

WARTIME DIPLOMACY

UKRAINIAN PRISM: FOREIGN POLICY

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG



УДК 327(477)»2023»(048.83)
ISBN 978-617-8189-20-4

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Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2023. Analytical study // Foreign Policy Council «Ukrainian Prism». Representation of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Ukraine – “Vistka” LLC, Kyiv, 2024. – 320 p.

This publication is an analytical study that represents a systematic and comprehensive analysis of Ukrainian foreign policy in 2023. Forty-nine directions were analysed — from cooperation with key partners and international organisations to public diplomacy and building coalitions for Ukraine’s recovery. Four evaluation criteria — indicators based on the new research methodology model — were applied. The experts have studied and assessed the activities of the President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, and other governmental institutions of Ukraine involved in the development and implementation of the foreign policy of Ukraine. This research is the ninth annual study. Previous years’ analysis can be found at www.prismua.org

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Introduction	3
Methodology of Research	4
Foreign Policy of Ukraine in 2023	14
G7 countries	30
United Kingdom	32
Italy.....	37
Canada	42
Germany.....	47
USA	52
France	57
Japan	62
European Integration	66
European Integration	68
European Union	74
Euro-Atlantic Integration	80
Bilateral Relations	88
Australia	90
Azerbaijan.....	94
Brazil	100
Georgia.....	105
Estonia	111
Israel	116
India	121
Iran	125
China	129
Latvia	134
Lithuania	139
Moldova	144
Poland	149
Romania	154
Slovakia	160
Türkiye	164
Hungary	169

Czech Republic	174
Belligerent Countries	180
Russia	182
Belarus	186
Regional Cooperation	190
Middle East	192
Western Balkans	198
Indo-Pacific Region.....	203
Latin America and the Caribbean	211
Northern Europe.....	218
Sub-Saharan Africa.....	223
Central Asia	231
International Organisations	236
United Nations	238
OSCE	246
Council of Europe	250
Building an International Coalition for the Recovery of Ukraine	255
Sanctions Policy	260
Military Diplomacy	266
Economic Diplomacy	272
Energy Diplomacy	277
Public Diplomacy	282
Nuclear Non-proliferation	287
Ukrainians Abroad	292
Human Rights	298
Next Level of the War-time Diplomacy	305
Table of the 2023 Scores for the Foreign Policy of Ukraine	308
List of Abbreviations	310
Authors	312
On Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”	316
On Representation of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Ukraine	318

Dear colleagues,

We are honoured to present the latest edition of our annual research, “Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2023”. For nine years, our team has analysed Ukraine’s foreign policy. For the last two years, we have done it in a special format to reflect the challenges of wartime diplomacy.

The continuing defence of Ukraine marked the main achievement of 2023, enabled by the collective efforts of the Ukrainian military, diplomats, and the entire society, which has been acquiring newfound resilience skills over the second year of full-scale Russian aggression.

This year witnessed a decline in media interest in Ukrainian events. Global public sentiment and support for Ukraine were adversely affected by the significant escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the active phase of the US presidential campaign, growing political divergences within the EU and NATO regarding assistance to Ukraine, and other global occurrences.

The unprecedented scale and intensity of hostilities, not seen since World War Two, highlighted the limitations of international partners’ political and material ability to help Ukraine. The shift to a war of attrition necessitated a shift in approaches to wartime diplomacy. Multitasking, improvisation, and creativity skills transformed into a daily routine, with each thematic area gaining depth and structure. To sustain the current level of support alone, Ukraine needs to double the effort when collaborating with friends and partners abroad.

In these challenging circumstances, the Ukrainian government and civil society have mustered the physical resources to take historically significant steps towards EU membership. Ukraine has also showcased its ability to forge crucial new coalitions in military cooperation, enabling the Armed Forces of Ukraine to carry out numerous offensive operations and maintain the frontline. Preparedness to discuss security commitments for Ukraine, recovery prospects, and the Peace Formula has attracted new partners.

The consistently high overall success rate of foreign policy activities in 2023 underscores the dedication and professionalism of Ukrainian diplomats, politicians, and public figures in the quest for victory and the reshaping of a new global security architecture.

The Ukrainian Prism team also strives to contribute to the victory cause. Drawing modern-day lessons enables us to shape our future better, discover new professional solutions, and move forward.

Glory to the Armed Forces of Ukraine!

Glory to Ukrainian diplomats!

Glory to Ukraine!

Methodology of Research

A

B-

C+

In the course of its own methodology development, the working group of the “Ukrainian Prism” carefully studied the experience of evaluation of the foreign policy of separate countries and international institutions done by other foreign analytical centres. Special attention was paid to the projects of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and the Czech Association for International Affairs (Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky, AMO), which reflect either peculiarities of particular member states in the EU foreign policy (ECFR) or internal aspects of the Czech Republic governing (AMO). None of these methodologies is multi-purposed, and their principles directly depend on the peculiarities of the object under research. That is why, after the methodological consultations with the ECFR experts, the working group of the “Ukrainian Prism” decided to develop their own methodology, taking into account Ukrainian conditions and some elements of the existing methodologies of Western colleagues. This methodology was applied in 2015-2021 and has been constantly improved.

