

Prospects of the Eastern Partnership under modern challenges to the European security system

Yaryna Turchyn* and Lesya Dorosh**

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to examine the Eastern Partnership initiative as a component of the European Neighbourhood Policy and a tool of regional security by taking into account the factor of Russian aggression and the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. Based on methods of analysis and synthesis, content analysis of primary and secondary sources of information, modelling and prediction, the following objectives are achieved: (1) to determine the vulnerabilities in the programme design, given the current geopolitical threats, and (2) to develop proposals to change the security component of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) within the context of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. The significant shortcomings of the existing EaP model are highlighted, in particular, the initiative overall ineffectiveness, the EU membership perspective in the long run, disregarded national features, the lack of commitment by the EU countries to strengthen the integration, the security component weakness and the insufficient European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) financial support. It is concluded that intensification of the cooperation of the EaP partner countries in the area of security will not only contribute to the initiative development, but it will also enhance national securities and promote the development of a zone of stability and democracy as well as the European security space consolidation.

Keywords

Eastern Partnership, security, Ukraine, Russia, the European Union.

* **Yaryna Turchyn** is a full time professor of Department of Political Science and International Relations of Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv, Ukraine. e-mail – turchynj@ukr.net.

* **Lesya Dorosh** is an Associate Professor of Department of Political Science and International Relations of Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv, Ukraine. e-mail – lesua3@yandex.ua.

Introduction

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative launched in 2009 within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is an important tool of the EU enlargement policy. This initiative involves the six countries – Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, formally dividing the EU foreign policy in relations with the southern and eastern neighbouring countries. The initiative is implemented in both bilateral and multilateral formats to support reforms in the partner countries, mainly through the conclusion of association agreements, creation of free trade zones and liberalisation of the visa regime between the European Union and Eastern candidates for accession. This format of international interaction acquires particular importance for effective implementation of the foreign policy of a number of European-oriented post-Soviet countries, as it is one of the mechanisms of integration into the European Union, an effective factor for democratic reforms, and it is a security guarantor in conditions of the latest geopolitical challenges. Since its inception, the initiative has changed significantly, primarily the purpose of its activities has got modified. The major factors for this were the political events in Ukraine (as well as in Eastern Europe, in general) as a consequence of the Vilnius summit of the European Union in November 2013. They revealed the benefits of the integration-oriented policy and, simultaneously, the vulnerabilities in the EaP design, and actualised the issue of changing its format according to new threats to security space of the united Europe.

The creation and development of the EaP initiative is the theme of scientific research of those Ukrainian scientists who comprehensively study the European integration process in the dimensions of politics, security and economy. Here the works by V. Manzhola, V. Kopijka, V. Dalskyy, L. Chekalenko, O. Shapovalova, O. Poltaratskyy, I. Maksymenko, H. Perepelytsia, D. Hajday, V. Malik, T. Sydorouk, N. Romaniuk, I. Nahorniak, S. Hutsal, S. Pavlenko, O. Vonsovyeh, V. Samokhvalov et al. should be distinguished.

The European Union regulatory documents constitute a particularly important group of primary sources on certain aspects of the launch and development of the EaP initiative and the normative securing of key areas (platforms) of the cooperation. In particular, this is about the official joint declarations adopted at the summits,¹ main positions of the cooperation key platforms,² the agenda of actions within the initiative³ and other documents.⁴

¹ Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Eastern Partnership, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/sec08_2974_en.pdf; Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, Prague, 7 May 2009, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf; Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Warsaw, 29–30 September 2011, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/124843.pdf; Joint Declaration of the

The study of the EaP initiative reforming is of particular relevance under the conditions of the intensification of the Russian Federation expansionist foreign policy, the contradictions within the European Union and the lack of a unified position with respect to addressing the pressing political and security problems of the European region. Thus, the purpose of the article is to examine the EaP initiative as a component of the ENP and a tool of regional security by taking into account the factor of Russian aggression and the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. This goal is achieved through the implementation of the following objectives: (1) to determine vulnerabilities in the programme design, given the current geopolitical threats, and (2) to develop proposals to change the security component of the EaP within the context of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict.

The Eastern Partnership objectives: relevance of the priorities

The EaP is a foreign policy initiative of the European Union, which applies to 28 EU member states and 6 Eastern European neighbours of the European Union – Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The initiative was launched on 7 May 2009 at the Prague constituent summit on the proposal made by Poland and Sweden to deepen cooperation of Eastern European countries and South Caucasus with the European Union and update the legal framework of these relations. The adoption and implementation EaP were of value for Poland and Sweden, the project initiating states. This way Poland demonstrated the capability to formulate constructive proposals as well as to coordinate and implement them. Sweden was trying to mitigate the negative perception of the policy of Poland, which spread in the European Union at that time and enlist the support of the ‘old’ EU member states. In addition, whilst solidarising with Poland, Swedes sought to implement the more far-reaching strategy – to strengthen their political weight in the European Union through the achievement of the regional

Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28–29 November 2013, Eastern Partnership: the way ahead, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/139765.pdf; Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (Riga, 21–22 May 2015), http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/riga-declaration-220515-final_en.pdf

² The Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/platforms/index_en.htm.

³ Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) – 2014–2020. Strategic Priorities 2014–2020 and Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014–2017. European Neighbourhood-wide measures, http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/sites/default/files/attachments/enp_wide_strategic_priorities_2014_2020_and_multi_annual_indicative_programme_2014_2017_en.pdf

⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Eastern Partnership, Brussels, 3 December 2008, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/com08_823_en.pdf

leadership in North and Central-Eastern Europe as well as to create an opposition to the intensifying tandem of Germany and Russia in the Baltic region strategic for Sweden.⁵

The main goal of the EaP was proclaimed to be ‘the creation of necessary conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the European Union and interested partner countries’.⁶ The commitment to the implementation of political and socio-economic reforms in partner countries was to serve as a contribution to the stability, security and prosperity of the entire European continent. Therefore, the initiative is based on the ‘more for more’ approach, when the EU assistance is distinctive and proportional to the volume of reforms in the Eastern Policy countries. Within the EaP framework, the interaction has been taking place according to the four thematic platforms: (1) democracy, good governance and stability; (2) economic integration and convergence with the EU sectorial policies; (3) energy security; and (4) interpersonal contacts. However, it is worth noting that the initiative thematic platforms declared today do not reflect all the important concerns of the majority of partner countries, which is primarily related to ensuring their territorial integrity and solving the existing unresolved conflicts.

It is important that the cooperation between the countries in the EaP format intensified the process of integration of Eastern European countries with EU economies, approximation of their legislation with European standards and creation of the Economic Union between the initiative members. In the struggle against corruption, organised crime and illegal migration, the cooperation also intensified, labour mobility increased and prospects were created for the opening of EU labour markets. With the financial support of the initiative, a number of individual programmes aimed at strengthening partners’ energy security, reducing social and economic inequalities, disaster relief, energy efficiency, border security and so on were implemented. This format of international cooperation (Ilnytska, ‘The Eastern Partnership as a dimension’, 116) significantly intensified contacts between the European Union and citizens of the EaP countries, created opportunities for countries to get financial assistance to carry out reforms in the sectors strategically important for the state development.⁷

⁵ В. Копійка, *Україна та Європейський Союз (Ukraine and the European Union)* (Київ: Знання, 2012), 29.

