

# THE CURRENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN UKRAINE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dir Ihor

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**Annotation.** The aim of the work is a comprehensive analysis of bilateral relations between Ukraine and the European Union at the current stage.

The methodological basis of the study are official websites of specialized institutions in Ukraine and the European Union, laws, analytical reports, articles by other scientists, etc.

**Results.** According to the results of the conducted research, it was found that Ukraine continues to actively work towards European integration. It's confirmed by a number of normative and legislative acts that have already been adopted or are planned to be adopted in the nearest future. In February 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Order "On approval of the Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the European Commission, presented in the Report on the progress of Ukraine within the framework of the 2023 European Union Enlargement Package."

The plan of events is calculated in accordance with the Recommendations of the European Commission, includes the name of the event, the deadline, as well as responsible bodies for its implementation. In total, the Plan contains 142 recommendations. Their implementation requires the realization of more than 350 measures. It was also revealed that the first explanatory session on the negotiating chapters of the EU acquis already took place as part of the official screening and concerned Chapter 23 "Judiciary and fundamental rights". After the EU revised the enlargement methodology, chapters 23 and 24 have become some of the most important chapters during the negotiation process. It happened in 2020.

**Conclusions.** Thus, Ukraine actively continues to work in the direction of European integration. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of the European Commission presented in the Report on the Progress of Ukraine. In total, this Plan contains 142 recommendations, the implementation of which requires the realization of more than 350 measures. The largest number of recommendations of the European Commission is contained in Chapter 23 "Judiciary and fundamental rights". It is also worth noting that all recommendations are developed in accordance with the updated methodology for the enlargement of the European Union.

**Key words:** European Union, Ukraine, recommendations, Parliament, European Commission, cluster, chapter.

## 1. Introduction.

Ukraine continues to actively work towards European integration. It's confirmed by a number of normative and legislative acts that have already been adopted or are planned to be adopted in the nearest future. State bodies also take into account the recommendations provided by the European Commission. In turn, this has a positive effect on the development of bilateral relations between Ukraine and the EU. This is evidenced by the December 14 decision of the Council of the EU regarding the start of negotiations between Ukraine and the EU.

## 2. Analysis of scientific publications.

Separate aspects of the study of this issue were considered by several scientists, including N. MacFarlane, A. Menon, J. Sherr, G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, M. Roth, V. Samokhvalov, T. Gehring, K. Urbanski, O. Yatsenko, V. Nitsenko, N. Karasova, S. Costea, B. Jarabik, G. Sasse, N. Shapovalova, T. Kuzio, H. Haukkala, O. Shumylo, M. Rabinovych, O. Spiliopoulos, P. Rieker, K.L. Gjerde, D. Cardier, R. Dragneva, K. Wolczuk, T. Valasek, K. Raik, K. Kubicek, C. Nitoiu, B. O`Loughin, A. Miskimmon etc.

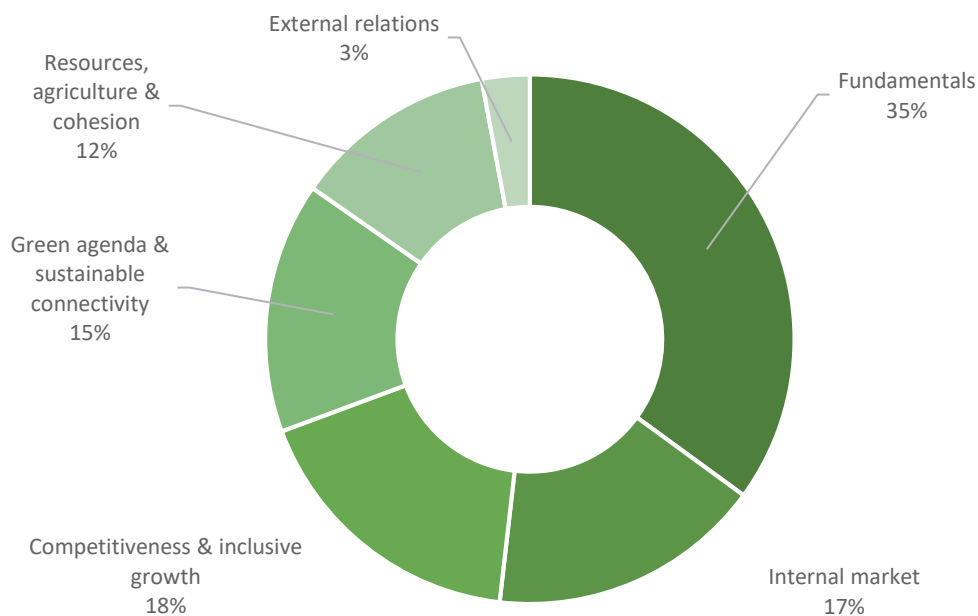
**3. The aim of the work** is a comprehensive analysis of the state of relations between Ukraine and the European Union at the current stage.

## 4. Review and discussion.

On February 9, 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the Order No. 133-r "On the approval of the Plan of measures to implement the recommendations of the European Commission, presented in the Report on the progress of Ukraine within the framework of the 2023 European Union Enlargement Package" [1].

The plan of events is calculated in accordance with the Recommendations of the European Commission, includes the name of the event, the deadline, as well as responsible bodies for its implementation.