In 2022, the research methodology was updated since Ukrainian foreign policy, as well as other spheres of the country's life, became guided by war-time. Therefore, a methodology for evaluating Ukrainian foreign policy has been elaborated to consider the current foreign policy and security conditions. This methodology retains most of the indicators used for the analysis during previous years (political interest, activities, and results) but expands the empirical basis for the evaluation. Besides, the indicators of inter-institutional cooperation and strategic vision have been replaced with new ones, such as strategic communications, which gained particular importance during the war.

As in previous years, the analysis focuses on the actions of the Ukrainian actors (representatives of the executive and legislative branches, the President and his Office, as well as individual actors involved) rather than the state of bilateral relations with the respective country.

Every year, a revision of the studied directions of Ukraine's foreign policy is conducted. In 2023, the section on Brazil was included, and the human rights section was reintroduced.

Foreign Policy Directions of Ukraine

For the evaluation of the foreign policy of Ukraine in 2023, 49 directions were selected and divided into the following thematic blocks:

- Relations with the G7 states (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the USA);
- European integration and relations with the EU;
- Euro-Atlantic integration;
- Bilateral relations (Australia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Estonia, Israel, Iran, India, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Türkiye);
- Belligerent countries (Belarus, the Russian Federation);
- Regional cooperation (Indo-Pacific Region, the Middle East, Western Balkans, Northern Europe, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia);
- International organisations (OSCE, the United Nations, Council of Europe);
- Nuclear non-proliferation;
- Building an international coalition for the recovery of Ukraine;
- Economic diplomacy;
- Public diplomacy;
- Military diplomacy;
- Energy diplomacy;
- Sanctions policy;
- Human rights;
- Ukrainians abroad.

Evaluation indicators of Ukraine's foreign policy in particular directions:

Given the above, four assessment indicators for foreign policy implementation in each of these directions were developed:

- (1) Political interest or engagement of political actors in particular directions of the foreign policy.
- (2) Strategic communications for a specific direction.
- (3) Specific activities regarding a particular direction during the evaluated year.
- (4) Results and achievements regarding a particular direction during the evaluated year.

Each of the four key indicators shall be assessed using a five-point system, where 1 point is the minimum score, and 5 points is the highest possible score. Each point in the assessment of a relevant direction by a specific indicator is linked to the presence or absence of a certain condition, which can be documented. The regulatory and evidence basis required to calculate a score has been set for each indicator.

1. Political interest/engagement

The basis for analysis: speeches and interviews of the President, the Prime Minister and Vice Prime Ministers of Ukraine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence and other relevant ministers, the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, statements of parliamentary factions, statements of political party leaders, interviews with the leadership of the Presidential Office, the Annual Address of the President of Ukraine to the Verkhovna Rada and the Analytical Report to it, the Agenda of the Verkhovna Rada Foreign Affairs Committee and available parliamentary hearings on the topic, hearings of relevant Verkhovna Rada committees.

Points:

- 1 point** — lack of references to a foreign policy direction in official or unofficial statements, policy documents, and manifestos of the main political actors;

- 2 points** — the existence of an informal reference to a foreign policy direction that has not acquired the form of a political position, interviews, blogs, tweets, or articles in the media on the respective topics;
- 3 points** — there are individual official statements concerning events or certain aspects of activity regarding the direction under research among some political parties, mentioning in the speeches by the President, Prime Minister or Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- 4 points** — there are official positions of various political entities represented in the higher authorities, but they are not mutually agreed upon, mentioning in the Presidential Annual Address, inclusion to the Agenda of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, organisation of the parliamentary hearings and round tables;
- 5 points** — the existence of a political consensus on Ukraine's activities in the chosen foreign policy direction, regular reference to the area under study, joint official statements, parliamentary hearings or thematic conferences.

2. Strategic communications

The basis for the analysis: speeches by the President, the Prime Minister, and Vice Prime Ministers of Ukraine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence and other relevant ministers to foreign audiences, major publications in foreign media, etc.

Points:

- 1 point** — interviews with high-ranking Ukrainian officials or the ambassador for the country's media, ad hoc information;
- 2 points** — speeches by high-ranking officials (except for the President) to various target audiences;
- 3 points** — joint statements, special (targeted) information campaigns, setting up a visit of a representative of a country or organisation to the de-occupied territories (except for an ambassador accredited in Ukraine);
- 4 points** — all of the above and speeches by the President or other high-ranking officials at major international venues (conferences, public events),

speeches by the foreign country's top officials/organisations to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine;

- 5 points** — all of the above and the President's speech in the parliament of the country concerned or at major international events (such as international organisations or meetings of initiatives chaired by the country under assessment, excluding non-governmental conferences).

4. Activities

The basis for the analysis: information and reports provided by the MFA of Ukraine and other ministries involved in the activities in this direction, statements and press releases of the Office of the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Prime Minister of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, bilateral committees and working groups, publicly available information on activities in this direction.