⁶ Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, 07 May 2009, 1 February, 2016, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/10758.pdf

⁷ Уляна Ільницька, “Східне партнерство” як вимір європейської політики сусідства та діалоговий рівень співробітництва України з ЄС” (‘The Eastern Partnership as a dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and a dialogue level of Ukraine-EU cooperation’), *Українська національна ідея: реалії та перспективи розвитку* 26 (2014): 113–120.

Undoubtedly, the EaP became a step forward in comparison with the ENP. The initiative positive aspect is about enjoying the support of all EU member states. However, in today's political environment, there are active debates on the effectiveness and relevance of the EU foreign policy cooperation with the countries of the Eastern European region in the EaP format. This is largely due to the lack of unified understanding of the initiative content and purpose, and, consequently, of its implementation effectiveness. In general, there are the two approaches to determining the EaP functional purpose for the EU foreign policy and the system of international relations as a whole. In one case, the initiative is treated as completely autonomous from the area of activities of the EU Eastern policy, which is an entirely self-sufficient mechanism for the full integration of these countries into the European Union, and in another, as part of the ENP. Western politicians mostly follow the latter approach, for example, during the recent the EaP summit in Riga, German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged 'not to build expectations that cannot be realized', thereby focusing attention on that the EaP does not guarantee the European Union membership.⁸ In the event final declaration ('The Final Declaration'), it is also clearly stated that the EaP is part of the ENP, that is, it does not imply an automatic perspective of EU membership.⁹ Therefore, today the issue of specifying the initiative objectives, its main mechanisms and accordingly amending the prioritised areas of the EU activities in terms of current challenges to the European security system is intensified.

Despite different interpretations of the initiative final opportunities, obvious is the fact (Parno, 'The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine') that both the ENP and EaP were developed and approved in response to the active process of the EU enlargement during 2004–2007¹⁰. It should be noted that the relevance of the Eastern European initiative was always determined by international geopolitical realities as well as by the dynamic process of democratisation of post-Soviet countries of the region. So, to a great extent, the EU Eastern policy got intensified after the failure of democratisation reforms in the former socialist camp countries. It is about the systemic political crisis in Ukraine in the Post-Orange Revolution period during the presidency of V. Yushchenko, the military conflict in Georgia, persecution of opposition politicians in Belarus and so on. The political realities of those days showed that the European Union conceded its

⁸ "Ризький Бальзам для України або тріщини "Східного партнерства" ('Riga Balsam for Ukraine or the Eastern Partnership cracks'), *Обозревател*, 22 травня, 2015, <http://obozrevatel.com/politics/04791-rizhskij-balzar-dlya-ukrainyi-ili-treschinyi-vostochnogo-partnerstva.htm>.

⁹ "Підсумкова декларація Ризького саміту Східного партнерства" ('The Final Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga'), *Європейська правда*, 22 травня, 2015, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2015/05/22/7034050/>

¹⁰ Леся Парно, "Східне партнерство" та Україна: які перспективи?", *NOVA-UKRAINA.ORG*, 28 листопада, 2011, <http://novaukraina.org/news/urn.news:1D41D7A>

Eastern policy in favour of foreign policy interests of the Russian Federation, which in many ways tried to restore and increase its impact on the countries of Eastern Europe. At the time when the European Union began to lose control of its foreign policy eastern dimension, making the initiative by Poland and Sweden to create the EaP in 2008 received necessary support amongst the European elite, which was perceived as an effective way of correcting the situation.¹¹ In general, analysts (Parno, ‘The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine’) distinguish at least two reasons for the creation of the EaP initiative. This way the European Union tried, first, to ensure stability around its borders and, second, to strengthen its influence in the post-Soviet countries, which were seeking to move away from authoritarianism and get closer to European democratic standards.¹²

The priorities of the EU Eastern initiative changed under the pressure of the geopolitical challenges in the European region. The expectations of Eastern Europe regarding the initiative were concentrated mainly in the political and geopolitical area, whereas the EU approach focused on the implementation of the functional tasks of the Eastern European space stabilisation. These were the differences, which influenced the structure formation, the choice of the implementation means and the EaP tasks. Thus, according to V. Manzhola (Manzhola, *European Security and Ukraine*, 30), if, at the beginning of its functioning, the EaP was aimed at deepening relations with EU neighbours in the East and balancing with the Union for the Mediterranean, then later it was prescribed a strategic role, taking into account the increased activity of Russia to restore its influence in the post-Soviet space. Trying to keep the eastern neighbours in the orbit of its interests, the European Union began to consider the EaP as an opportunity to strengthen the statehood and territorial integrity of the countries invited to participate in it on the basis of European solidarity.¹³

Other analysts, including H. Perepelytsya (Perepelytsya, ‘New tools and opportunities of the Eastern Partnership’), argue that the EaP both from the side of the European Union and from the side of participating countries involves implementation of the two groups of objectives: ideological and pragmatic ones. The ideological group of objectives had to provide a civilisational choice, that is, focusing on Europe and European structures as opposed to Eurasia

¹¹ Іван Нагорняк, “Ревізія Східного партнерства: Україну та Азербайджан варто нарешті розділити” (‘The Eastern Partnership Revision: It is worth to finally split Ukraine and Azerbaijan’), *Європейська правда*, 18 травня, 2015, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/experts/2015/05/18/7033849/>.

¹² Леся Парно, “Східне партнерство” та Україна: які перспективи? (‘The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine: What are the prospects?’), *NOVA-UKRAINA.ORG*, 28 листопада, 2011, <http://novaukraina.org/news/urn:news:1D41D7A>.

¹³ В. Манжола, О. Хилько, *Європейська безпека та Україна (European Security and Ukraine)* (Київ: Знання, 2010): 85.

and Russia, building democratic regimes in the EaP countries, respecting human rights, and organising a competent administration system. Instead, the pragmatic one was about the opportunity to obtain financial and technical assistance from the European Union and implement own policy by balancing between the EU and Russia interests. And in this sense, the initiative is perceived by its participants as a ‘modernisation’ and ‘stabilisation’ project and a strategy of ‘balancing’, in which the European Union is trying to expand its influence by using soft power instruments. The aim here was to arrange a safe environment and establish a stable zone around the EU borders, for the border areas not to turn into sources of the EU security concerns.¹⁴ Thus, in the security context, by using the EaP policy, through deepening cooperation with the six countries in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, the European Union tried to influence the ongoing conflicts in the region (the problem of Transnistria, Nahirnyy Karabakh and self-proclaimed republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and prevent possible future crises (energy, political and others). It is, therefore, logical that because of the annexation of Crimea and the Russian–Ukrainian conflict, Russia’s support of armed and terrorist groups in eastern Ukraine, the ‘frozen conflict zone’ creation here, with this being a direct threat to the security of the eastern EU member states and European security in general, the expediency of modifying the EaP objectives and priorities once again started to be actively discussed.

