

# POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN RELATION TO UKRAINE

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**Annotation.** The *aim of the work* is comprehensive analysis of the state of bilateral relations between Ukraine and the European Union at the stage after the opening of the accession negotiation process.

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

**Results.** In April 2024, the European Commission issued a Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the Ukraine Plan. This Plan, in addition to the provisions on the reconstruction of Ukraine and financial support, also contains other important provisions. Yet, the document contains a reform plan that must be implemented by Ukraine. In general, the Ukraine Plan proposes 69 reforms and 10 investments accounting for 146 qualitative and quantitative steps. These reforms are based on 15 key sectors, which also cover sectors of the EU acquis. Sectors in which it is necessary to attract investments are additionally selected. An important feature of this Plan is also the fact that the number of steps necessary for the implementation of these reforms is determined.

An important feature of each of these reforms is that it takes into account the EU acquis. For example, the goal of the Public Administration reform cluster is strengthening the capacity and efficiency of the Ukrainian administration and the gradual alignment of the rules, standards, policies, and practices with the EU acquis. Accordingly, the introduction of certain reforms has a positive effect on Ukraine's implementation of the EU acquis in domestic legislation. It was found that out of 33 clusters of the EU acquis, the implementation of reforms will have broad alignment with recommendations in the 2023 Enlargement Report for 14 clusters. Another 11 clusters will be partially approximated.

**Conclusions.** As a result of the study, it was found that the European Union actively helps Ukraine in its European integration aspiration. Thus, in April 2024, the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the Ukraine Plan was presented. In addition to the provisions on the reconstruction of Ukraine, this report contains a reform plan that must be implemented by Ukraine in order to bring domestic legislation as close as possible to the EU acquis.

**Key words:** European Union, Ukraine, enlargement, implementation, progress, negotiation, association, agreement, area.

## 1. Introduction.

Bilateral relations between Ukraine and the European Union in recent years, and especially after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, have been characterized by dynamism. Thus, in 2022, Ukraine received the status of a candidate for membership in the European Union. However, this status was granted on condition of implementation of the reforms, which consisted of seven points. Already a year and a half after this event, the European Council decided to start negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU. In view of the above-mentioned provisions, the study of the state of Ukraine-EU relations at the current stage is actual.

## 2. Analysis of scientific publications.

Separate aspects of the study of this issue were considered by significant number of 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 bilateral relations between Ukraine and the European Union at the stage after the opening of the accession negotiation process.

## 4. Review and discussion.

In April 2024, the European Commission issued a Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the Ukraine Plan. This Plan, in addition to the provisions on the reconstruction of Ukraine and financial support, also contains other important provisions. Yet, the document contains a reform plan that must be implemented by Ukraine. In general, the Ukraine Plan proposes 69 reforms and 10 investments accounting for 146 qualitative and quantitative steps. These reforms are based on 15 key sectors, which also cover sectors of the EU acquis. Sectors in which it is necessary to attract investments are additionally selected. An important feature of this Plan is also the fact that the number of steps necessary to implement these reforms is determined (Table 1).

**Table 1. Reforms defined in accordance with the Ukraine Plan**

Chapter	Reforms		Investments		Total quantity steps for reforms and investments
	Quantity of reforms	Quantity of steps	Quantity of investment	Quantity of steps	
<i>Total</i>	69	130	10	16	146
Public Administration Reform	3	5			5
Public Financial Management	5	9			9
Judiciary	4	14			14
Fight Against Corruption and Money Laundering	3	10			10
Financial Markets	4	6			6
Management of Public Assets	4	9			9
Human Capital	9	11	5	8	19
Business Environment	6	9	1	2	11
Decentralisation and Regional Policy	3	6	1	2	8
Energy Sector	7	17	1	1	18
Transport	4	6	1	1	7
Agri-Food Sector	6	8	1	2	10

Management of Critical Raw Materials	3	6			6
Digital Transformation	2	4			4
Green Transition and Environmental Protection	6	10			10

Source: [1]

An important feature of each of these reforms is that it takes into account the EU acquis. For example, the goal of the Public Administration reform cluster is strengthening the capacity and efficiency of the Ukrainian administration and the gradual alignment of the rules, standards, policies, and practices with the EU acquis. Accordingly, the introduction of certain reforms has a positive effect on Ukraine’s implementation of the EU acquis in domestic legislation.

Out of 33 clusters of the EU acquis, the implementation of reforms will have broad alignment with recommendations in the 2023 Enlargement Report for 14 clusters. Another 11 clusters will be partially approximated with the cluster recommendations specified in the 2023 Enlargement Report (Table 2).

