bilateral relations in the future. In turn, it seems appropriate to regulate the legal framework for the introduction of strategic partnership tools.

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ANALYTICAL REPORT «STRATEGIC PARTNERS OF UKRAINE»

The evolution of Ukraine's foreign policy and strategic priorities includes difficult multi-vector period, the formation of a strategic course towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration, and eventual assertion and protection of this course during Russian aggression. Basic principles and foundations of the country's foreign policy were outlined in the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine, streamlined in the General Directions of the Foreign Policy (2 July 1993), enshrined in the Constitution (1996), the Law on the principles of domestic and foreign policy (2010) and other foreign policy documents.

The war accelerated the pro-Western evolution of Ukraine's foreign policy, largely determining the direction, nature and benchmarks of Kyiv's activities on the world stage. The legal framework was also updated to include the National Security Strategy of Ukraine (September 2020) and the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (August 2021), as well as other acts and decisions focused on protecting the country from internal and external threats, resisting Russian intervention, and gaining EU and NATO membership.

In the meantime, the transformation of priorities, nature and means of national diplomacy is taking place against the backdrop and under the influence of escalation of dangerous interconnected conflicts. The confrontation between the collective West and Russia, caused by the Kremlin's aggression against Ukraine, continues amidst the US-China conflict. This reinforces the global confrontation between the democratic world and the camp of authoritarian states. These global poles are fighting for influence around the world – in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, etc. This «democracy-authoritarianism» clash is likely to determine the specifics and dynamics of global trends in the near future. Moreover, it is the political and security factor that will be decisive in further division and polarisation of the modern world.

In view of the complex external processes, Ukraine's diplomacy must take into account the general geopolitical situation, global trends and crises. On the other hand, it should adjust its actions to the allies' positions and interests.

The main tasks of Ukraine's foreign policy in times of war include the following:

- ✓ institutionalising Ukraine's universal Peace Formula;
- ✓ ensuring external military assistance to resist Russian aggression, in particular, accumulating weapons, material and technical resources for the Armed Forces of Ukraine;
- ✓ strengthening the sanctions front against the aggressor as a key component of international resistance to aggression, along with the process of isolating the Putin regime and political and legal condemnation of Russian intervention;
- ✓ accelerating Ukraine's EU and NATO integration, in particular, ensuring conditions for the launch of EU membership talks and effective use of the results of the Vilnius NATO Summit;
- ✓ concluding a package of intergovernmental agreements on «bilateral security commitments and arrangements» within the framework of the G7 Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine;
- ✓ rebuilding and economic recovery, which envisages the revival of a modernised, developed Ukraine based on modern advanced technologies and practices;
- ✓ providing assistance and protecting the rights of our compatriots in different countries around the world;
- ✓ expanding the coalition of countries in solidarity with Ukraine, promoting initiatives on international platforms, disseminating objective information about the war in Ukraine, etc.

The above priorities of Kyiv's war diplomacy determine the specifics and direction of the overall system of Ukraine's foreign relations, as well as the nature of development and strengthening of partnerships in strategic foreign policy areas. In this context, the following important trends deserve attention.

Russia's large-scale aggression has altered the principles and motives of strategic partnership in view of the current needs and

goals of war diplomacy. Therefore, the important criteria for Ukraine's allied/strategic relations with other nations include mutual long-term interests based on the values of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights; political and diplomatic support at the state level for Ukraine's resistance to Russian aggression and condemnation of the aggressor's crimes; military, technical, financial, and economic assistance to Ukraine, including as part of the Ramstein group and within the G7 Joint Declaration; participation in the international sanctions front; participation in the Crimea Platform and the United for Justice (#U4J) platform for setting up an international tribunal to convict the aggressor country, etc.

On the other hand, controversial and ambiguous processes have taken place against the backdrop of the Ukraine war, shaping different countries' official positions regarding Russian aggression and determining their behaviour. In this regard, the global community can be conventionally divided into a) allies providing direct and comprehensive support to Ukraine and defending its interests on the world stage. This alliance includes roughly 60 nations with the core formed by the countries of the collective West, plus Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, etc., and joined by individual states from across the globe, such as Guatemala, Costa Rica, Guyana, etc.; b) a group of countries in political solidarity with Ukraine. These are more than 100 states that have recently supported pro-Ukrainian resolutions in the UN General Assembly; c) «neutral» states that avoid clear determination regarding the Ukraine war and try to maintain contacts with Ukraine and the aggressor alike, calling for a «peaceful settlement of the conflict». These are China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, as well as several countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East; d) the aggressor's allies. This limited group includes North Korea, Eritrea, Belarus, Mali, Nicaragua, Syria, and Iran.

Obviously, the respective position of a particular country in this critical period for Ukraine will determine the level and model of bilateral relations in the future.

Summing up the regional and global trends and processes related to the Ukraine war, it should be noted that the Western world, primarily the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the EU states, especially Poland, Germany, the Baltic States, France, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and others, as well as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, along with international institutions such as the EU, NATO, PACE, and the UN General Assembly, have demonstrated solidarity with Ukraine, supported its territorial integrity, and provided wide-ranging assistance in confronting the aggressor.

This allied solidarity and support materialised in various areas.

Political sphere. During the Russian aggression since 2014, the countries of the collective West and reputable international institutions demonstrated solidarity with Ukraine, supporting its territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty. More specifically, in the political and diplomatic sphere, partners (a) condemned Russian intervention, did not recognise the annexation of Crimea and the «accession» of the occupied Ukrainian territories to Russia; (b) contributed to the international isolation of the Putin regime and to political and legal condemnation of the aggressor's crimes; (c) assisted Ukraine on its path to European and Euro-Atlantic integration; and (d) supported Ukraine's interests and promoted its initiatives on the global stage.

Heads of the Western states/governments addressed the international community with statements of support for Ukraine. In the meantime, influential international institutions adopted resolutions, declarations and appeals in 2014-2023 demanding to stop Russian intervention, withdraw the occupation forces and ensure Ukraine's territorial integrity.² In particular, the Fourth Council of Europe summit (16-17 May 2023, Iceland) adopted a final resolution in which the presidents and heads of governments of the Council of Europe member states expressed support for Ukraine in countering Russian expansion and supported the Ukrainian Peace Formula.³

² EU leaders call on Russia to immediately withdraw all troops from Ukraine, Ukrinform, 10 February 2023 (in Ukrainian). <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/3668261-lideri-es-zaklikaut-rosiu-negajno-vivesti-vsi-vijska-z-ukraini.html>

³ The Council of Europe Summit supported the intention to bring the Russian leadership to justice (in Ukrainian). European Pravda, 17 May 2023. - <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2023/05/17/7161890/>

The process of granting RF a political and legal qualification of a terrorist country has spread around the world. In autumn 2022, PACE, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism. In particular, in its resolution, the European Parliament called on EU member states to initiate Russia's comprehensive international isolation, supported the investigation of its crimes and the establishment of a special international tribunal.⁴ This initiative sent a signal to the European community, and in late 2022 and early 2023, the parliaments of several European countries also declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism.