The EU foreign policy cooperation crisis in the Eastern Partnership format and its causes

In recent years, in the European environment, the need to reform not only the EaP initiative but also the EU policy towards Eastern Europe as a whole has been increasingly noted. It became apparent (Maksymenko, ‘Ukrainian factor of the European Union foreign policy’, 80) that the implementation of the established Eastern European policy model by the European Union did not produce the desired result, as it contained a number of significant drawbacks. In particular, destructive factors in its implementation such as political, economic and ideological discrepancies between partner countries, the lack of their regional cooperation tradition, a differentiated level of their dependence on Russia and the presence of a security vacuum the EaP states found themselves in were not taken into consideration.¹⁵ As a result, the EU Council

Yaryna Turchyn, Lesya Dorosh

¹⁴ Григорій Перепелиця, “Нові інструменти Східного партнерства і можливості для України” (‘New tools and opportunities of the Eastern Partnership for Ukraine’), 28 липня, 2016, <http://old.niss.gov.ua/book/Mitryaeva2009/26.pdf>

¹⁵ І. Максименко, “Український чинник зовнішньої політики Європейського Союзу відносно держав Східного партнерства: виклики 2014 року” (‘Ukrainian factor of the European Union foreign policy towards the Eastern Partnership countries: Challenges of 2014’), *Вісник ОНУ ім. І. Мечникова. Соціологія і політичні науки* 19, Вип. 2 (21) (2014): 78–87.

adopted a decision on the need for approval of ‘The Green Card of the Revised European Neighbourhood Policy’, and a little later – the adoption of the final document on the ENP reform, which would fix the new priorities and objectives of the EU Eastern policy. In order to build an effective system of the eastern direction of the EU foreign policy, it is worth identifying and getting to understand the reasons for the EaP non-compliance with the new geopolitical demands and security realities, and determine possible EaP formats in the area of European security. Eventually, investigating the possibilities of the EaP to enhance the security system of the European region will allow to determine the initiative priority in combating the latest threats and challenges.

According to K. Raik, an analyst of Finnish Institute of International Affairs (Raik, ‘Ukraine and Europe’), official Brussels is currently interested in protecting internal European interests rather than in conducting foreign policy based on a certain system of values. As, at present, the issue of the EU enlargement is not considered, it significantly alters the format of relations between the European Union and its Eastern partners. The Finnish researcher reasonably distinguishes the three main areas in which there are limitations for the EaP further development. First, the European Union did not manage to work out a common strategy for relations with Eastern European countries. In particular, it concerns the EU obligation on the introduction of in-depth and comprehensive free trade zones for neighbouring countries seeking to integrate into the Eurozone common market. This limitation can be overcome by providing interested eastern partners with a clear EU membership perspective. However, European politicians are constantly substituting a real integration with ‘new perspectives’ or likelihood of ‘further progress’ in relations as well as with Association Agreements, which are also synonymous with the previous statements and do not guarantee the EaP countries the prospect of membership in the European community.¹⁶ The same position is shared by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland W. Waszczykowski (‘Polish Foreign Minister on the Eastern Partnership’), who has similarly noted that the EaP programme is largely ineffective, as it has never been a real chance for joining the European Union, but only assigned eastern countries the role of a fake zone between Russia and the European Union, that is, ‘created the illusion for these countries, however, did not provide the prospect of membership in the European Union’.¹⁷ Conducting reforms in the EaP countries

¹⁶ Крістіні Райк, “Україна та Європа: ближче до ЄС, але далі від членства?” (‘Ukraine and Europe: Closer to the EU but further from the membership?’), *Європейська правда*, 5 червня, 2015, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2015/06/5/7034480/>

¹⁷ “Глава МЗС Польщі про Східне партнерство: не за це вийшов Майдан” (‘Polish Foreign Minister on the Eastern Partnership: It is not what the Maidan stepped out for’), *Експрес*, 30 січня, 2016, <http://expres.ua/news/2016/01/30/171144-glava-mzs-polshchi-shidne-partnerstvo-ne-vyyshov-maydan>

with no ultimate goal reduces their effectiveness. It is only a clearly defined goal, that is, EU membership, that will contribute to the modernisation of the countries embraced by the initiative, taking into account the existing experience of the EU member states, and will also intensify the European standards implementation and sectorial cooperation between the partner countries and the European Union.

It should be noted (Andrukhovych, ‘The Eastern Partnership Summit’) that since very inception of the EaP initiative, there was uncertainty regarding the opportunities of such a format of international cooperation for eastern post-Soviet countries. The last EaP summit in Riga (May, 2015) became the proof of this as it did not record a perspective of EU membership for the EaP countries or any specific changes in the policy of the initiative per se. By evaluating the summit results, President of the European Council D. Tusk stated that so far there was no possibility to provide the EaP countries with prospects of joining the European Union but emphasised the feasibility of introducing a visa-free regime with the European Union for Ukraine and Georgia already starting 2016.¹⁸ In fact, liberalisation of a visa-free regime between certain EaP member countries and the European Union can not only mitigate the effects of uncertainty of participation in the EaP but also become an effective incentive for further changes and the formation of a more loyal attitude of the population of the EaP countries towards the European Union. However, the current situation contributes to the disillusionment amongst Eastern European countries in the possibilities of full integration into the European Union. For example, according to the World Policy Institute (Hajday, ‘What is the future of the Eastern Partnership?’), only every fifth Ukrainian is convinced that Ukraine as one of the EaP countries will receive the status of a candidate for EU membership already in the near future. Nearly one-third believes that none of the EaP countries can count on a positive response from Brussels, and 80% of Ukrainian respondents express the view that in the next 5 years, EaP will not succeed in making progress in its activities, which actualises the need in its reform.¹⁹ Thus, the skeptical attitude of the community of EaP countries towards the initiative is due to the fears that it will become a substitute for the prospect of membership in the European Union as well as to doubts regarding its viability and effectiveness, taking into account the uncertainty of the ultimate goal. Euroscepticism is also intensified by economic hardships, social anxiety and political uncertainty as well as by the international isolation, causing instability in many post-Soviet states of Eastern

¹⁸ Тарас Андрухович, “Саміт Східного партнерства: надія чи розчарування для України?” (‘The Eastern Partnership Summit: Hope or disappointment for Ukraine?’), *Польське радіо*, 22 травня, 2015, <http://www.polradio.pl/5/132/Artykul/207767>

¹⁹ Дарія Гайдай, “Яке майбутнє у Східного партнерства?” (‘What is the future of the Eastern Partnership?’), *Institute of World Policy*, 29 квітня, 2015, <http://iwp.org.ua/ukr/public/1506.html>

