

EU Cross-Border Cooperation Activities and Governance of its Eastern Neighbourhood

Since Ukraine's achievement of independence in 1991, its energy sector has still largely relied on Russian petroleum and natural gas, siphoned into the country via pipelines constructed when the two contemporary nations belonged to one Soviet state. Even prior to the Orange Revolution of 2004/05 and, more recently, EuroMaidan, post-independence Russia and Ukraine began entering into sporadic albeit predictable disputes in which either nation would accuse the other of price gouging (Russia possessing the power to arbitrarily raise the cost of oil exports to Ukraine, Ukraine possessing the ability to raise taxes on Russian transport-routes to its European markets lying on Ukrainian soil). In early 2020, the new Nord Stream 2 pipeline—a decisive project for Gazprom in its aspirations to reach European markets without relying on Ukrainian transport infrastructure—should be completed. This paper seeks to address two points: firstly, what does European support for Ukrainian sovereignty look like after the completion of this new pipeline that (ostensibly) stands to benefit the economies of both Russia and the EU? Secondly, how is Ukraine to react to Nord Stream 2, in terms of both lost revenues and its ongoing geopolitical struggles against Russian overreach?

Panel 2. Borders in Practice. Everyday experiences on the EU-Ukrainian Border

NEW PROSPECTS OF THE EU STRATEGY

“EASTERN PARTNERSHIP”

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The process of Ukraine's integration into the European Union began with the acquisition of independence by our state, which stipulated the need for the creation of appropriate political-and-legal instruments for the implementation of this process. One of them is the EU strategy “Eastern Partnership”, which aims to ensure the implementation of the European integration course of Ukraine. Besides, within the framework of this initiative, obtaining of coherent and systematic both political and economic assistance by Ukraine is planned in order to achieve the level of European standards of ruling of law, observance of human rights, democratic political regime and professional governance.

The strategic course of Ukraine for integration into the EU was the decisive factor that allowed Brussels to take on the role of the center for regional gravity for all states of “the Eastern Partnership” (Azerbaijan, Bilorus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine).

Critical perception of “Eastern Partnership” by Ukraine at the beginning of its implementation was due to lack of a clear political-and-security component. Such a conceptual incompleteness of the EU Eastern policy remains still, which fully satisfies Brussels, but it makes the “Eastern Partnership” functionally unattractive from the point of view of the states of Central and Eastern Europe. Further evolution of the “Eastern Partnership” should contribute to the final institutional design of this initiative.

Within the framework of this initiative, obtaining of consistent and systematic assistance by Ukraine is planned to achieve the level of European standards of rule of law, democratic political regime and proper governance that corresponds to Ukraine’s interests.

In the light of the mentioned above one should, firstly, create an effective institutional mechanism against the non-democratic practices of the leadership elite of states that are a part of the “Eastern Partnership”; secondly, increase the level of citizens’ legal culture and law awareness through perception and deep understanding of European values; thirdly, complete the administrative reform and reduce the

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influence of administrative regulation of economy; fourthly, introduce the professional reforming of the public service by attracting young managers in return of filling old nomenclature and selection, training of new personnel; fifthly, create self-sufficient local self-government bodies; sixthly, build an effective system of courts; seventhly, replace “outdated” legislation by adopting a new one that meets European standards.

***SUCSESSES AND FAILURES THAT THE UNITED TERRITORIAL
COMMUNITIES IN SUMY REGION ENCOUNTERED***

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The integration of Ukraine into the European community has led to a fundamental renewal of public authority and bringing it to international standards. Local self-government is the basic link that provides quality administrative services to the population in Europe and acts for the benefit of the local population. The Law of Ukraine "On the voluntary association of local communities" allowed start to form a basic level of local self-government that meets the European standards in Ukraine and directly in Sumy region.

Sumy region has an area of 23834 km² with a population of 1097651 people. During the last 4 years it was create 38 united local communities of 298 local communities. More than 760 thousand people (69.00% of the region's population) were combined by the united territorial communities.

The benefits of consolidation include improvements to infrastructure, increased funding and improved administrative services. For example, Chernechchyna ULC, created in 2017, has become the largest rural ULC of the region. It is comprised of 32 settlements of Okhtyrka district, where leave about 11.000 people. During the first