Security sector. In this area, Ukraine's key interests in relations with allies include restoring the country's territorial integrity; raising its defence capability, along with reforming and strengthening the security sector and all law enforcement agencies; ensuring external security guarantees for the period before accession to NATO by reaching bilateral agreements, including within the G7 Declaration; stepping up military and technical cooperation with Western partners to receive their assistance in equipping Defence Forces.

The obvious wartime priority is military and technical assistance from partners, including within the Ramstein coalition. During its 12th meeting, the participants pledged to provide Ukraine with \$65 billion in military assistance.⁵ The largest donors of financial and military assistance in the Ramstein format are the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The main drivers of providing modern weapons to Ukraine (howitzers, MLRS, drones, tanks, long-range missiles, aircraft) are the UK, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and recently the Netherlands and Denmark.

At the same time, it is strategically important to support the development of the Ukrainian defence industry and promote its integration into the European and global defence industry, that is, to form a powerful and stable defence industrial base. This cooperation could be mutually beneficial

given a) the difficulties faced by the Western countries' military industries (insufficient production capacity, lack of skilled labour); b) Ukraine's experience in the effective use of Western weapons; c) the availability of promising technological developments in some Ukrainian companies; and d) a potentially large orders as part of international assistance in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

Economy. Volumes, dynamics and structure of economic aid, budget support, mutual trade, foreign direct investment, economic sanctions against the aggressor, support for socio-economic reforms are all important criteria and indicators of real economic relations and strategic partnership. Thus, the bulk of economic assistance comes from the United States, the EU, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada, Poland and other European countries, as well as Japan, which have resources, potential and a clear position on providing comprehensive support for Ukraine.

Furthermore, Ukraine's economic ties with the EU are of strategic priority. The national economy's integration into the larger European economy creates additional competitive advantages, especially amidst certain economic autonomy of major global economic players and ensuring their economic security in strategic sectors. It is important for Ukraine to preserve and build up transatlantic economic solidarity with two centres of the modern global economy – the US and the EU. These areas of economic partnership and integration are key to Ukraine's tactical and strategic interests in the short and long term.

Energy sector. Partnership in this area involves coordinated implementation of a common energy policy, while sharing technologies, resources and investments. Strategic partnerships here are aimed at improving energy security and ensuring stable energy access for households and industries. Energy cooperation with partners is crucial for Ukraine, as it not only allows to develop the sector, but has become a vital necessity and means of its survival.

⁴ European Parliament resolution on recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism of 23 November 2022 (2022/2896(RSP)). - https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0405_EN.html

⁵ Ramstein countries pledged to provide \$65 billion in military aid to Ukraine with – Pentagon's Chief. «Ukrainska Pravda», 25 May 2023 – <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/25/7403876/>

The fight against the aggressor and its devastating consequences in power generation and gas sectors have determined the directions and priorities of strategic cooperation in this area, such as arranging direct supply of equipment and materials to restore the electricity sector; modernising the sector and helping in the transition to renewable energy; financing production and imports of natural gas and oil products; supporting the sanctions policy against the aggressor in the energy sector; coordinating the energy sector activities in the international arena.

Meanwhile, countries that, in spite of sanctions, increase imports of russian hydrocarbons and supply energy equipment, thus supporting russia's ability to aggress, cannot be strategic partners of Ukraine.

Humanitarian sphere. The priority is to ensure socio-economic stability in times of war and to overcome the humanitarian consequences of russian aggression. It is clear that the country's recovery will rest on the able-bodied population, skilled workers, and human capital. Therefore, cooperation and partnership on migration with EU countries is strategically important. First and foremost, it concerns Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Baltic States, and other European countries hosting a significant number of Ukrainian refugees. In this context, Ukrainian diplomacy faces a dual task – to ensure the rights, freedoms and interests of Ukrainian citizens forced to seek refuge in European countries during the war, and to gradually create the necessary conditions for the return of our citizens to Ukraine in cooperation with partner countries. In view of this, the development of new migration policy approaches and instruments seems to be relevant.

European and Euro-Atlantic integration.⁶ One can observe positive dynamics and a new quality partnership in the field of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration. On the European front, Ukraine obtaining the status of an EU candidate in June 2022; establishing

the EU-Ukraine duty-free trade regime⁷ that accelerates integration into the EU internal market; and introducing «visa-free regimes» in certain sectoral areas of cooperation should be considered as achievements of the Kyiv-Brussels relations. In parallel, Ukraine is implementing the Association Agreement, fulfilling 72% of its obligations as of 2023. The greatest progress has been made in statistics and information exchange, intellectual property, public financial management, justice, freedom, security, human rights, etc.⁸

Speaking about the current EU-Ukraine agenda, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, at the meeting with his EU colleagues in August 2023, outlined a package of joint tasks for Kyiv and Brussels that included increasing exports of Ukrainian grain; expanding the number of participants in the Peace Formula; returning Ukrainian children abducted by russia; increasing joint arms production; and launching membership negotiations between Ukraine and the EU by the end of 2023.⁹

In terms of European integration, the main, strategic task for Ukraine today is to finish implementing the European Commission's recommendations, which would give reasons to expect a new stage in Kyiv-Brussels relations – EU membership negotiations, which may start in late 2023 – early 2024. In August 2023, the Ukrainian side took a number of important steps in this direction, such as entry into force of an important European integration law clarifying the provisions on the competitive selection of candidates for the Constitutional Court judges, and adoption of the law on improving the functioning of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine.

In the meantime, the conflict situation around the ban on Ukrainian agricultural exports by some EU countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia) requires a compromise solution.

The war has accelerated Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration and added a new quality to

⁶ For more detail, see «The Russia-Ukraine conflict: from full-scale war to conflict resolution and post-war recovery», National Security & Defence journal, No.1-2, 2023 – p. 25-27 - <https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2023/09/13/2023-MATRA-journa.pdf>.

⁷ In June 2023, the EU extended year the suspension of all customs duties, quotas and trade defence measures on Ukrainian exports for another year.

⁸ Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement for 2022. The Government of Ukraine Portal, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/opryliudneno-shchorichnyi-zvit-pro-vykonannya-uhody-pro-asotsiatsiiu-ukraina-ies>

⁹ Ukraine's Foreign Minister reveals Ukraine and EU goals to achieve by December. – «European Pravda» Українська правда, 31 серпня 2023р. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2023/08/31/7417880/>.