Europe. It is clear that in general, the Europe-wide economic recession influences the relations with the EaP region countries. It comes to reducing investments, slowing down trade and complicating the procedure of obtaining loans. Consequently, in Eastern European countries, civil discontent with the actions of authorities is growing, structural reforms are inhibited and ruling elites are changed periodically (through elections), which does not provide an effective political alternative. Thus, the expectations expressed by European partners in addressing countries such as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are significantly changed. Today, there is no confidence (Bugajski, 'Vulnerable to pressure') as to whether these post-Soviet countries will turn into consolidated democracies, open economies and real candidates for EU membership. However, the more uncertain beliefs of the EaP countries in their EU membership are and the more precarious the European Union position regarding the issue is, the stronger is the pressure from the side of the Kremlin, which applies different methods to affect foreign and security policy of its nearest neighbours, so that they maintain neutrality and refrain from their membership in Western institutions or actively support the Russian alternative.²⁰

The second limitation of the EaP development is related to the fact (Parno, 'The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine') that the European Union, whilst implementing the eastern direction of its foreign policy, turned out to be unable to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the partner countries. Here the relations between the European Union and Russia are acquiring a strategic value. The EaP prospects have always been considered by Europeans in the light of cooperation with Russia, with the problems of the EU energy dependence and energy security dominating there. Thus, from between the effectiveness of the EaP policy and the EU energy security, Brussels always prefers the latter.²¹ Extremely dangerous is the fact that the 'Russian factor' makes the EU Eastern policy fuzzy, and accordingly futile, devoid of sufficient incentives to carry out radical reforms on democratisation in the EaP member countries.

In addition, the situation is complicated by the uncertainty of the EU countries themselves on the EU extension to the east and different visions of the policy with respect to Russia. It is clear (Raik, 'Ukraine and Europe') that such polarisation only complicates the implementation of the Union's policy towards the east. Consequently, until now, no effective mechanisms are developed to prevent actions of the Russian Federation that violates the rules of international law

Prospects of the Eastern Partnership under Modern Challenges to the European Security System 68

²⁰ Януш Бугайські, "Вразливі до тиску. Дестабілізація в країнах Центрально-Східної Європи грає на руку Москві" ('Vulnerable to pressure. The destabilization in Central and Eastern Europe is playing into the hands of Moscow'), *Тиждень*, 19 квітня, 2013, <http://tyzhden.ua/World/77140/PrintView>

²¹ Леся Парно, "Східне партнерство" та Україна: які перспективи? ('The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine: What are the prospects?'), *NOVA-UKRAINA.ORG*, 28 листопада, 2011, <http://novaukraina.org/news/urn:news:1D41D7A>

in the sphere of foreign policy and, unlike Europeans, has used military force to implement its interests in the Eastern European region. Economic sanctions do not produce the desired and speedy result, and alternative mechanisms to counteract military aggression, and hybrid forms of pressure on the part of Russia to advance its interests have not yet been found.²²

Therefore, it can be argued that the EaP exacerbates the relations between Brussels and Russia, which considers the countries of Eastern Europe as a zone of its influence, and the EU policy in the region as a threat to the national security. A similar view is expressed by the well-known expert of German Council on Foreign Relations Alexander Rahr (Romaniuk, 'The Eastern Partnership'), claiming that Moscow treats the EaP as a way of NATO's eastward expansion.²³ Under these conditions, Russia sees (Ilnytska, 'The Eastern Partnership as a dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy', 115) the European Union as a political and economic competitor because, according to the Russian side, the EaP may limit the opportunities of 'gas' diplomacy of Russia (North and South Streams), is an alternative to Russian integration initiatives in the post-Soviet space and, in general, contradicts the majority of the provisions of the Concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation until 2020 signed by V. Putin in 2008.²⁴

Equally annoying issue for Russia with respect to the EaP is the indirect presence of the United States here. Actually, out of all the EU foreign policy initiatives, the EaP is most consistent with the US priorities in Eastern Europe. The EaP introduction is also seen in Russia as the evidence of the lack of effectiveness of the post-Soviet vector of Russian foreign policy. It is about Georgia's withdrawal from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), refusal by the post-Soviet republics to recognise South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, Dignity Revolution in Ukraine and so on. This only reinforces the aggressive foreign policy of the Russian Federation and clearly confirms the fact of the annexation of Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. With intensification of the Eastern European EU policy, the dualism of Europe-Russia is becoming increasingly evident, and the challenges making the parties

²² Крістіні Райк, "Україна та Європа: ближче до ЄС, але далі від членства?" ('Ukraine and Europe: Closer to the EU but further from the membership?'), *Європейська правда*, 5 червня, 2015, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2015/06/5/7034480/>.

²³ Наталія Романюк, "Східне партнерство" як інструмент посилення інтеграційних процесів у Європі ('The Eastern Partnership' as a tool for strengthening integration processes in Europe'), *Україна та Польща: минуле, сьогодні, перспективи*, 18 липня, 2016, http://irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/cgi-bin/irbis_nbuv/cgiirbis_64.exe?C21COM=2&I21DBN=UJRN&P21DBN=UJRN&IMAGE_FILE_DOWNLOAD=1&Image_file_name=PDF/UPmcp_2013_2_21.pdf

²⁴ Уляна Ільницька, "Східне партнерство" як вимір європейської політики сусідства та діалоговий рівень співробітництва України з ЄС ('The Eastern Partnership as a dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and a dialogue level of Ukraine-EU cooperation'), *Українська національна ідея: реалії та перспективи розвитку*, no. 26, (2014): 113-120.

demonstrate that their capabilities are amplified. In this context, experts often associate the situation around the relations of the EU and the EaP countries with the ‘dilemma of integration’ when one state considers the integration of neighbouring states, with economic organisations still inaccessible to it currently, as a threat to its safety or well-being. Thus, after 2008, the EU Eastern policy activation has led to Russia’s vision of the threat implemented by the EU regulatory policy: the struggle between the normative nature (the European Union) and geopolitical nature (Russia) is traced.²⁵

The third initiative limitation is caused by the failure of the European Union to transform the neighbouring countries into stable democracies with real versus fake democratic institutions. Although the prospect of membership in the European Union and NATO is an effective tool for the radical democratisation of society, only the Baltic States were able to fully take advantage of it in the mid-1990s in conditions of the geopolitical influence of Russia relatively low at the time. In the current international system, the opposite situation is observed (Raik, ‘Ukraine and Europe’), in particular, strengthening Russia’s pressure not only on Eastern Europe but also on the European Union.²⁶ This greatly hinders the democratic transition intensity in the EaP countries.

Hence, the partnership initiative effectiveness is largely dependent on the demonstration of readiness for further systemic reforms by the EaP countries. If reforms in the countries involved in the EaP continue demonstrating unsatisfactory pace, it will be a significant threat for the European Union in terms of Russia’s aggression and the presence of active conflicts near its borders. Although the democratic transition process is not yet completed, but it is worth stating the fact of public perception of democratic values in Eastern European countries. In this context, analysts reasonably point out that particularly, the ideological (value-oriented) breakthrough triggered by the revolutionary events in Ukraine is a major achievement of the Eastern Partnership today. It is also evident in case of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) countries, none of which introduced unilateral sanctions and prohibition of the import of certain goods from the European Union following the Russian example. Therefore, the expediency of the EaP existence should be justified not only from the perspective of stimulating democratic reforms in the post-Soviet countries in the region but also from the point (Nahorniak, ‘The

²⁵ Аргам Гаспарян, “Східна політика” ЄС: до і після Вільнюського саміту” (‘Eastern policy of the EU: before and after the Vilnius summit’), *UA Foreign Affairs*, 7 лютого, 2014, <http://uaforeignaffairs.com/ua/ekspertnadumka/view/article/ckhidna-politika-jes-do-i-pislja-vilnjuskogo-samitu/>.