In total, the Plan contains 142 recommendations. Their implementation requires the realization of more than 350 measures. The first cluster "Fundamentals" contains 48 recommendations of the European Union. The second cluster "Internal Market" includes 23 recommendations. The third cluster "Competitiveness and inclusive growth" includes 24 recommendations. The fourth cluster "Green agenda and sustainable connectivity" contains 21 recommendations. The fifth cluster "Resources, agriculture and cohesion" contains 17 recommendations. Finally, the sixth cluster "External relations" includes 5 recommendations (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Ratio of European Commission Recommendations according to clusters**

Source: compiled by the author [1].

The largest number of recommendations of the European Commission is contained in Chapter 23 “Judiciary and fundamental rights” - 23 recommendations, Chapter 24 “Justice, Freedom and security” - 12 recommendations, Chapter 15 “Energy” - 7 recommendations, etc. (Table 1).

**Table 1. Number of Recommendations of the European Commission by chapters**

Cluster	Chapter	Number of Recommendations of the European Commission
Cluster 1: «Fundamentals»	Chapter 23. Judiciary & fundamental rights	20
	Chapter 24. Justice Freedom & Security	12
	Chapter 5. Public procurement	3
	Chapter 18. Statistics	2
	Chapter 32. Financial control	5
Cluster 2: «Internal Market»	Chapter 1. Free movement of goods	3
	Chapter 2. Free movement for workers	2
	Chapter 3. Right of establishment & freedom to provide services	3
	Chapter 4. Free movement of capital	3
	Chapter 6. Company law	2
	Chapter 7. Intellectual property law	3
	Chapter 8. Competition policy	2
	Chapter 9. Financial services	3
	Chapter 28. Consumer & health protection	3
Cluster 3: «Competitiveness & inclusive growth»	Chapter 10. Information society & media	3
	Chapter 16. Taxation	3
	Chapter 17. Economic & monetary policy	3
	Chapter 19. Social policy & employment	3
	Chapter 20. Enterprise & industrial employment	3
	Chapter 25. Science & research	3
	Chapter 26. Education & culture	3
	Chapter 29. Customs union	4
Cluster 4: «Green agenda & sustainable connectivity»	Chapter 14. Transport policy	4
	Chapter 15. Energy	7
	Chapter 21. Trans-European networks	4
	Chapter 27. Environment & climate change	7
Cluster 5: «Resources, agriculture & cohesion»	Chapter 11. Agriculture & rural development	4
	Chapter 12. Food safety, veterinary & phytosanitary policy	5
	Chapter 13. Fisheries	4
	Chapter 22. Regional policy & coordination of structural instruments	4
	Chapter 33. Financial & budgetary provisions	1
Cluster 6: «External relations»	Chapter 30. External relations	2
	Chapter 31. Foreign, security & defence policy	3

Source: compiled by the author [1].

In addition, on February 21-22, 2024, the first explanatory session on the negotiating chapters of the EU acquis was held as part of the official screening, which related to chapter 23 “Judiciary and fundamental rights”. Since 2020, when the EU revised the enlargement methodology, chapters 23 and 24 have become some of the most important chapters during the negotiation process [1].

The new methodology, which was adopted on February 5, 2020, aimed to revise the previous rules. According to this methodology, in the future the EU is ready for new enlargement. Especially with regards to the countries of the Western Balkans. Mentioned methodology includes four main categories:

1. A more credible process – the accession procedure must be based on trust, mutual confidence and clear commitments between the EU and the countries seeking to join. It is assumed that the strengthening of trust will take place through the implementation of reforms, especially in some areas related to the rule of law, strengthening democracy, public administration, as well as economic reforms. Candidate countries can move to another stage in the negotiation process after they meet certain criteria.
2. A stronger political steer – in order to prepare the political leadership of the candidate states for the negotiation process, the member states of the European Union should hold from time to time bilateral summits with the leadership of the candidate state for accession.
3. A more dynamic process – in order to better understand the obligations of the candidate state, the European Commission decided to group the sections of the negotiation process into six thematic clusters: “Fundamentals”, “Internal market”, “Competitiveness and inclusive growth”, “Green agenda and sustainable connectivity”, “Resources, agriculture and cohesion” and “External relations”. Negotiations with the candidate country will be opened after the implementation of the initial benchmarks. At the same time, the start and end of negotiations will take place on the basis of the first cluster. As for the time frame, there are no clearly defined limits for negotiations. It is assumed that the general term for the opening and closing of each chapter should not exceed one year. But everything will depend on the progress of reforms.
4. A more predictable process – the European Commission will provide candidate countries with more detailed information on what the institution expects from candidate countries at different stages of the negotiation process, especially those provisions that require greater efforts [2].

## 5. Conclusions.

Thus, Ukraine actively continues to work in the direction of European integration. To this end, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of the European Commission presented in the Report on the Progress of Ukraine. In total, this Plan includes 142 recommendations. Their implementation requires the realization of more than 350 measures. The largest number of recommendations of the European Commission is contained in Chapter 23 “Judiciary and fundamental rights”. It is also worth noting that all recommendations are developed in accordance with the updated methodology for the enlargement of the European Union.

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**Ihor Dir,**

*Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Ukraine*

*Honored Lawyer of Ukraine*

*Ph.D., Associate Professor*

*Doctoral Candidate at Uzhhorod National University*

*E-mail: [ihor.dir@uzhnu.edu.ua](mailto:ihor.dir@uzhnu.edu.ua)*

*ORCID: 0000-0001-9829-4294*