Kyiv's partnership with NATO. As noted above, the Alliance demonstrated political solidarity and practical support for Ukraine, helping promote its interests on the global stage. At the same time, NATO's position on the Ukraine war has limitations and is generally reduced to «support but no intervention» formula, and it was publicly declared by NATO leadership.

In the first half of 2023, Kyiv launched an active lobbying campaign to promote the idea of Ukraine's accelerated accession to the Alliance. As part of this campaign, a number of bilateral declarations were signed with NATO members to support Ukraine's membership.

Although failing to meet Kyiv's maximum expectations, the results of the NATO Summit in Vilnius provided a significant impetus to the development of the NATO-Ukraine partnership, specifically in providing military assistance, raising the institutional level of the partnership, and adopting the G7 Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine, which initiated a large-scale signing of agreements on long-term military, technical, financial and economic assistance.

In conclusion, the above processes related to the Ukraine war raise the issue of improving the formal circle of states, relations with are of a priority, strategic nature for Ukraine, according to the country's current Foreign Policy Strategy (August 2021).

In particular, the Foreign Policy Strategy proclaims the development / strengthening of relations of a priority strategic (global) nature with 16 countries that can be conditionally classified into several groups:

- ✓ G7 countries (US, UK, Canada, Japan);

- ✓ EU member states (Germany, France, Poland, Lithuania, Romania);
- ✓ Eastern Partnership countries (Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan);
- ✓ other influential countries (China, India, Brazil, Turkey).

Therefore, considering the wartime trends and processes, including the positioning of individual countries, the list of states defined in the current Foreign Policy Strategy as priority and strategically important for Ukraine may include **the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, Canada, Germany, France, Lithuania, Japan, Romania, and Moldova**. During the war, these countries supported Ukraine, condemned Russian intervention, imposed sanctions, and provided various forms of assistance and support to Ukraine. In other words, their leaders demonstrate a consistent pro-Ukrainian position and implement it on the world stage.

In turn, one can assert that relations with **China, Brazil, India, and Georgia** generally do not meet the level of strategic partnership in the current circumstances.

For example, China a) takes a neutral position on the Ukraine war, putting forward purely declarative peacekeeping initiatives and considering the war a «Ukrainian crisis»; b) actively supports and develops strategic relations with the aggressor, strengthening financial and economic cooperation with RF; c) does not support Ukrainian initiatives on the world stage and pro-Ukrainian resolutions in the G20, UN GA and the Security Council; d) remains in sharp confrontation with the United States – Ukraine's main ally. This behaviour pattern regarding Ukraine is to some extent and with different variations inherent in other countries in this group.

The potential for strategic partnership with **Turkey** and **Azerbaijan** is largely limited by the specifics of their position on the Ukraine war.

Generally speaking, these assessments of the «strategic nature» of relations with the countries outlined in the Strategy are fully consistent with the opinions and positions of both Ukrainian citizens and the expert community (see Table «Strategic Partners of Ukraine...»).

STRATEGIC PARTNERS OF UKRAINE: ASSESSMENTS BY CITIZENS AND EXPERTS ¹⁰		
	Citizens	Experts
Countries that help Ukraine the most in countering Russian aggression	United States (87%), Poland (78.5%), United Kingdom (69.4%), Germany (50.7%), Lithuania (40.4%), Canada (37.9%), Latvia (34.1%), Estonia (21.4%), France (18.6%), Czech Republic (17.2%), Turkey (12.7%), the Netherlands (9.9%), Italy (8.4%)	Poland (91.1%), United States (91.1%), United Kingdom (90.1%), Germany (70.3%), Lithuania (67.3%), Estonia (59.4%), Latvia (49.5%), Canada (45.5%), the Netherlands (32.7%), France (26.7%), Czech Republic (21.8%), Denmark (17.8%), Italy (12.9%) and others
Countries that can be considered Ukraine's strategic partners (among the countries mentioned in the Foreign Policy Strategy)	United Kingdom (93.8%) ¹¹ , United States (93.4%), Poland (92.3%), Germany (87.9%), Canada (83.9%), Lithuania (78%), France (76.9%), Turkey (56.5%), Moldova (52%), Romania (50.1%)	United States (98%), Poland (97%), United Kingdom (97%), Canada (93.1%), Lithuania (93.1%), Germany (92.1%), France (84.2%), Romania (75.3%), Japan (73.3%), Moldova (71.3%).
Countries whose relations with Ukraine do not meet the level of strategic partnership (among the countries mentioned in the Foreign Policy Strategy)	China (70.6%) ¹² , India (59.2%), Georgia (51.7%), Brazil (50.6%), Azerbaijan (45.2%) ¹³ .	China (88.2%), Brazil (85.2%), India (85.1%), Georgia (77.2%), Azerbaijan (52.5%), Turkey (48.5%) ¹⁴

Therefore, one can assert that the realities of war necessitated an inventory of foreign relations system and raised the issue of improving the range of states, cooperating with which is strategic and prioritised for Ukraine.

However, when assessing these results, one should take note of the following important conditions. **First**, amidst rapidly changing regional and global processes, the countries' positions continue to evolve, including with regard to the Ukraine war. The alliance of nations standing in solidarity with Ukraine in its fight against the aggressor is strengthening. Meanwhile, the confrontation between the «Western» and «non-Western» centres of influence and their struggle for support from the Global South continues and is likely to intensify. Obviously, these processes will determine both Ukraine's position in the world and its benchmarks for choosing strategic partners. **Second**, in choosing such partners, Ukraine cannot but take into account the interests of its key allies, primarily the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, as well as the foreign policy priorities of the EU, of which it

plans to become a member. **Third**, it is clear that doubts about the strategic nature of relations with individual countries do not mean distancing or curtailing contacts with them. That is, a model of relations with China or Azerbaijan will be different from that used with Germany or the United States.

However, given the previous questionable experience of using strategic partnership instruments and the current realities of war, a clear legal definition of the principles, goals and mechanisms of interstate relations at the strategic level seems to be relevant. Also, the procedure for introducing the strategic partnership format at the bilateral level needs to be legally regulated.

Proposals and recommendations for strengthening and developing strategic partnerships.

The dual purpose of expert recommendations below is to accomplish the tasks of war diplomacy in relations with the allies and to increase the effectiveness of strategic

¹⁰ The table summarises the data from the opinion polls published in this journal.

¹¹ Citizens and experts' assessments are based on the total of «yes» and «rather yes» answers.

¹² Citizens and experts' assessments are based on the total of «no» and «rather no» answers.