²⁶ Крістіні Райк, “Україна та Європа: ближче до ЄС, але далі від членства?” (‘Ukraine and Europe: Closer to the EU but further from the membership?’), *Європейська правда*, 5 червня, 2015, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2015/06/5/7034480/>

Eastern Partnership Revision’) of view of creating a counterweight to the actions of Russia with respect to expanding the EurAsEC and internal political inclinations of these countries towards the corruption and authoritarianism.²⁷ This initiative is a kind of the tool for the formation of ideological attitudes of the population of Eastern European countries and the system of impeding Russian authoritarianism oriented at curtailment of democratic reforms in the post-Soviet countries. Therefore, the approach is getting updated on the basis of which the EaP can and should be used as an effective means of countering Russian interests aimed at gradual recovery of the influence of the European Union in the Eastern European region.

**The foreign policy divergence between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries:
internal and external impact factors**

It should be noted (Parno, ‘The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine’) that the trajectory of the Eastern European initiative movement is determined by the position of each EU member state on the key issues of the EU foreign policy. As they exhibit discrepancies regarding the format and objectives of the Eastern European policy implementation, it is fair to consider the EaP as quite a controversial initiative of the European Union. The states representing ‘Old Europe’, in contrast to the countries of its central and eastern part as well as Sweden, were trying to hold back the integration project development, and their position as to strengthening the cooperation with the EaP countries has always been extremely cautious.²⁸

Given this, the Eastern European initiative to this day remains undervalued by the European Union and has a low level of support by European leaders, and consequently, insufficient funding. Even so, it is obvious that the success of EaP is to a certain degree proportionally dependent on the project funding. However, the allocated funds are insufficient for the realisation of the goals as set, and the declared objectives absolutely do not correlate with the material side of the project. If the EU budget for 2014–2020 reaches EUR 1 trillion, then the initiative is allocated less than EUR 1 billion. For example, in 2009, EUR 600 million was allocated for the EaP financing, whilst only Turkey received an equivalent amount of aid.²⁹ Currently, the priority of the EU foreign policy is the Southern dimension (‘Union for the Mediterranean’), which receives two-third of the financial assistance of the European Union in

²⁷ Іван Нагорняк, “Ревізія Східного партнерства: Україну та Азербайджан варто нарешті розділити” (‘The Eastern Partnership Revision: It is worth to finally split Ukraine and Azerbaijan’), *Європейська правда*, 18 травня, 2015, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/experts/2015/05/18/7033849/>

²⁸ Леся Парно, “Східне партнерство” та Україна: які перспективи? (‘The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine: What are the prospects?’), *NOVA-UKRAINA.ORG*, 28 листопада, 2011, <http://novaukraina.org/news/urn:news:1D41D7A>

²⁹ *Ibid.*, <http://novaukraina.org/news/urn:news:1D41D7A>

relation to the Eastern Dimension financing. Even if to take into account the assistance provided by the Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation programme (EaPIC, active since 2012 and financed by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)), then on the list of the countries provided in 2013 with additional financial support in the amount of EUR 87 million, there were only Moldova, Georgia and Armenia.³⁰ There remains the issue of not only the shortage of funds for the EaP development but also the lack of mechanisms of control over their usage, which also doesn't promote increasing the amount of financing the Eastern European initiative of the EU foreign policy. In general, we can assume that European officials *a priori* did not really count on the success of such a European option of cooperation with Eastern European countries, as they were not particularly risking (in financial terms) in case of its failure.

The uncertainty of the EaP prospects is enhanced by the fact that the Russian Federation is actively implementing the measures targeted at further deepening contradictions within the European Union, successfully applying the system of economic preferences or supporting political forces of pro-Russian orientation, for example, in Greece, France, Italy, Spain and the Baltic countries. Today, the disagreements are clearly manifested against the background of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. In particular, amongst the European partners, there is no consensus on the implementation of the EU police mission for the maintenance of peace and security in Ukraine, weapons supply for the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine or ways to counteract the current policy of the Russian Federation. Whilst Poland, Sweden and the Baltic countries show continued support for the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine by means of sanctions, individual politicians in the EU countries, such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, France, Italy, publicly take a pro-Russian stance and advocate for the restoration of full cooperation with Russia, justifying this primarily by economic expediency.³¹ A number of the EU countries are willing to sacrifice political interests for the sake of the implementation of economic goals. This situation is extremely dangerous for the future of the European Union as a holistic entity in general. Ultimately, in the modern world, the object of external aggression is the national consolidation of the population, embodied in the political and legal forms, around the single social order of relationships between groups of people constituting the national entity

³⁰ Уляна Ільницька, “Східне партнерство” як вимір європейської політики сусідства та діалоговий рівень співробітництва України з ЄС” (“The Eastern Partnership as a dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and a dialogue level of Ukraine-EU cooperation”), *Українська національна ідея: реалії та перспективи розвитку*, no. 26, (2014): 113–120.

³¹ “Тенденції розвитку внутрішньої і зовнішньої політики ЄС: виклики, ризики та небезпека для України” (“The EU trends of the internal and external policy development: Challenges, risks and danger for Ukraine”), *Аналітичний центр “Борисфен Інтел”*, 8 квітня, 2015, <http://bintel.com.ua/uk/article/ForeignPolicyEU/>

as a whole. The aim of aggression is the rejection of images of social cohesion, violation of the model of consensus on a diversity of values and norms, which is actually present in any society.³² In one society, several systems of values contradicting each other are artificially created. This is the actual situation that is observed within the European Union today, and more and more the issue of the crisis of European values is actualised, which significantly reduces the impact of European Union on the international arena, and makes the fact of its existence questionable in the long run.

The accumulation of the EU internal problems attaches secondary importance to the EaP issue. These problems should include the unfinished process of ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, the focus on overcoming the financial crisis consequences, Britain's EU exit, migration policy problems, the growing influence of nationalist movements and so on. The above factors may significantly slow down the initiative development. To mitigate these phenomena for European partners, it is worth to adopt a consistent policy on the implementation of all foreign policy initiatives in relation to the EaP countries and observe parity in policy development in the South and East as the stability and prosperity in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus is a determining factor in the EU's stability.