Points:

- 1 point** — the de-facto absence of activities connected with the implementation of the relevant direction of the foreign policy, the absence of other forms of cooperation or official contacts; documented facts of the opposition of some institutions to others in policy-making or conflicts between Ukrainian authorities or different branches of power in the implementation of policy in a particular foreign policy direction, disruption of the work of coordinating bodies;
- 2 points** — individual non-systematic activities, which are not based on current strategic or operational documents for implementing a relevant direction of the foreign policy, maintaining dialogue exclusively through available diplomatic missions of Ukraine, absence of a Ukrainian ambassador in the respective country for more than half a year;
- 3 points** — non-systematic cooperation or contacts only in certain areas without systematic cooperation; meetings within multilateral formats or “on the side-lines” along with maintaining diplomatic, trade and economic relations; reactionary approach to the implementation of the relevant direction of foreign policy;

- 4 points** — visits of the MFA leadership, the parliament chairperson, prime minister of Ukraine to the respective country or organisation of visits of foreign representatives to Ukraine; operation of interdepartmental and other committees and working groups, joint military exercises, cooperation at the interdepartmental level;
- 5 points** — there are activities in all areas (financial and economic, political, military, humanitarian), joint international initiatives, visits at the level of heads of state and heads of international organisations, chairmanships in international organisations or initiatives, and holding joint bilateral or multilateral forums.

5. Results

The basis for the analysis: International agreements and memoranda signed for a relevant direction of the foreign policy, information on activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Office of the President of Ukraine, MFA of Ukraine, and other relevant ministries and institutions, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, statistics of trade and economic relations, information and analytical materials on the results of the meetings, sittings, etc.; aid ratings, information from foreign partners.

Points:

- 1 point** — severance of diplomatic relations, withdrawal from an international organisation, termination of cooperation within an initiative's framework, open military aggression or official support of the aggressor; trade, energy wars against Ukraine, obstruction of initiatives of international organisations aimed at supporting Ukraine;
- 2 points** — reducing the level of a diplomatic mission or existing discriminatory policy in the field of trade, lack of significant joint projects in the economic and energy field, lack of dynamics in political dialogue;
- 3 points** — slight positive dynamics at the level of political dialogue, economic contacts, and cooperation at the interdepartmental level; signing action plans for cooperation at the interdepartmental level, supporting political statements and sanctions regimes, but without significant initiatives to provide military, financial, and humanitarian assistance;

- 4 points** — active political dialogue, support for Ukraine in certain areas (for example, only humanitarian or only economical, without military), signing bilateral and multilateral agreements, implementing decisions to support Ukraine made during high-level visits, participating in international coalitions to support Ukraine;
- 5 points** — full support of Ukraine's position, provision of financial, political, and military support, allocation of aid (humanitarian, financial, or for reconstruction), large-scale projects in the economic, energy, and military fields, creation and operation of special coordinating bodies to implement foreign policy in a particular direction, voting in parliaments to support Ukraine.

***Note:**

In 2023, we analysed but did not score Ukraine's foreign policy regarding the Russian Federation and Belarus, as the full-fledged aggression did not allow us to use a standard methodology for assessment.

General scoring of a relevant direction of the foreign policy (direction's rating)

After giving points for all the indicators, a direction's general score will be identified by calculating the arithmetic mean value. The general score (rating) will be then reflected in the form of Latin letters (A, B, C, D, E) with arithmetic signs (+/-) depending on the obtained value.

RATING SCORE

	A	A-	
Indicator value	5	4,6-4,9	
.....			
	B+	B	B-
	4,1-4,5	4	3,6-3,9
.....			
	C+	C	C-
	3,1-3,5	3	2,6-2,9

Direction's rating

D+	D	D-
2,1-2,5	2	1,6-1,9

E+	E
1,1-1,5	1

Overall scoring of Ukraine's foreign policy implementation during the year (overall rating of Ukraine's foreign policy implementation for the relevant year)

The overall scoring of successful implementation will be calculated by obtaining the arithmetic mean value of the general scores in all the directions of foreign policy under the research. The overall rating will be calculated similarly to the assessment of relevant directions of foreign policy.



FOREIGN POLICY IN 2023

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	B+	B+
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	B+	B
ACTIVITIES	B+	B+
RESULTS	B	B
TOTAL SCORE	B+	B+

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Ukraine's political interest in foreign policy was driven by its needs resulting from Russia's aggression. The second year of the full-scale invasion called for covering substantial financial needs for support of Ukraine, large supplies of weapons and munitions for defence forces, stronger sanctions against Russia and its allies, securing energy resilience of Ukraine and restoration of its critical infrastructure, humanitarian demining, returning Ukrainian children kidnapped by Russia, exchange and return of military and civilian prisoners, joint political and diplomatic events at international organisations, and more.

On top of priority needs in the work with international partners, Ukraine focussed politically on long-term elements of wartime diplomacy. These included security commitments to Ukraine, NATO and EU membership advocacy for Ukraine within the shortest timeframe possible, a search for legal ways to transfer Russia's frozen assets to fund Ukraine's reconstruction needs, mechanisms to hold Russia accountable for war crimes and the crime of aggression against Ukraine, and adding substance to and implementation of President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula.

Restoring Ukraine's economic and export potential amidst Russia's aggression was another critically important element. Given the worrying signals about the partners' limitations in helping Ukraine in terms of political capacity or resources in the mid-term, Ukraine's leadership focused on establishing industrial and technological conditions for defence autonomy, autonomous covering of its needs for weapons and munitions, and opening new markets and corridors for Ukrainian exports.

President Zelenskyy articulated his strategic vision on foreign policy priorities in his addresses to diplomats (02.08, 22.12) and at the annual UNGA session (19.09). In August, President Zelenskyy listed five priorities for Ukraine's diplomacy: 1) Peace Formula; 2) Weapons and sanctions; 3) Ukraine's integration with the EU and NATO, security commitments and neighbourhood policy; 4) Economy and reconstruction, transformation; 5) Protection of Ukrainians. International coalitions and bilateral work with international partners were Ukraine's key instruments for most of these tracks.