¹³ 30.5% of respondents considered Azerbaijan a strategic partner.

¹⁴ 44.5% of experts consider Turkey a strategic partner.

partnership at the bilateral level, as well as to intensify strategically important processes of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. In general terms, it is about measures, steps and initiatives in the following areas:

Legislative and legal sphere. The realities of Russia's aggression and new geopolitical trends, including countries' positions on the Ukraine war, call for updating and modernising the basic foreign policy documents, particularly the National Security Strategy and the Foreign Policy Strategy. It is about improving the analysis of external environment, challenges and threats, and directions of foreign policy activity. It is advisable not only to define the foundations and principles of strategic partnership, but also to take stock of the system of priority relations and the circle of strategic partners. In war, there is an objective need to significantly improve the level of constitutional and legal regulation of Ukraine's institution of strategic partnership. To this end, it is suggested to supplement the Law of Ukraine «On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy» with provisions united under a separate article entitled «Strategic Partnership of Ukraine». In the long run, it seems reasonable for the Verkhovna Rada to adopt a new Law «On the Principles of Foreign Policy», which would take into account Ukraine's current interests and priorities on the global stage, its foreign policy position, geopolitical realities and trends, and so on.

Foreign and security policy. The following steps will contribute to the intensification and strengthening of strategic partnership with the EU and NATO. In relations with the EU it is expedient a) to carry out the relevant instructions of the NSDC of Ukraine aimed at completing reforms and measures for implementing the European Commission's recommendations by October 2023, and to ensure political and legal conditions for launching Ukraine's membership talks with the EU; b) based on the results of self-screening of Ukrainian legislation for its compliance with the EU *acquis*, to develop and implement a targeted state programme for adopting the national legislation to EU norms. The estimated number of relevant EU regulatory and legal acts is 3,000; c) to ensure the continuation of reforms to implement the provisions of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, focusing on the most problematic areas – transport and transport infrastructure, financial cooperation

and anti-fraud, consumer protection, etc; d) to ensure bilateral (and with the participation of the European Commission) resolution of the conflict around the restriction of imports of Ukrainian agri-food products by certain EU countries; e) to initiate the resumption of joint meetings of the Cabinet and the European Commission, the Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament.

In Euro-Atlantic integration, it is advisable a) to actively use the new NATO-Ukraine Council institutional mechanism in order to deepen security partnership with the Alliance, coordinate actions on the global stage, identify directions and priorities of internal reforms in Ukraine and jointly monitor the effectiveness of their implementation. To agree on the specific conditions and parameters for Ukraine's NATO membership within the NATO-Ukraine Council; b) by the end of 2023, to finalise an annual roadmap for NATO integration, which should be compact and contain goals and objectives, including those outlined in the G7 Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine. In parallel, when concluding agreements with partners on support and assistance in the security sector, to include provisions on supporting Ukraine's accelerated integration into the Alliance; c) by the end of 2023, to agree with the states (26, as of August) on the parameters of bilateral agreements on support and assistance in the security sector within the G7 Declaration, conducting relevant negotiations with the US and UK in the first place. These documents should set out Ukraine's strategic interests and specify as much as possible its long-term needs for supplying weapons and modern military equipment; supporting and modernising the Ukrainian defence industry and integrating it into the Western defence sector; establishing joint ventures with partners to produce ammunition and military equipment; expanding training and education for the AFU; providing financial and technical support for Ukraine's recovery, etc. Also, to elaborate a clear plan for implementing Ukraine's commitments set out in the G7 Declaration, in particular, to ensure transparency and accountability for partner assistance; implement reforms of law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and anti-corruption; strengthen democratic civilian control over the AFU, etc.

Additional recommendations are to intensify the political and diplomatic campaign for

a global Peace Formula summit, scheduled for autumn 2023; make more active use of public diplomacy tools to promote and popularise the Peace Formula components, especially in problematic areas of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, and Central Asia; and initiate the next round of international consultations on the Peace Formula, preferably raising the level of participants (foreign ministers).

Economic domain. The proposed measures in this sphere are a) to develop a concept of Ukraine's foreign economic activity under martial law with a focus on ensuring the country's economic security, restoring economic potential through cooperation and integration primarily with strategic partners, preserving traditional and finding new markets for Ukrainian products. Such a concept can already orientate towards the goals, principles, and mechanisms for addressing the crisis in international trade proposed in the EU's New Trade Policy (2021); b) within the framework of European integration processes, to focus on the following. First: further institutional deepening and progress of Ukraine's integration in the main areas of economic cooperation with the EU, including energy, industry, aviation, digital, agriculture, transport, migration, etc. as well as customs control facilitation, while accelerating Ukraine's integration into the Digital Europe Programme. Second: implementation of the plan of priority measures for integration into the European single market, which should include realisation of joint industrial and infrastructure projects, implementation of an effective EU investment policy on Ukraine, and expansion of Ukrainian companies' access to the national service markets of EU members. Third: measures to create the necessary conditions for signing an Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products, while monitoring and searching for opportunities for investment cooperation together with the EU institutions in the context of external aggression. Fourth: support for further deepening and expansion of international economic sanctions by strategic partners against the aggressor, with a focus on narrowing the opportunities of circumventing or avoiding sanctions, and actively applying secondary sanctions. At present, the potential for deepening sanctions remains significant for the Russian energy sector,

defence industry, finance, and assets in other countries.

Energy sector. Ukraine's main tasks in energy cooperation with strategic partners include restoring and modernising the energy sector and improving energy efficiency. Another task is to join forces in addressing common challenges of transition from hydrocarbons to green energy. The strategic partnership should facilitate investment in Ukraine's energy sector and help promote the country as an important full-fledged participant in the EU gas/energy markets. To this end, the following steps should be taken: a) Ukrainian UGS facilities represent a huge security reserve for Europe's gas market, as their full use will allow the EU to significantly improve the market's stability. This issue deserves attention and promotion in relations with European strategic partners. Given that the EU and Germany fear the possible destruction of UGS facilities by air strikes, Ukraine may demand additional air defences to cover them; b) within the framework of strategic partnership, measures to protect critical energy infrastructure, including offshore gas pipelines, submarine cables and seaport infrastructure, should be intensified; c) it is important to engage with strategic partners to refuse to supply Russian LNG and network gas via Russian offshore pipelines, taking into account their possible use for military and intelligence purposes, obstruction of navigation and deliberate underwater explosions; d) it is necessary to intensify interaction with partners to stop/restrict cooperation with Rosatom and its subsidiaries. The countries that do not support Ukraine in defending itself from the aggressor can still be important trade partners (energy equipment, materials, etc.).