On the other hand, the EaP countries also demonstrate inconsistency in the approaches to the solution of topical issues on the agenda of international relations, and different pace of internal reforms oriented at democratisation of their political systems. Although the Soviet past unites the EaP member countries, nowadays, their positions on many issues differ, similar to the indicators of economic or political development as well. These countries are poorly integrated with each other, and each of them has individual priorities and expectations regarding the cooperation with the European Union. By contrast with the countries of Central Eastern Europe, the EaP countries do not share a common goal, that is, the acquisition of full membership in the European Union. Some EaP countries do not at all associate their state perspectives with EU membership. It is the EaP summit in Riga, which also became an indicator of discrepancies, where Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus refused to sign the text of a joint declaration condemning the annexation of Crimea by Russia. Let us remind that according to the results of the EaP summit, the Joint Statement was approved, in which, in particular, the resolute support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine as well as the right of the initiative states to

³² “Українська криза та архітектура світової безпеки” (‘Ukrainian crisis and the global security architecture’), *Бюлетень Інституту стратегічних досліджень “Нова Україна”*, 8 липня, 2016, <http://newukraineinstitute.org/media/news/447/file/%D0%91%D1%8E%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%8C%20%D0%86%D0%BD%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%83%D1%82%D1%83%203-2014.pdf>

freely choose their developmental direction and realise their ambitions in relations with the European Union were confirmed. The recognition of European aspirations of some of the EaP country partners and their European choice under the provisions of Association Agreements were also confirmed, and the impetus for starting a substantive discussion on the EaP strategic objectives, especially in the context of the approval of the partner countries' European perspective, was provided. From the declaration contents, it is obvious that the European perspective within the EaP is differentiated.

It is clear that the EaP countries approach the EaP guided by their own national interests. In this case, the European Union can focus on those areas where there is a common interest of all partner countries: economic cooperation development (expanding opportunities for the marketing of goods of national production and investment flows); development of joint programmes for the solution of existing unresolved conflicts and prevention of potential ones within the EaP area; territorial integrity and borders settlement; energy security guarantee, which for producers lies in the stability and profitability of energy sales and for consumers in the stability and profitability of transit and ensuring an uninterrupted supply of energy for their own needs.³³

Another important point, in our opinion, is that the diversity of positions of the EaP countries with respect to political and security issues denies the possibility of a unified EU policy towards the Eastern European region countries. Therefore, further unification of the approaches to the implementation of the Eastern policy with respect to both those countries that demonstrate democratic reforms (Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia) and those that do not share European values (Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan) within the framework of this project may lead to its complete worthlessness. To avoid such a development, the EaP programme should approach the EaP countries, which show different foreign policy preferences, in a more differentiated way.

Thus, the researchers highlight (Hajday, 'What is the future of the Eastern Partnership?') some of the most significant reasons that determine the need to reform the EaP policy. In particular, this comes to the overall ineffectiveness of the initiative, no EU membership perspective for the initiative member countries, ignoring their national peculiarities, lack of interest on the part of the European Union to strengthen the integration of the EaP countries, weakness of the safety

³³ В. Мартинюк, "Східне партнерство: імплементація та моніторинг" ('Eastern Partnership: implementation and monitoring'), *Східне партнерство ЄС: додаткові можливості для євроінтеграції України*, 8 липня, 2016, <https://eu.prostir.ua/data?t=1&q=236150>

component and insufficient financial support for the ENP.³⁴ Amongst political analysts, concrete mechanisms to reform the initiative aimed at modernising its content and increasing its efficiency are singled out. Likewise, based on the results of the analytical study conducted by the World Policy Institute, the five major priorities of the EaP are singled out, in particular, enhancing the differentiation between the associate and unassociated members of the initiative, according to the level of implementation of European reforms; securing EU membership for the countries having made most progress in implementing European standards and practices; a wider use of the ‘more for more’ approach for the countries participating in the EaP; increased mobility of citizens as the EaP priority, which envisages enhanced attention on the part of the European Union to those countries that aspire to EU full membership; strengthening the initiative security component, particularly in the sphere of energy security. We believe that the last priority acquires a special status here, because in terms of Russian aggression, the European Union should develop a policy of relations with the eastern partners considering the latest threats and real ways to prevent them.

What are the security prospects for the Eastern Partnership?

Considering the security sector, it should be noted that the EaP initiative, besides strengthening cooperation and the partner countries accessing the European Union, is aimed at very specific objectives, the implementation of which relates to ensuring and strengthening the EU security. In this case, it comes to the development of a free trade zone, an energy network of the partner countries, the conclusion of association agreements as well as of mobility and security agreements and so on. According to A. Vonsovych (Vonsovych, ‘The Eastern Partnership role’, 76), the EaP has already been counteracting the current challenges to European security, such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), terrorism and organised crime, ensuring energy and cyber security, and solution for climate change problems. The fact of the availability of physical and intellectual capabilities in the EaP participant countries, as well as close proximity to the countries that potentially possess weapons of mass destruction, Iran in particular, should also be taken into consideration. The European Union considers this threat to be overcome by preventive means through the UN activities and multilateral relations, including the cooperation with regional organisations. Thus, in this case, the initiative has a real potential for the work to counter the financing of the dissemination of weapons of mass destruction,

³⁴ Дарія Гайдай, “Яке майбутнє у Східного партнерства?” (‘What is the future of the Eastern Partnership?’), *Institute of World Policy*, 29 квітня, 2015, <http://iwp.org.ua/ukr/public/1506.html>

develop and support biosafety activities and prevent proliferation of delivery systems, especially ballistic missiles.³⁵

At the same time, the tendencies of the European policy development in the sphere of security and defence are specified, which can also be designed for the fulfilment within the EaP framework, in particular: globalisation of the operational space; extension of the operational range; expansion of civil and military interaction; increase of interaction between the first and second components (pillars), within the framework of which the European Union operates; and development of processes associated with operation performance means.³⁶

According to the data of the International Research Project ‘Important, Forgotten or Irrelevant? Stakeholders’ Survey on Post-Vilnius Eastern Partnership’ (Vit Dostal, Nikola Karasova, and Waclaw Lidl, ‘The Eastern Partnership Trends’), after Vilnius summit, the initiative advance in security is considered as unsatisfactory by respondents from the majority of the EaP countries. Thus, respondents from Belarus, Armenia and Ukraine did not agree with the assumption that the initiative was the main guarantor of security for the EaP countries.³⁷ Only 22% of the respondents believe that the initiative was a guarantor for the partner countries. Instead, more than 63% of the respondents expressed the view that the EaP did not become a factor of stability and security in relations between the European Union and the initiative EaP countries. To explain the situation, they operate with at least two important factors. First, the Russian Federation ‘intimidates’ the EaP member countries, threatening their territorial integrity. In fact, it is only on the territory of Belarus that there are no separatist movements as a constituent of the hybrid RF war with the neighbouring countries. Second, Russia’s violation of the territorial integrity of the EaP member states would have strengthened the initiative security dimension. However, this did not happen. Moreover, the pro-Western governments of Georgia and Ukraine were denied the prospect of integration into NATO during the Bucharest NATO summit in 2008. Thus, these countries focused their attention on the EaP but eventually have realised that this initiative has no clearly defined security component.³⁸ This highlights the issue of accentuating and strengthening the EaP security aspects and intensifying contacts in this area between the European Union and the initiative EaP countries.