On the government level, the Cabinet of Ministers' Action Plan for the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) was the key document that articulated foreign policy priorities. It lists 120 clauses in seven sections: 1) Countering the aggression of the Russian Federation with political and diplomatic tools; 2) European integration; 3) Euro-Atlantic integration; 4) Developing bilateral relations and regional interaction; 5) Economic diplomacy and sectoral cooperation; 6) Public diplomacy; 7) Protection of the rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens and legal entities abroad, contacts with Ukrainians abroad.

In his address to diplomats in December, President Zelenskyy listed the countries and regions that contributed greatly to the implementation of the priorities listed above. Overall, the intensity and the scale of support for Ukraine – primarily by G7 countries – were defined as decisive. So was cooperation with the EU. President Zelenskyy highlighted the US, the UK, Japan, and Canada separately. He spoke highly of the potential of Northern European countries, highlighted the promise of cooperation with Australia and South Korea, put a special emphasis on relations with Turkiye, and marked progress in the LAC region and Africa, the Arab world and Islamic countries overall.

In terms of work on thematic foreign policy tracks, Ukraine focused on Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States – both bilaterally and in promising trilateral formats.

Total score —

B+

Strategic communications

2023 saw a decline in the media spotlight for Ukraine. This is not surprising given the duration of the full-scale war and a number of external factors, primarily developments in the Middle East.

The role of President Zelenskyy remained important in communication with international elites and audiences. He resumed visits to partner states,

international organisations and coalitions. Wartime diplomacy priorities based on the political nature of dialogue with partners, their concerns and capabilities were on the agenda of these meetings.

President Zelenskyy used the biggest summits and public events to advocate for the issues that are important for Ukraine. These platforms included the Ukraine-EU Summit (03.02), European Summits (9.02, 05.10), G7 summit (20-21.05), NATO summit (11-12.07), Nordic-Ukrainian Summits (3.05, 13.12), Arab League summit (19.05), European Political Community meetings (1.06, 5.10), Ukraine-Southeastern Europe summit (21-22.8), and the UN SDG summit (19.09). President Zelenskyy had an opportunity to address the UN General Assembly (19.09) and the special session of the UN Security Council (20.09), as well as the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, so-called “Ramstein” (11.10).

Trilateral meetings of heads of state and governments were an important format. These included meetings with Poland’s President Duda and Lithuania’s President Nausėda in the Lublin Triangle framework (11.01), France’s President Macron and Germany’s Chancellor Scholz (08.02), Dutch Prime Minister Rutte and Belgium’s Prime Minister De Croo (4.05), European Council President Charles Michel and Moldova’s President Sandu (21.11).

In addition to multilateral official platforms, President Zelenskyy addressed parliaments in the UK (8.02), Canada (23.09), European Parliament (9.02), and NATO Parliamentary Assembly (09.10).

Ukraine’s international partners were engaged in thematic initiatives, such as the Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform for Ukraine (26.01), the Compensation Mechanism (February), the summit of leaders for the creation of a Special Tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine (Core Group, 9.05), Ukraine Recovery Conference (21-22.06), International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine (03.07), the third Crimea Platform summit (23.08), the third summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen (7.09), the International Defence Industries Forum (29.09), the second Grain from Ukraine summit (25.11), and Tallinn Mechanism, a cybersecurity cooperation tool (20.12).

The establishment of various coalitions – including the tank coalition, F-16 coalition, IT coalition and a coalition of capabilities – was a strong communication instrument in the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (Ramstein format).

On the European track, intensified strategic communication of 2023 manifested itself in the joint meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the College

of Commissioners, as well as the Ukraine Foreign Affairs Meeting in Kyiv (2.10). Worth mentioning is the visit of all EU Political and Security Committee Ambassadors to Ukraine (30.03). All meetings and visits were widely covered by the media and commented upon.

In its communication with the Global South, Ukraine focused on informing countries about the Russia-Ukraine war and Kyiv's initiatives – primarily the Peace Formula and Grain Deal. President Zelenskyy addressed the National Congress of Chile in April and MPs of the Mexico-Ukraine friendship group in the Congress of the Union of Mexico in April, both online. For the second time since the full-scale invasion, he addressed the Organisation of American States in June and attended the inauguration of Argentina's newly elected President Milei (10.12). Ukraine conducted a wide-scale media campaign in LAC in May in the run-up to the trip of Foreign Minister Kuleba to the Association of Caribbean States summit. Minister Kuleba spoke with African media during his two Africa trips.

Press tours for journalists from the top media in Africa and Latin America organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NGOs were a successful practice. African journalists visited Ukraine and met Ukrainian top officials in July and November. As a result, over 70 articles were published in African countries. A series of media campaigns was held in Sub-Saharan Africa. In December, Ukraine approved its Ukraine-African States 2024-2026 Communication Strategy.

“Grain From Ukraine”, “Boycott Russian Sport”, “Light Up Ukraine”, “Free The Leopards”, “Taurus for Ukraine”, and “Real Peace Not Appeasement” information campaigns were conducted throughout 2023.

Experts, academics, and artists commented proactively for the media, tweeted, produced podcasts and expert blogs, presented at conferences, roundtables and festivals, etc.