Social sphere and migration. The key areas should include the development and effective implementation of Ukraine's new comprehensive migration policy and strengthening partnerships in the field of migration. The new policy should include the following components: a) creating external and internal conditions with the help of the allies to preserve Ukraine's able-bodied population, skilled workers, and human capital for winning the war and post-war reconstruction; gradually creating the necessary security, socio-economic, humanitarian conditions and prospects for Ukrainian refugees to return home; b) developing the

State Programme for New Jobs, which should introduce a state system for providing potential migrants with a package of basic conditions – housing jobs, educational services, vocational training, as well as a system of retraining, focused on the most active post-war sectors, such as construction, engineering, healthcare, IT, etc.; c) developing and introducing the targeted programme for the involvement of Ukrainian diaspora. This programme would coordinate activities of Ukraine’s diplomatic missions and diaspora organisations (Ukrainian World Congress) to implement the country’s foreign policy objectives, such as promoting Ukrainian initiatives, countering Russian propaganda, increasing political and sanctions pressure on the aggressor, promoting Ukrainian narratives and Ukraine’s image abroad.

Strengthening collaboration and partnerships in the field of migration involves: a) enhancing coordination with EU migration policy, in particular through participation in the European Migration Network; b) establishing a permanent dialogue platform on migration issues at the Government–European Commission level, tasked to elaborate and conclude relevant framework agreements and arrangements for social protection and meeting the national, cultural and linguistic needs of Ukrainian migrants; c) stepping up bilateral cooperation and partnerships with other countries, primarily Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Baltic States and other European countries hosting a significant number of Ukrainian refugees. This cooperation should focus on ensuring the rights, freedoms and interests of Ukrainian citizens, preserving their national identity, and gradually creating conditions for their return to their homeland.

Obviously, the above proposals and recommendations do not cover all areas and directions of cooperation with partner countries that are of priority to Ukraine. However, the outlined measures and initiatives are important for resisting Russian aggression, strengthening internal resilience and developing the country in war. In general, the goal is to further deepen partnerships with key allies in various fields, and to intensify Ukraine’s movement on the European and Euro-Atlantic directions.

2. REMOTE ROUNDTABLE «UKRAINE ON THE WORLD STAGE: NATIONAL INTERESTS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES»

The event was held in June 2023 as part of the Strategic Partners of Ukraine project, supported by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ukraine.¹⁵

The dialogue involving government officials and non-governmental experts focused on the Ukrainian diplomacy’s priorities and main tasks in times of war, as well as the interests of the state, which are decisive in relations with partner countries and international organisations. The participants generally agreed that ensuring external conditions for effective resistance to Russian intervention is one of Kyiv’s key tasks.

The relevance of strategic partnership is due to many war-related external and internal factors. In particular, the positions of various countries on Russian aggression vary. In the meantime, the Ukraine war has deepened the watershed between the democratic world and the camp of authoritarian states, and this process will continue to determine the dynamics and specifics of the geopolitical situation in the world.

In mini-interviews, the roundtable participants outlined the main principles of strategic partnership, identified ways to optimise relations with other countries, and defined the range of the allies with which relations are a priority. The materials of this discussion are still relevant; moreover, given the current processes in Europe and the world, the development of cooperation in key foreign policy areas is becoming increasingly important and decisive for Ukrainian diplomacy.

Of course, it was impossible to cover all areas and directions of Ukraine’s activities in the world during this brief dialogue, but expert opinions and assessments still give an idea of both the problems and priorities of Ukraine’s foreign policy and outline measures that need to be taken to improve and strengthen it. Below are some of the participants’ assessments and opinions.

¹⁵ Peculiarities of speech and styles of roundtable participants were presented in the texts of interviews.

Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine's Minister for Foreign Affairs, outlines the country's foreign policy priorities, with the supply of weapons being a top priority: «Ukrainian diplomats are already working on a strategic perspective – strengthening the long-term defence capabilities and enhancing the role of Ukraine as a new military power. Our defence should not depend solely on the partners' political decisions. Instead, Ukraine must have a powerful defence industry that relies on its own resources and on partner technologies and joint projects». Other priorities include accelerating Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, promoting the Peace Formula and expanding the coalition in support of it, as well as setting «a course towards new horizons in Asia, Africa and Latin America». According to the minister, «active work with previously 'forgotten' regions is also critical to overpowering russia. By expanding our presence and influence in these regions, we increase pressure on the russian regime and deprive Moscow of its last trump cards».

Answering the question about the ways to develop and improve Ukraine's relations with strategic partners, Mr Kuleba noted that «it was the full-scale war that revealed which countries were sincere allies and friends of Ukraine and which ones did not really «reach» this high status... the position and involvement of some countries was a pleasant surprise, while others caused deep disappointment. **The behaviour of a particular state during a full-scale war will determine our long-term relations with it for years and decades to come.** Ukrainians have a good memory». According to the Minister, the list of strategic partners included in the Foreign Policy Strategy «will change as a result of the war».

In her interview, **Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU**, draws attention to the importance of strengthening the anti-Putin coalition and conveying to partners the idea «that RF must be defeated, weakened and punished, and that Ukraine must be in NATO immediately after the victory, because there will be no peace neither in Europe nor in the entire world...». In her opinion, this requires joint efforts of the entire country – the parliament, the government, and

civil society. We need to hold public discussions and to shape public opinion, otherwise the level of support from Western societies will significantly decrease. Ukraine must learn to convince its partners. At the same time, loud statements about the country's readiness for EU and NATO membership must be backed up by completed homework.

According to Ms Klympush-Tsintsadze, **«honesty is the main thing in our relations with strategic partners today.** We must be honest both in our talks with the allies and in our actions. When we say one thing and do something else, it will hardly help build trust with our partners... Another important thing is that we must demonstrate that, despite the war, democracy, freedom of speech and the rule of law are not just words for our country. I think not only we, but our friends as well see how Ukraine is gradually losing ground in these areas under the pretext of martial law». When assessing some geopolitical aspects, the MP points out that the Ukraine war has proved the incapacity of most international organisations – the UN, the Red Cross, the OSCE, etc. The reason is that «all these organisations were created based on the principles that stem from the Yalta agreements of the USSR, the US and the UK during World War II, when the world was divided into spheres of influence... The planet has long needed other organisations that can really respond to challenges».

Ihor Zhovkva, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, believes that «Ukrainian diplomacy's priorities today are entirely determined by the need to ensure victory in the war and restore a just and sustainable peace for Ukraine after the war». Key areas include providing Ukraine with the weapons necessary for a successful counteroffensive; strengthening anti-russian sanctions; implementing the Ukrainian Peace Formula, organising this year's global Peace Summit and ensuring the participation of as many world leaders as possible; creating an international special tribunal for the crime of russian aggression; developing compensation mechanisms for damage caused by russian aggression; rebuilding Ukraine on the basis of modern innovative technologies; bringing Ukraine closer to the UN and NATO memberships, which is also critical for our victory.