³⁵ О. Вонсович, “Роль Східного партнерства в процесі боротьби із сучасними викликами та загрозами європейській безпеці” (‘The Eastern Partnership role in combating modern challenges and threats to European security’), *Зовнішня політика і дипломатія: традиції, тренди, досвід* 22, no.2. (2015): 74–80.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 77.

³⁷ Віт Достал, Нікола Карасова, Вацлав Лідл, “Тренди Східного партнерства” (‘The Eastern Partnership Trends’), *Institute of World Policy*, 28 квітня, 2015, <http://iwp.org.ua/ukr/public/1502.html>

³⁸ Ibid., <http://iwp.org.ua/ukr/public/1502.html>

Taking into account the peculiarities of the foreign policy environment of the Eastern Europe's region, in our opinion, it is worth focusing on the issue of the EU security and the EaP capacities in its strengthening. Javier Solana, a well-known politician and an expert on the EU foreign affairs and foreign policy, justly pointed out that: '...rather than being surrounded by a ring of friends, the European Union is surrounded by a ring of fire stretching from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, through the Middle East and the Caucasus up to the new frontlines in eastern Europe'.³⁹ Defining the Eastern European initiative role in countering modern threats and challenges to European security, it is necessary to take into account that in the region of the EaP action, there is actually no country that would fully meet the criteria of democracy and stability. In particular, Belarus belongs to the so-called neo-authoritarian states, mainly due to the persecution of opposition forces; Ukraine is associated with political instability and corruption; and to address regional conflicts on the territories of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, there is still no general concept developed to be aimed at solving problems.⁴⁰ It is also worth highlighting the low level of interaction between the partner countries, their different foreign policy orientation as well as the tangible impact of the Russian Federation on them.

In general, the prospect of combining the EaP countries in a single format for safety is quite doubtful, if not to apply a more differentiated approach to the whole 'diversity' of the initiative targets. Thus, if Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia are somewhat inclined to European integration, then Armenia and Belarus, as properly defined by L. Chekalenko (Chekalenko, 'Is the Eastern Partnership programme a new model of security'), are 'vassals of Russia' from the point of view of security awareness and do not even consider reviewing their national security concepts in the context of European integration. With respect to Armenia and Belarus, this is due to several reasons, such as both states are under the nuclear umbrella of the Russian Federation; in both countries, there are significant contingents of Russia's armed forces (only in Belarus, there are 300,000 persons of Moscow garrison); the indicated states are active participants in the pro-Russian integration formations (EurAsEC, Customs Union, The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), etc.). Besides, the CSTO, security integration structure rigidly adheres to all the statutory provisions, with Belarus and Armenia having also joined them. To this must be added that Belarus and Russia are officially in a state of the confederation of two states – the

³⁹ Іван Нагорняк, "Ревізія Східного партнерства: Україну та Азербайджан варто нарешті розділити" ('The Eastern Partnership Revision: It is worth to finally split Ukraine and Azerbaijan'), *Європейська правда*, 18 травня, 2015, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/experts/2015/05/18/7033849/>

⁴⁰ "Глава МЗС Польщі про Східне партнерство: не за це вийшов Майдан" ('Polish Foreign Minister on the Eastern Partnership: It is not what the Maidan stepped out for'), *Експрес*, 30 січня, 2016, <http://expres.ua/news/2016/01/30/171144-glava-mzs-polshchi-shidne-partnerstvo-ne-vyushov-maydan>

Union State of Russia and Belarus, which is enshrined in the constitutive documents, ratified by the two countries and so on.

Such a ‘diversity’ of the EaP countries is explained by comprehensive interests of the European Union in the process of the EaP programme implementation. First, the European Community was concerned about the issue of alternative energy sources to get rid of the heavy dependence on Russian oil and gas supplies. It was in 2003–2004, when Russian alternate, European Nabucco Pipeline Project was developed. This is why Azerbaijan and Georgia hit the Eastern project, with the first one being a source of energy resources, and the second a transit delivery route. Ukraine was assigned a geostrategic responsibility: to involve Belarus in democratisation and deepening cooperation with the European Union and certain steps in this direction have already been made. Some European integration aspirations were also met by Armenia at that time. Most likely, for Europeans, the initiative was one of the options for having their own needs in energy resources met as well as calming down the political ambitions of Ukraine and Georgia, as they both found themselves isolated between neo-authoritarian Russia and the integrated Europe. The fact that not all the countries participating in the EaP programme are the Eastern European geographically should also be taken into consideration. This is why talking about common pro-European security space according to the EaP programme is early and inappropriate.⁴¹

Accordingly, we can conclude that the EaP transformation into a new integration security model can occur only after the substantial deepening of the differentiated approach to the EaP countries in the programme implementation, as well as when there is an interest of the EU member states in such design changes. However, the problem is that at present, the European Union cannot give up the relations that are already developed with ‘the countries uncertain with respect to European integration’. Thus, the EU cooperation with Armenia has an economic basis and, according to Europeans, will promote the development of both Armenia and the European Union. Similarly, the European Union is interested in further developing the relations with oil-bearing Azerbaijan and the geopolitical and security realities are forcing into deepening the interaction with Belarus, whilst carefully verifying and critically interpreting reciprocal steps of such cooperation. The countries referred to be of strategic importance for the European Union as they ensure the unimpeded transit routes, open up new opportunities for introducing power lines and so on.⁴²

⁴¹ Людмила Чекаленко, “Чи є програма Східного партнерства новою моделлю безпеки?” (“Is the Eastern Partnership programme a new model of security?”), *Віче*, травень, 2015, <http://www.viche.info/journal/4723/>

⁴² *Ibid.*, <http://www.viche.info/journal/4723/>

A positive signal from the European partners' perspective position is the fact that if from the standpoint of economic progress and democratic reforms the EaP member countries have not achieved the desired success, then from the standpoint of political priorities, some positive changes still have taken place. After all, the imperial policy of Russia, which aims to restore its sphere of influence internationally by various means, including military ones, is forcing the leaders of Eastern European countries into considering the possibility of enhancing the Western European foreign policy course. Therefore, in the current geopolitical realities, full integration with the EU member countries is perceived by the EaP countries as a guarantor of national security, an opportunity to maintain the states' national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This situation can be used for the EaP modernisation in view of today's threats and their origin sources. The priority objective of the initiative should be to improve the mobility of citizens in a secure and controlled environment, because further destabilisation in the EU neighbouring countries will lead to geopolitical turbulences on the Eurozone eastern borders.