Overall, a professional and creative approach to strategic communications had a positive impact on diplomatic performance. At the same time, a number of communication practices failed to help meet maximum expectations. For example, many partners and media had a negative reaction to the emotional tone of statements by Ukraine's leadership at the NATO Vilnius Summit.

Negative aspects of communication with neighbour-states were not avoided. In the second half of 2023, the crisis in relations with Poland caused by trade arguments over the exports of Ukrainian grain to Poland stifled strategic communication. The mentions of these arguments by Presidents Zelenskyy and

Duda in official speeches and other events at the UN General Assembly (19.11) resulted in a diplomatic scandal and emotional accusations in unfriendly steps from both countries.

International parliamentary cooperation stayed in place as a tool of wartime diplomacy communication with MPs in partner states and the EU, parliamentary delegations in international organisations, and public events and conferences. However, the problems Ukrainian MPs faced in travelling abroad for work events hampered the intensity of parliamentary diplomacy and stifled its efficiency.

Total score —

B

Activities

Throughout 2023, proactive foreign policy activity gradually switched from purely online to proactive visits of Ukrainian leadership and bilateral meetings. The President of Ukraine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions abroad, as well as Defence Ministry representatives – under their mandate – were its key actors. The work of MPs was sporadic and sometimes limited because of the difficulties in leaving Ukraine to go abroad.

According to official data, President Zelenskyy had nearly 250 meetings with foreign leaders, the leaders of international organisations, civic activists and business leaders in 2023. He had 170 telephone conversations with foreign state and government leaders. Foreign Minister Kuleba was proactive, too, with nearly 140 bilateral meetings and 90 telephone talks. Throughout 2023, Ukraine hosted 190 visits of high- and top-level foreign delegations. Overall, representatives of 45 countries, as well as the UN, NATO and EU leadership, visited Ukraine.

Following Ukraine's foreign policy priorities, President Zelenskyy, Vice PM Stefanishyna and Minister Kuleba had intense contacts with the leadership of the EU and NATO driven by the preparation for Ukraine's EU accession talks and participation in the NATO Vilnius Summit (12.07). Presidents of the European

Council and the European Commission, and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs visited Ukraine repeatedly.

Given the priority of EU integration, Ukraine focused substantial efforts on complying with the European Commission's recommendations provided in June 2022. Over 80 executive government agencies were involved in preparing solutions to comply with the integration agenda for 2023. Coordinated by Vice PM Stefanishyna, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine launched the preparation of the National Program for the Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to the EU Law and initiated the self-screening of Ukraine's law. Ukraine was the first country to do the self-screening before an official screening by the European Commission. In February, the 24th Ukraine-EU Summit met, setting the priority of opening EU accession talks for the first time in joint statements. The EU was represented by European Council President Ch. Michel, European Commission President U. von der Leyen, EU High Representative J. Borrell, and 15 commissioners.

Other common formats worked throughout 2023 to implement the Association Agreement with the EU. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed 11 EU integration laws and two decrees taking into account the conclusions of the Venice Commission and recommendations of the EU Integration Committee.

A large Ukrainian delegation led by President Zelenskyy attended the NATO Summit in Vilnius. President Zelenskyy joined NATO meetings and launched the work of the newly-established NATO-Ukraine Council.

In 2023, Ukraine and its partners managed to intensify work on security commitments to Ukraine. In the context of the G7 Joint Declaration, signed and announced by the G7 members on the side-lines of the NATO Summit, the President's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine held proactive consultations on the future security arrangements with G7 members, as well as the states that joined the Declaration.

The President's Office was proactive in advocating and coordinating the implementation of Ukraine's Peace Formula, a priority for President Zelenskyy. Throughout 2023, national security advisors met three times in Copenhagen (25.06), Jeddah (5-6.08), and Malta (28.10). Ten working groups were established, each delegated one Peace Formula provision.

In January, the Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform with member-states of the EU and G7, as well as international financial organizations, was officially

launched. Throughout 2023, the Platform's Steering Committee met seven times. The bilateral Ukraine Reconstruction Conference in Rome (25-26.05), the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London (21-22.06), and the trilateral Ukraine-Turkiye-Japan forum on Ukraine reconstruction (21.09) were important developments on the reconstruction track.

The Yermak-McFaul Expert Group worked proactively with the respective institutions of the EU, the US, and other partners on sanctions.

The Ukraine Defence Contact Group, also known as the Ramstein group, had ten meetings. Ukraine's Defence Minister was mostly in charge of coordinating Ukraine's efforts there. During the work of the group, Ukraine's partners engaged proactively in new defence coalitions – for tank, airplane, maritime, ground-based air defence, munition supply, IT, demining and other capabilities. In September, Kyiv hosted the first International Defence Industries Forum co-organised by the Ministry of Strategic Industries, Defence Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. The forum brought together 252 companies from 31 countries. Its thematic continuation took place in Washington during the working visit of Defence Minister R. Umerov to the US.

Like before, European and American tracks saw the most efforts. This is driven by the scale of diplomatic, political, economic and military assistance provided to Ukraine and the euro-integration track of Ukraine's foreign policy.

Ukraine scaled up the visits of its high- and top-level leadership to the countries of the Global South. President Zelenskyy attended the inauguration of Argentina's President Javier Milei. In that event, he met briefly with the leaders of some Latin American countries, including Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Ecuador. First Vice Prime Minister Y. Svyrydenko attended the inauguration of Brazil's President L. da Silva. The presidents of Ukraine and the Philippines had the first telephone conversation in the history of relations between the two countries.