Describing the state and prospects of the strategic partnership, Mr Zhovkva stressed that «the full-scale war against Ukraine has somehow changed the approaches to defining strategic partnership. Although almost all of our traditional and officially recognised strategic partners only confirmed this status during the war. In the current reality, our country's relations with all the G7 countries can be described as a strategic partnership... As for the NATO and EU members, strategic partnership can only be applied to those countries that are the largest suppliers of military assistance to Ukraine... **Today, the main way to developing and improving relations with strategic partners is to strengthen Ukraine's defence partnership aimed at strengthening our country's defence capabilities, as well as its further active movement towards the EU and NATO membership.**»

Volodymyr Ohryzko, the Head of the Centre for Russian Studies and former Foreign Minister of Ukraine (2007-2009), focused on the fact that «the expected defeat of Russia will raise a number of issues that will have to be addressed at the global, regional and bilateral levels. For example: will Russia survive in its current form? Will it have nuclear status, and how deep and comprehensive will the process of its demilitarisation be? Will a federation be created with only declared or real rights of its subjects?» Mr Ohryzko believes that this should be the subject of in-depth analysis and reflection by the Ukrainian government, think tanks and experts. Ukrainian diplomacy should demonstrate a proactive position in shaping the global agenda and imposing approaches that meet Ukraine's national interests. After our victory over ruscism, Ukraine will have to initiate the re-establishment of international security structures replacing the current ones that have failed to fulfil their functions.

Speaking of strategic partnership, Mr Ohryzko emphasises that «our highest national interests are served by relations with the vast majority of EU, NATO and G7 countries, which, however, can be narrowed down even further to the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Relations with them should be a top priority. **Meanwhile, full membership in the EU and NATO should be the principal goal for Ukraine, as it will solve the fundamental political, security and economic issues it faces today.**»

According to **Pavlo Klimkin, another former Foreign Minister (2014-2019)**, «Ukraine can defeat the current Russian regime only in alliance with the West, with full integration into its structures and with the preservation of its solidarity... Therefore, becoming part of the West mentally, politically, institutionally in the sense of the EU, NATO, OECD membership, economically, scientifically and culturally is the key to our existence and development». Mr Klimkin emphasised that this would require a different level of mobilisation, including in foreign policy, innovation and competence, as well as the search for new forms of interaction between politics, business, civil society and the expert community both in Ukraine and with our partners.

Outlining Ukraine's priorities in strategic areas, Mr Klimkin stressed that «**in the foreseeable future, the United States will remain not just a strategic, but a vital partner for Ukraine.** Without the US, no effective support of Western solidarity and the entire range of military assistance are possible. The European Union will represent the second pillar of our alliance because of the commonality of values and the criticality of the security issue for the EU, which is impossible without a new status quo in Europe. Relations with others will be important but subordinate to maintaining allied relations with the first two...»

Andriy Veselovskyi, advisor to the Director of the National Institute for Strategic Studies, noted the importance of improving the system of external relations and eliminating shortcomings in it, thus accelerating the realisation of priority tasks, namely: 1) maintaining wide-ranging and trusting contacts with the G7, the EU and Euro-Atlantic countries and friendly extra-regional states at the higher and highest levels (first level); 2) establishing positive second level contacts, including major regional powers such as India, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, as well as active regional players such as Argentina, Algeria, Thailand, the Philippines, Kenya, the UAE, etc. 3) involving MPs, leadership of influential economic regions, NGOs and professional associations of journalists, scientists, etc. in a more active external role; 4) implementing legal reform in line with the position of the G7, EU, NATO, Council of Europe and Venice Commission; 5) reforming the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic

service based on long-term political action plans; 6) setting up a permanent mechanism for coordination and implementation of foreign policy measures sphere in the form of the Committee on Foreign Relations under the President of Ukraine and granting it with the functions of an operational sectoral headquarters; 7) intensifying activities of the NSDC and the Cabinet (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Justice, intelligence community) in sanctions policy and practice of cooperation with foreign partners.

Assessing Ukraine's foreign policy contacts, Mr Veselovskyi noted that **at this stage, only relations with Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Lithuania, the EU should be considered strategic.** In the medium term, Germany, Sweden, Italy and Romania may also become strategic partners of Ukraine, provided its rapid and unhindered development.

Analysing the evolution of Ukraine's foreign policy, **Sergiy Solodkyy, First Deputy Director of the New Europe Centre**, stressed that «a comprehensive approach is crucial in diplomatic work. Foreign policy should not be perceived as only the work of the Foreign Ministry or embassies. Ukraine's success in the international arena depends on its domestic successes in various spheres. The perception of Ukraine depends on successes on the battlefield, on achievements in reforms, on the integrity and responsibility of individual politicians, on the example of every Ukrainian abroad...» The issue of restoring Ukraine lies at the intersection of operational and strategic tasks. On the one hand, it is the European integration with the relevant reform of the state. On the other hand, it is the creation of appropriate safeguards to prevent Russia from committing new acts of aggression, and the provision of effective security guarantees, and there is no more effective guarantee than NATO.

Outlining the Ukrainian diplomacy's priorities, Mr Solodkyy noted that **«in the situation of survival, there are virtually no insignificant foreign policy areas. Ukraine, of course, should first of all develop partnerships with those countries and organisations that are consistent with the 'security first' approach.** Therefore, developing strategic partnerships

with the United States, Poland, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and other countries is a priority. We are talking about international partnerships to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities. In English, there is a concept of «brothers-in-arms»; in our case, it is about «partners-in-arms».

Petro Burkovskyy, Executive Director of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, particularly mentioned «supporting and scaling up international efforts to provide Ukraine with weapons, macro-economic assistance, and international sanctions against Russia» as the main tasks of Ukrainian diplomacy. In his opinion, implementing Ukraine's medium- and long-term interests would be the most challenging task as it requires changing political approaches and sometimes overcoming ideological differences between Ukraine and the countries that are members of various formal and informal groups. He mentioned the following sets of issues: a) neutralising the Russian threat; b) defending Ukraine's sovereignty; and c) curbing the erosion of international security and law.

Ukraine's key interest is to win the war, which will a) deprive Russia of the opportunity to escalate violence and prepare for the use of non-conventional weapons; b) force Russia to accept the inevitable loss of chances to limit Ukraine's sovereignty and violate its territorial integrity; c) discredit hybrid ways and means of undermining regional and international security.