Today, European partners are well aware of the need for changes in the vector of Eastern European foreign policy and searching for most effective mechanisms for its implementation. In general, the issue of strengthening EU Common Security and Defense Policy was considered at the European Security Forum (January 20, 2015), the sessions of the European Parliament (March 11, 2015) and the European Council (March 19-20, 2015). In March 2015, Austria also called on the ENP revision, thus emphasising the questionable effectiveness of the EaP initiative of the European Union. During the EaP summit in Riga, Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian S. Kurz ('Austria urges to radically revise the European Neighbourhood Policy') pointed to instability in the east and south of the European Union and noted that the purpose of updating the ENP should be the establishment of the stability world versus 'new dividing lines in Europe'.⁴³ The aggressive foreign policy of Russia is one of the main factors encouraging Brussels to define new priorities of the EaP. At all the levels, the feasibility of developing the defence strategy of the European Union was emphasised, to the implementation of which eastern EU countries should be actively involved, where Ukraine should occupy a special place. Its approaching to the European Union will increase the opportunity for European partners to influence the policy of post-Soviet states and contribute to the stabilisation and strengthening of cooperation in the region. This actualises the proposition to the effect that enhancing Western partners' participation in solving the conflict on the territory of Ukraine and the post-conflict

⁴³ "Австрія закликає кардинально переглянути європейську політику сусідства" ('Austria urges to radically revise the European Neighbourhood Policy'), *ZN.UA*, 7 березня, 2015, http://dt.ua/POLITICS/avstriya-zaklikaye-kardinalno-pereglyanuti-yevropeysku-politiku-susidstva-166319_.html

reconstruction process should become the priority of strengthening the EU policy in the Eastern European region. So far, the official Brussels is quite sceptical about the idea of a peace-making operation and launching a civilian mission in Ukraine within the framework of EU Common Security and Defence Policy. This situation is due to several reasons, primarily the absence of the UN Security Council resolution on the subject, the position of Greece, which makes impossible a consensus of all EU member states on the feasibility of such operation, as well as due to the caution with respect to the decision misinterpretation by Russia, which could lead to direct military confrontation between the European Union and Russia.⁴⁴

Back in April 2014, Heads of ‘Weimar Triangle’ foreign ministries initiated their own approach to the EaP reforming, taking into account the factor of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. Attention here is also focused on expanding cooperation within the ENP in the field of security and defence. However, the changes in the programme of the EU cooperation with the initiative countries are primarily associated with deepening political and military cooperation with Ukraine, which involves the Ukrainian army participation in the ‘EU Battlegroups’ being created with the support of the European Union.⁴⁵ The already implemented example of this approach (Dorosh, Turchyn, ‘Alternative New Collective Security Models’, 64) is the Lithuanian–Polish–Ukrainian Brigade established in 2014, aimed at strengthening the military cooperation between the countries for the sake of mastering the advanced operational standards of training troops as well as achieving interoperability, participation in peace-making operations, increasing regional military cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in reforming the armed forces.⁴⁶

Therefore, given the current political situation, the reform of the major EaP directions should take place whilst taking into account the Russian factor, clear understanding of all the possible Russia-related threats, and the development of appropriate mechanisms to combat them. Important here is the awareness of the fact that the EaP initiative has already acquired a geopolitical colour caused by the incompatibility of the interests of the European Union, EaP and Russia on the important issues, primarily security. In fact, the Russian Federation is a salient barrier to the development of European integration processes in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus. Under such conditions, the European Union should not develop cooperation with

⁴⁴ “Тенденції розвитку внутрішньої і зовнішньої політики ЄС: виклики, ризики та небезпека для України” (‘The EU trends of the internal and external policy development: Challenges, risks and danger for Ukraine’), *Аналітичний центр “Борисфен Інтел”*, 8 квітня, 2015, <http://bintel.com.ua/uk/article/ForeignPolicyEU/>

⁴⁵ Іван Козловський, “Східне партнерство може поширитися на галузі безпеки й оборони” (‘The Eastern Partnership can spread to the fields of security and defense’), *Голос України*, 2 квітня, 2014, <http://www.golos.com.ua/article/25926>

⁴⁶ Lesya Dorosh, Yaryna Turchyn, ‘Alternative New Collective Security Models: Options for Countries of Eastern Europe’, *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* XVI, no.1. (2016): 53–67.

Russia at the expense of the interests of the partner countries making concessions on certain issues. Instead, the European Union should propose and implement practical measures to address the pressing problems of the EaP countries and act more decisively and persistently, especially in the field of security. Otherwise, Russia will intercept the initiative, and this will slow down or prevent the European integration and development of the Eastern European region relations with the European Union. Therefore, the main efforts of the institutions and leading EU member states in the field of foreign and defence policy should be directed towards active opposition to the challenges and threats that are derived from the destructive activities of Russia on the European track, first of all with respect to Russian aggression in Ukraine. The positive point here has already become the main objectives definition by European partners to overcome in the short and medium term the deconsolidation of the European Union, acceleration of own security and defence policy development, review and adjustment of relations with member countries of the EU Eastern Partnership initiative, implementation of a single EU energy market, introduction of measures to prevent and counter terrorism and information policy strengthening in the process of security sector reforming, given the power of Russian propaganda in the European region.⁴⁷

Conclusions

Thus, the EaP initiative should also take better account of security issues, which is primarily due to the strengthening of Russian influence in the Eastern European region that for many years has been left without a proper evaluation by the EU member states. In order to convert the EaP into an effective mechanism of ensuring European security, it is necessary not only to deepen the differentiated approach to partner countries but also to involve other interested parties (such as Turkey or Iran) to certain initiatives, enabling the initiative to extend the international influence. Another important task in this direction is the development of new effective mechanisms of cooperation between the partner countries in various (economic, energy, etc.) segments, including security, and strengthening the cooperation in the framework of the European policy in the field of security and defence – EaP. This can be done through the revitalisation of Platform 1 of the ‘Democracy, Good Governance and Stability’ initiative, which, inter alia, aims to improve key sectors of governance in various fields.⁴⁸ Attention should be directed here to encourage internal reforms of the EaP countries in joint management of state borders, migration processes,

⁴⁷ “Тенденції розвитку внутрішньої і зовнішньої політики ЄС: виклики, ризики та небезпека для України” (‘The EU trends of the internal and external policy development: Challenges, risks and danger for Ukraine’), Аналітичний центр “Борисфен Інтел”, 8 квітня, 2015, <http://bintel.com.ua/uk/article/ForeignPolicyEU/>

⁴⁸ The Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/platforms/index_en.htm

civil protection, police reform, combating cybercrime and so on. It is important to use here the positive experience of the participants of multilateral cooperation within the EaP, which today are already members of the European Union and are fully aware of the threat of Russian expansionism. Specific targeted projects aimed at strengthening the cooperation security dimension are pertinent to the implementation.

Supplementation of the EaP format with the dimension of political and security cooperation will be beneficial for all its participants. The cooperation of the EaP partner countries in the field of security will not only promote the development of the initiative per se but will also enhance the national security of member states and contribute to building a zone of stability, democracy and the European security space consolidation. The meaningful use of the EaP as a component of the European integration process is possible, provided that there is a common position of the EU member states in the development of the initiative priorities, the Russian factor in its implementation is reduced, and internal democratically oriented reforms of the initiative countries are carried out. The effectiveness of this cooperation would depend on at least three indicators, in particular, the EaP reform and filling it with a new real meaning, the political will of all parties to facilitate the cooperation and the shared responsibility for its results.