In parallel, Ukraine worked on expanding its presence in Africa. Among other things, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the first open competition for the postings of ambassadors to 10 countries in Africa in March. Foreign Minister Kuleba had two African tours: to Morocco, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique and Nigeria (22-29.05) and Equatorial Guinea and Liberia (23-26.07). President Zelenskyy held the first-ever telephone talks with the President of Uganda and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. A delegation of leaders from six African countries visited Kyiv with a peace initiative.

Ukraine remained with no ambassadors to Armenia, Angola, Algeria, Belgium, Czechia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Norway, Thailand, and the UK. The widely advertised March competition to fill the vacancies for Ukrainian ambassadors abroad did not result in appointments.

Ukraine continued its humanitarian efforts under the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports (Grain Deal). Jointly with its partners, it developed the institutional framework for trade. Ukraine renewed its Free Trade Agreement with Canada and talks with Turkiye were scheduled to finish in early 2024 with the ratification of the Free Trade Agreement by the parliaments of both countries.

27 out of Ukraine's 49 foreign policy tracks scored 5, the highest grade, for Activities in 2023.

Total score —

B+

Results

Ukraine managed to capitalise on the substantial political and diplomatic efforts of the Ukrainian government and non-government actors, converting them into specific results of support for Ukraine. Despite serious difficulties on that path, the European Council passed the decision to open accession talks for Ukraine, taking into account the conditions the European Commission set forth in the Enlargement Package (14.12). Intensified cooperation between the EU and Ukraine resulted in structural changes within the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) as it created a dedicated unit in charge of interaction with Ukraine.

The outcome of Ukraine-NATO cooperation was not fully up to Ukraine's expectations or the level of political dialogue in 2023. The NATO-Ukraine Council was launched as the new format of cooperation, and an expanded package of political and practical support for Ukraine was authorised at the NATO Vilnius Summit. A decision was made at the Summit to drop the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as a mandatory document for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration path.

At the same time, Ukraine did not manage to get any clearer phrasing on future membership at the Vilnius Summit. In November, Ukraine prepared and presented the adapted Annual National Program for 2024.

In 2023, Ukraine received record-breaking financial support from its partners worth USD 42.6bnm, mostly as preferential loans. Non-repayable grants were USD 11.5bn or nearly 27% of the total funding. At the same time, all of the loans Ukraine received were preferential. The EU was the leader in terms of financial support with USD 19.7bn, followed by the US with USD 11bn, IMF with USD 4.5bn, Japan with USD 3.6bn, Canada with USD 1.8bn, and the UK with USD 1bn. In October, the European Parliament supported the proposal to create the Ukraine Facility with EUR 50bn for 2024-2027. The European Council supported the decision to launch the Ukraine Facility in its meeting in December. However, the final decisions and approvals were delayed to early 2024 because of Hungary's destructive position.

In terms of assistance for Ukraine, the US remained the leader in 2023, with USD 10.9bn in budget support and over USD 21bn in military support. Military support included Patriot systems, Abrams tanks, armoured vehicles, ATACMS, DPICM, air defence, missiles, artillery shells, demining equipment and more. The rest came from EU member-states and other allies, including the UK, Canada, Japan, etc. The Baltic States provided the biggest assistance in terms of the share of their budget. The US, Germany, the UK, the EU, and Norway were the top suppliers of military assistance, and the EU, the US, the UK, Japan, and Norway were the top providers of financial assistance. Despite this substantial support, the last quarter of 2023 was marked by the political inability of the US Congress House of Representatives to pass the decision on a new package of assistance of USD 61.8bn for Ukraine. The Council of the European Union approved the supply of 1 million 155mm artillery shells to Ukraine by March 2024 in March 2023. However, the EU managed to deliver only a third of the declared amount of munitions to Ukraine by the end of 2023 as a result of various political miscalculations and the lack of technical capacity.

There was some progress in holding Russia accountable for war crimes. In July, the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine (ICPA) was launched in Eurojust in The Hague. The European Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments supported the work of ICPA. On March

17, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Russia's President V. Putin and Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights M. Lvova-Belova upon allegations of illegal forced displacement of Ukrainian children.

Ukrainian companies signed 20 agreements and memoranda on drone production and armoured vehicle and munition production and maintenance with international partners at the International Defence Industries Forum (29.09). Cooperation will have several formats, including co-production, technology sharing, and supply of components. Also, the Alliance of Defence Industries was set up, and 38 companies from 19 countries joined.

The findings of the Yermak-McFaul Expert Group were used in over 70% of the sanctions implemented by the US, the EU, the UK and other countries. The Group's work resulted in the embargo on Russian oil and oil products, price caps for them, and full blocking sanctions against Russia's 20 biggest banks. Also, Russia was stripped of all FATF rights. Trade restrictions were imposed on an unprecedented list of dual-use items, individual sanctions were imposed on thousands of individuals from various sectors, and a G7 coordination mechanism for the implementation of sanctions was created. However, the breaking-point economic impact on the aggressor country expected in 2023 was not accomplished that year. For example, the non-revision of the price cap for the oil transported by sea or the absence of sanctions on LNG and Russia's key banks that handle energy transactions – such as GazPromBank – substantially hamper the effect of the sanctions. Apart from that, the problems of grey exports and bypassing sanctions – with the help of some Asian countries – were not solved.