According to Mr Burkovskyy, **«Ukraine's strategic partners are nations that, despite high risks to their own national security and economy, continue to pursue a policy of supporting Ukraine and defeating Russia.** These include the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Canada, Slovakia, Denmark, Finland, and Norway. Some other European and Asian countries that are part of the Ramstein Coalition can be called Ukraine's partners that are interested in benefits from Ukraine's victory but try to minimise the risks to their own security and economy».

Oleksandr Khara, an expert at the Centre for Defence Strategies, stressed that «the

threat from Russia necessitates Ukraine's transformation into a medium-sized power with the necessary economic, technological and demographic resources to ensure optimal defence potential to deter aggression in the future. **Therefore, building a highly competitive political and dynamic economic model that would allow Ukraine to realise its own potential and attract resources from the outside world is an internal priority that requires collaboration and support from international partners».**

In his opinion, the partnership's strategic nature should be determined by common values, shared vital interests, and the potential for Ukraine to realise its cornerstone interests. The author stated that «the role of countries in supporting the Ukrainian nation's existential struggle should become a meter for (re)evaluating the existing and potential partnerships. Strategic or special partnerships should be developed with the Baltic States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, Germany, Poland, Romania, the United States, Turkey, France and Japan. South Korea, despite its ambivalent position so far, and India should be considered as promising strategic partners».

3. NATIONWIDE AND EXPERT SURVEYS¹⁶

In June–July 2023, the project surveyed ordinary citizens and experts to determine their positions and opinions on the peculiarities and priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy, the effectiveness of international support, the level of «strategic» partnerships with different countries, the state and prospects of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration, etc. The results of the study give rise to the following generalisations and conclusions.

Citizens and experts alike tend to support official Kyiv's actions on the world stage. Most

citizens (74.7%) assess Ukraine's foreign policy either positively (33.8%) or rather positively (40.9%). These assessments generally coincide with the experts' opinions, as vast majority of them (93.1%) consider Kyiv's actions on the world stage as either positive (39.6%) or rather positive (53.5%). Moreover, citizens and experts' opinions about the effectiveness of Ukraine's foreign policy in specific areas are also similar: almost all citizens (82.2%) and experts (92.1%) agree that Ukrainian diplomacy is effective in the main area of securing external support to resist Russian aggression.¹⁷ Citizens and experts also appreciated the strengthening of relations with countries and international organisations (82.8% and 88.1% respectively), and the expansion of the circle of allies supporting Ukraine in its resistance to Russian aggression (81.3% and 86.1%). It should be added that most citizens (76.9%) consider Ukraine's international image to be either positive (28.3%) or rather positive (48.6%).

Respondents have different opinions about the effectiveness of foreign assistance to Ukraine in countering Russian aggression.

In particular, the highest score (3.9 points) was given to foreign assistance to Ukrainian refugees.¹⁸ Citizens are generally positive (3.7 points) about military and financial assistance, political solidarity and support for Ukraine on international platforms (3.5 points). The assessment of sanctions against the aggressor is more restrained (3.1 points). Experts' positions are rather similar – they are also the most critical of sanctions (3.0 points).

Further on, citizens and expert alike are mostly sceptical about the assistance to Ukraine from international organisations, with the exception of the EU (citizens – 3.6 points, experts – 3.9 points), NATO (3.5 and 3.7), and the IMF (3.4 and 3.8 respectively). The assistance from other international organisations, such as the UN, OSCE, Council of

¹⁶ The survey was conducted by the Razumkov Centre's sociological service in government-controlled and hostilities-free territories of Ukraine on 5-11 July 2023 using face-to-face method. 2,017 respondents aged 18+ were interviewed. The theoretical sampling error does not exceed 2.3%. At the same time, additional systematic sample deviations may be caused by the consequences of Russian aggression, such as forced evacuation of millions of citizens. The expert survey was conducted on 7-22 June 2023. 101 experts were interviewed in different regions of Ukraine and Kyiv, including representatives of relevant ministries and agencies, regional authorities, state and non-state research institutions, university professors, independent experts, public figures, and scholars.

¹⁷ Hereinafter, the author gives the total scores of «yes» and «rather yes».

¹⁸ The effectiveness of the assistance was assessed on a five-point scale from 1 to 5, where «1» means that the assistance is totally ineffective, and «5» - very effective.

Europe, International Committee of the Red Cross, and IAEA, is generally not satisfactory, according to respondents.

Citizens and experts distinguish a group of countries that provide the greatest assistance to Ukraine. When identifying the group of leading nations in terms of helping Ukraine to counter Russian aggression, citizens primarily mention The United States (87%), Poland (78.5%), the United Kingdom (69.4%), Germany (50.7%), Lithuania (40.4%), Canada (37.9%), Latvia (34.1%), Estonia (21.4%), France (18.6%), the Czech Republic (17.2%), Turkey (12.7%), the Netherlands (9.9%), and Italy (8.4%). This list of allies almost completely coincides with the similar list of countries identified by experts. However, unlike citizens, experts rank Poland first and the United States second, and also mention Denmark instead of Turkey.

Priorities of war diplomacy as seen by citizens. The hierarchy of urgent tasks, as constructed by the respondents, is as follows: ensuring the supply of weapons, military equipment and machinery for the Armed Forces (80.7%); securing external financial assistance to stabilise Ukraine's economy (65.4%); increasing sanctions against Russia (45.9%); facilitating international condemnation and prosecution of RF for crimes against Ukraine (41.2%); and accelerating integration into the EU and NATO (40.5%).

Experts and citizens' opinions on the strategic nature of relations with individual countries. Quite interesting are the respondents' thoughts about the strategic nature of Ukraine's relations with the states that are recognised as priority by the current Foreign Policy Strategy. Thus, according to citizens, ten countries from this list can be considered strategic partners of Ukraine, namely the United Kingdom (93.8%), the United States (93.4%), Poland (92.3%),¹⁹ Germany (87.9%), Canada (83.9%), Lithuania (78%), France (76.9%),

Turkey (56.5%), Moldova (52%), and Romania (50.1%).²⁰

This list generally coincides with the corresponding list formed by the expert community, with the exception of Turkey, which experts do not currently consider a strategic partner. At the same time, citizens have doubts about the strategic nature of partnerships with some other countries mentioned in the Strategy, namely China (70.6%),²¹ India (59.2%), Georgia (51.7%), Brazil (50.6%), and Azerbaijan (45.2%).²²

The above positions of the Ukrainian expert community suggest that it is expedient to take stock of and improve Ukraine's current relations with strategic partners. As many as 86.1% of experts agree with this statement, and only 7.9% share the opposite opinion.²³

Expert opinions on the principles of strategic partnership. Respondents are convinced that strategic relations with various countries should primarily build on: mutual long-term interests based on the values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights (4.3 points);²⁴ consistency and predictability of collaboration, and strict fulfilment of mutual obligations (4.3 points); readiness to take into account each other's interests and compromise (4.2 points); equality and parity of relations, rejection of unilateral advantages, ultimatum and discriminatory actions (4.2 points).