**Table 2. The impact of the reforms defined in the Ukraine Plan on the recommendations for Ukraine in the 2023 Enlargement Report**

Chapter in the Ukraine Plan	Cluster (chapter) defined in the 2023 Enlargement Report	Degree of alignment
1. Public Administration Reform	cluster 1: Functioning of the democratic institutions and public administration reform	●
2. Public Financial Management	cluster 1: Functioning of the democratic institutions and public administration reform	●
	chapter 16 Taxation	○
	chapter 17 Economic and monetary policy	○
	chapter 29 Customs union	○
	chapter 32 Financial control	○
3. Judiciary	chapter 33 Financial and budgetary provisions	●
	chapter 23 Judiciary and fundamental rights	●
4. Fight against Corruption and Money Laundering	chapter 4 Free movement of capital	○
	chapter 23 Judiciary and fundamental rights	●
	chapter 24 Justice, Freedom and Security	●
5. Financial Markets	chapter 9 Financial services	●
6. Management of Public Assets	chapter 8: Competition policy	○
7. Human Capital	chapter 19: Social policy and employment	○
	chapter 26: Education and culture	●
8. Business Environment	chapter 5: Public procurement	○
	chapter 20: Enterprise and industrial policy	●
9. Decentralisation and Regional Policy	chapter 22: Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments	○
10. Energy Sector	chapter 15: Energy	●
11. Transport	chapter 14: Transport	●
	chapter 21: Trans-European Networks	○
12. Agri-Food Sector	chapter 11: Agriculture and rural development	●



13. Management of Critical Raw Materials		○
14. Digital Transformation	chapter 10: Digital transformation and Media	○
15. Green Transition and Environmental Protection	chapter 27: Environment and climate change	●
chapters 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11	cluster 1: Economic criteria	●

Notes: ● broad alignment with recommendations in the 2023 Enlargement Report;

○ partial alignment with recommendations in the 2023 Enlargement Report.

Source: [1]

Another important component in bilateral relations between Ukraine and the EU is the Association Agreement. In March 2024, during the 9th meeting of the Ukraine-EU Association Council, the Report on the implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU for 2023 was presented.

Thus, the progress of the implementation of the Agreement for 2023 increased by 5% compared to 2022. Most of the requirements were met in the Consumer Protection sector, where compared to 2022, the increase in the fulfilment of obligations was 66%. It is also worth noting that there were no changes in some areas: Financial Cooperation and Combating Fraud, Public Finance Management, Statistics and Information Exchange during the year (Table 3).

**Table 3. Status of implementation of the Association Agreement 2015-2023**

Area	2015-2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Overall progress in implementation of the Association Agreement by areas</i>	54%	63%	72%	77%
Political Dialogue, National Security and Defence	89%	89%	89%	91%
Justice, Freedom, Security and Human Rights	85%	88%	91%	92%
Technical Barriers to Trade	85%	86%	87%	89%
Humanitarian Policy	84%	89%	91%	94%
Public Procurement	83%	86%	88%	89%
Entrepreneurship	81%	85%	88%	89%
Public Finance Management	74%	74%	90%	90%
Education, Trainings and Youth	69%	81%	86%	94%
Statistics and Information Exchange	68%	84%	96%	96%
Energy Efficiency and Housing and Utility Infrastructure	63%	70%	75%	78%
Taxation	60%	84%	88%	89%
Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures	60%	64%	72%	82%
Intellectual Property	54%	61%	94%	98%
Environment and Civil Protection	50%	61%	77%	80%
Public Health	47%	64%	66%	78%
Science, Technology and Innovations, Space	46%	52%	60%	68%
Energy	45%	58%	75%	78%
Customs Matter	44%	52%	60%	61%
Agriculture	42%	52%	63%	70%
Consumer Protection	42%	48%	48%	80%
Social Policy and Labour Relations	40%	45%	54%	79%
Financial Services	36%	62%	67%	68%
Transport, Transport Infrastructure, Postal and Courier Services, Digital Integration	35%	47%	53%	56%
Financial Cooperation and Combating Fraud	24%	24%	24%	24%

Source: compiled by the author according to [2, 3, 4, 5].

Various authorities are responsible for the implementation of the Agreement. Thus, for the period from 2014 to 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine implemented 75% of the measures, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine – 64%, and other authorities – 62%.

## 5. Conclusions.

Therefore, the European Union in its policy actively helps Ukraine in its European integration aspiration. Thus, in April 2024, the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the Ukraine Plan was presented. In addition to the provisions on the reconstruction of Ukraine, this report contains a reform plan that must be implemented by Ukraine in order to bring domestic legislation as close as possible to the EU *acquis*. What is important is that out of 33 clusters of the EU *acquis*, the implementation of reforms will have broad alignment with recommendations in the 2023 Enlargement Report for 14 clusters, and 11 clusters will be partially aligned with the recommendations for clusters specified in the 2023 Enlargement Report. Ukraine is also working on fulfilling EU requirements. In particular, during the year, Ukraine fulfilled its obligations under the Association Agreement by 5%. The largest number of requirements compared to 2022 was fulfilled in the Consumer Protection sector.

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