Progress in transferring frozen Russian assets to Ukraine was a serious accomplishment in 2023. The EU and the US are working on this proactively and developing specific plans. This signals their increased readiness to transfer frozen assets for reconstruction needs.

The Ukrainian Institute is building up its potential as a central institution that works on Ukraine's cultural diplomacy. Throughout 2023, it opened offices in Berlin (March) and Paris (November). It held its fourth International Cultural Diplomacy Forum in London (4.12). It also started creating expert groups to expand its operations to Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Massive media campaigns – such as “Grain From Ukraine”, “Boycott Russian Sport”, “Light Up Ukraine”, “Free The Leopards”, “Taurus for Ukraine”, “Real

Peace Not Appeasement” – were conducted. Interaction with experts in various fields continues to beef up informational, analytical and communication support for Ukraine’s foreign policy. These include the Crimea Platform expert network, an expert group that works on point 10 of the Peace Formula and more. The expert community organised advocacy trips to strategic countries for Ukraine’s foreign policy interests, including India, South Korea, Brazil, South Africa, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Turkiye and others.

Ukraine remained the key actor in the global markets for grain and sunflower oil, as it accounts for over 10% of global trade in these items. Overall, Ukraine exported over 16 mn tonnes of wheat, 26 mn tonnes of corn and nearly 6 mn tonnes of vegetable oils through the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes, the Black Sea Grain Deal, and the alternative sea route after Ukraine unblocked navigation in the Black Sea. As part of the Grain From Ukraine program, Ukraine shipped wheat to Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Nigeria in 2023. Apart from that, Kenya was the first country where the Port agency presented The Wall project – opening the Grains of Culture mural created by artists from Ukraine and Kenya in a celebration ceremony (17.03).

In March, the EU-Ukraine Special Agreement on Liberalisation of Road Transport was extended till June 2024. Thanks to the Agreement, Ukrainian exports through the roads to the EU increased 30% in 2023 compared to 2021 (before the Agreement), and imports to Ukraine grew 25%. Despite this liberalisation, the situation deteriorated for Ukraine’s economy as Polish protesters blocked border crossing points. In the context of trade liberalisation, the Council of the European Union extended the lifting of all custom taxes, quotas and trade barriers for Ukrainian exports in May. However, the European Commission introduced restrictive measures for four items exported by Ukraine, including wheat, corn, rapeseed and sunflower seeds, upon demand from five of Ukraine’s neighbours that are EU member-states. Thanks to the efforts of the Coordination Platform, Kyiv managed to convince the European Commission not to extend the restrictions on the EU level in September, even if three countries – Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary – did extend them nationally. Despite serious efforts from Ukraine and European institutions, the situation was not resolved in 2023. The blockade led to the 18.3% decline in truck exports compared to the previous period. The year-end decline was small at -0.7%.

In 2023, eight new markets – including Albania, Canada, Kuwait, Lebanon, Indonesia, South Africa, and Turkiye – were opened for Ukrainian goods.

Overall, Ukraine's foreign trade deteriorated in 2023 as it imported USD 63.5bn worth of items (up from USD 59.51bn in 2022) and exported USD 36.2bn worth of items (down from USD 44.17bn in 2022). Ukraine's top five partners in trade in goods included China (USD 12.8bn), Poland (USD 11.3bn), Turkiye (USD 7.1bn), Germany (USD 6.9bn), and Romania (USD 5.4bn). The key sources of Ukraine's imports were China (USD 10.4bn), Poland (USD 6.6bn), Germany (USD 4.9n), and Turkiye (USD 4.7bn). Ukraine's top export destinations were Poland (USD 4.7bn), Romania (USD 3.8bn), China and Turkiye (USD 2.4bn each).

In December, Ukraine opened its new embassy in Ghana. At the same time, other African embassies that President Zelenskyy announced in late 2022 were not opened, nor was the embassy to the Philippines announced earlier.

18 out of 49 directions of foreign policy scored the highest points in 2023. These included the UK, Italy, Estonia, Canada, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, the US, France, Czechia, Japan, Northern Europe, European Integration, Cooperation with the EU, the UN, Building Coalition on Ukraine Recovery, and Economic Diplomacy.

Total score —



Overall, the following directions scored A or A-, the highest grades, based on a number of indicators in 2023: the UK, Italy, Estonia, Canada, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Romania, Slovakia, the US, France, Czechia, Japan, Northern Europe, European Integration, Cooperation with the EU, Cooperation with the UN, Building Coalition on Ukraine Recovery, Wartime Diplomacy, Economic Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy, and Sanctions Policy.

Some directions improved their scores compared to 2022. These included Italy, Moldova, the Middle East, Latin America, Northern Europe, and Central Asia.

Performance on the Australia, Georgia, Poland, and the Council of Europe tracks deteriorated compared to 2022.

**Total score for
Ukraine's foreign policy in 2023 –**

B+



G7 COUNTRIES

	2022	2023
UNITED KINGDOM	A	A
ITALY	B+	A
CANADA	A	A
GERMANY	A	A-
USA	A	A-
FRANCE	A-	A
JAPAN	A-	A

The United Kingdom



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

In 2023, cooperation between the UK and Ukraine maintained the 2022 level of war-time diplomacy. The UK continued to be one of Ukraine's key security and political partners, and in many cases, it became a forerunner in shaping the assistance of other partner countries. While British issues were less prominently reflected in official political statements, they were compensated by significant ad-hoc activity and the fleshing out of the information space through media and informal communication channels.