Problems in Ukraine's relations with strategic partners. Unlike experts who consider Ukraine's internal problems to be the main constraint (82.2%), citizens are convinced that cooperation with priority partners is primarily hampered by Russia's large-scale aggression, the occupation of certain territories, and large socio-economic and human losses (74.1%), followed by internal problems (67.9%). Among other problematic factors, citizens mention the aggressor's influence (40.4%),

¹⁹ Poland has the largest number of positive answers «yes» – 74.1%.

²⁰ The total of «yes» and «rather yes» scores.

²¹ The total of «no» and «rather no» scores».

²² 30.5% identified Azerbaijan as a strategic partner.

²³ The expert survey contained a number of specialised questions different from the nationwide citizen survey.

²⁴ A five-point scale from 1 to 5 was used, where «1» means that the element is absolutely unimportant, and «5» - very important.

«fatigue» from the Ukraine war (35%), and partners' unpreparedness to further develop relations with Ukraine (33.1%).

Prospects for Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Citizens are quite optimistic about Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO. According to 58.7% of respondents, our country will be able to join the EU either within 1-3 years (35.4%) or within 3-5 years (23.3%). At the same time, 13% predict a longer path to EU membership – from 5 to 10 years. A similar pattern of forecasts is observed with regard to NATO membership. Also, the majority of respondents (53.1%) are confident that Ukraine will become a member of the Alliance either in 1-3 years (32.2%) or in 3-5 years (20.9%).

Experts are more cautious about the timeframe for Ukraine's possible accession to the EU. Only 14.9% of them believe that it will happen within 1-3 years. 28% predict the EU membership in 3-5 years. In turn, 40.6% believe that Ukraine will join the EU in 5-10 years. Assessing the prospects of Ukraine's NATO membership, more than half of the surveyed experts believe that it will happen either in 1-3 years (28.7%) or in 3-5 years (31.7%). Every fifth expert (19.8%) predicts accession to NATO in 10-20 years.

4. ORIGINAL ARTICLES

The project materials are complemented by a number of original articles that look into various aspects of Ukraine's foreign policy, in particular, the features and priorities of strategic partnership.

In her article «State and prospects of Ukraine's strategic partnership with the countries of the world», **Oleksandra Davymuka**, Senior Consultant of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies with the National Institute for Strategic Studies, describes the specifics and tools of Kyiv's war diplomacy. The author notes that in the context of large-scale aggression, «the dynamics of diplomatic contacts with partner states has accelerated; the priority topics for discussion have changed; the circle of states with which Ukraine is establishing and developing political dialogue has expanded». According to Ms Davymuka, given the realities of war, the criteria for Ukraine's strategic partners include «states that share common interests and democratic values with Ukraine,

and therefore stand for freedom, elected government, protection of the rights of their citizens, respect for legal norms, including international ones; states with which Ukraine maintains stable and systematic bilateral relations, within the framework of which they provide exclusive military and political assistance to counteract Russia's armed aggression».

Ms Davymuka further stresses that strategic relations with key international partners should build on common democratic values and security priorities and include regular political dialogue between at various levels; provision of practical (armed, financial, intelligence) assistance to repel Russian aggression and liberate the occupied territories of Ukraine; imposition of sanctions against Russia and its supporters; diplomatic support in multilateral cooperation formats; political and diplomatic support for Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO; involvement in Ukraine's post-war rebuilding.

The article «Kyiv-Brussels partnership in times of war» by **Veronika Movchan**, Director of Research at the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, focuses on three important areas of EU-Ukraine cooperation. The first includes issues related to the EU membership process and one of its cornerstones – changes in economic regulation as a result of transferring European legislation to the Ukrainian context. Ms Movchan says that adaptation is not linear, as the list of thousands of EU regulations includes both systemic laws that form general rules and many bylaws. In her opinion, «once talks have started, Ukraine will be able to implement the necessary reforms fairly quickly, despite the significant difference in the number of regulations included in the Association Agreement and those in force in the EU». The second area is Ukraine's current economic interaction, including regulatory collaboration, which creates preconditions for integration into the EU market «right now» by removing barriers or harmonising regulations. This includes new EU initiatives designed to further facilitate access to the EU market for Ukrainian businesses and thus mitigate the effects of Russian aggression, as well as the implementation of infrastructure projects, the development of transport links and people movement. The third area is financial coope-

ration. The author notes that after February 2022, the inflow of FDI into Ukraine almost stopped, while the country became increasingly dependent on grant and loan money from international partners to finance its budgetary obligations and thus maintain its macro-economic stability. In this context, Ms Movchan points to the important large-scale financial assistance by the EU, also stating that European integration and the process of financial support by the EU are closely intertwined and that it is crucial to properly use the money allocated for reconstruction. In conclusion, the author notes that «EU-Ukraine economic relations have never been so close. And they are likely to deepen even further in the coming years».

In her article «Realities and practice of Ukraine's strategic partnership amidst the full-scale war», **Nadiia Koval**, the Head of Research, Analytics and Academic Programmes Department of the Ukrainian Institute, outlines the evolution of approaches to the «strategic partnership» definition in Ukrainian and world science, and the peculiarities of the political practice of introducing such relations. The author stresses that in war, «Ukraine, first, has gained strategic certainty under the pressure of external and internal circumstances, which was lacking in the previous 30 years. Second, the existential nature of the conflict has reduced the main

criteria for strategic partnership to basic security and political dimensions, which renders conditional neutrality in political and security issues in the name of economic relations impossible. Third, the situation of direct conflict has dispelled the fog of understatement and diplomacy, thus testing the alliances in practice and enabling assessment of real mutuality». The author points that russian aggression has led to a reassessment of alliances and partnerships in the world, so not only Ukraine, but also many countries with an inclusive set of strategic partners have found themselves facing the problem of choosing priorities.

Ms Koval identifies two key criteria for strategic relations with international partners – «practical and proactive assistance to Ukraine's defence against russian aggression» and «support for Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration». Also important is the partner's strategic readiness to join the post-war rebuilding of Ukraine. Summing up, the author notes that «the current strategic goals give us clarity on strategic partnerships for the coming years, but their achievement will inevitably create new challenges, new alliances, and new solutions. The concept of strategic partnership will be updated periodically along with changes in the foreign policy situation and domestic political context of the partner country, achievement or modification of Ukraine's foreign policy objectives».