Political interest/engagement

There was interest in expanding and strengthening contacts with the UK at all levels. However, this interest was mostly expressed not in official communication but through media comments, social media, and press releases following a particular meeting with the British side. Rather indirectly, the UK was mentioned in the President's speech at the meeting with the heads of Ukraine's foreign diplomatic missions (02.08). The President also mentioned the UK among the leaders of support for the Ukrainian struggle and in the context of the security of NATO's Eastern flank in his speech on the occasion of Constitution Day (28.06). The importance of partnership and cooperation with the UK was not called into question but was limited to the defence sector and the recovery of the Ukrainian economy.

The UK is mentioned in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) in the context of sanctions and deepening cooperation within the Ukraine-UK-Poland alliance.

The VRU Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation repeatedly addressed the issue of relations and strengthening contacts with the UK at its meetings. The UK was also identified as a priority country for establishing inter-parliamentary relations and sending delegations of Ukrainian MPs (Committee meetings on 26.04, 1.08, 13.09). The importance of UK sanctions against Russia was highlighted (20.03).

Strategic communications

In 2023, there was a slight decline in the UK media's interest in Ukrainian issues, but the representation of Ukrainian politicians, diplomats, and the military remained high. For example, during the year, the President of Ukraine gave interviews to Sky News (26.01), Reuters (8.11), BBC (12.11), and The Sun (20.11). It is also worth noting the significant media activity of the Ukrainian military. For example, the article by the Commander-in-Chief of the AFU, General V. Zaluzhnyi, in *The Economist*, where he outlined Ukraine's strategy for winning the war, the risks of escalating Russian aggression, and the Ukrainian army's demand for equipment and ammunition, became very popular. Also noteworthy in this context are General O. Syrskiy's interview with the BBC (18.07), which presented more realistic expectations of a Ukrainian counter-offensive, and General O. Tarnavskiy's interview with the BBC (27.12) regarding expectations for 2024.

The key themes of 2022 in all public communications of Ukraine's representatives remained relevant: the UK's weapons and resource support for Ukraine, continued development of bilateral economic cooperation within the framework of previously signed agreements, and joint actions to strengthen international support for Ukraine by other partner states. These messages found support in interviews with the First Lady (The Independent on 08.07 and the BBC on 11.12) and Ukrainian MPs (e.g., L. Vasylenko, MP with The Telegraph on 03.10).

Activities

In 2023, cooperation with the UK was one of the most active areas of Ukraine's foreign policy at all levels. More than ten high-level and top-level visits were made, including two by the President of Ukraine (8.02, 15.05). There were dozens of phone calls and meetings at all levels, and joint events initiated by the Ukrainian side. De facto, every month, there was a high-level contact and/or event, which is the clearest reflection of the intensity and mutual interest of the parties in cooperation. The visit of the President of Ukraine in February was marked by the signing of the London Declaration (08.02) on support of the Ukrainian Peace

Formula, the process of Ukraine's recovery and support for the restoration of its territorial integrity within internationally recognised borders. The visit had the widest media coverage.

The most significant examples of activities were the organisation of the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London (21-22.06) and the hosting of the Eurovision Song Contest by Liverpool instead of Kyiv, during which a large number of public diplomacy events were held.

Active work was also carried out by the Verkhovna Rada, which, in addition to the usual areas of cooperation, raised the issue of recognising the Holodomor as genocide of the Ukrainian people (visit on 27.03), joint attraction of investment in Ukraine (part of the High-Level Declaration of Intent of 23.06), and a series of speeches by Ukrainian MPs, including the Speaker of the VRU, to their British counterparts (27.03).

The activities of Ukrainian business, including visits organised by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (19-22.04) and the second Ukrainian business delegation that participated in the London Design Fair 2023 (19-21.09), were important for the development of bilateral economic cooperation. In addition, in the first half of the year, the UK continued to host the Year of Ukrainian Culture, with regular events supported by the Ukrainian Institute, numerous private organisations, and artists.

Results

The year 2023 was productive in terms of expanding the existing agreement framework for cooperation. In this regard, the joint Ukrainian-British London Declaration (08.02) reiterated the messages of the 2020 framework agreement and outlined key areas for further cooperation: military assistance to Ukraine, cooperation in post-war reconstruction, and continued trade liberalisation.

In 2023, the UK provided over GBP 2.3 billion in military assistance to Ukraine.

As part of economic cooperation, the two countries signed an agreement on cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (23.01), an agreement on digital trade and investment (20.03), and an energy partnership

agreement (21.06). On 31 March, the last trade duties between the two countries were cancelled under the 2020 framework agreements, and the free trade zone de facto began operating.

In 2023, trade between the two countries totalled USD 1.45 billion, with imports significantly exceeding exports (USD 1.09 billion versus USD 360 million). Trends and the goods composition of trade relations remained stable, but it is worth noting the almost threefold drop in the trade balance during the year.

The post-war reconstruction of Ukraine was an important topic that was also reflected in the agreement framework. The Ukraine Recovery Conference in London (21-22.06) resulted in a joint statement by the co-chairs of the governments of Ukraine and the UK (23.06), which outlined further steps for cooperation and partner engagement. Ukraine and the UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding (2.08) in the context of Ukraine's reconstruction and pursuant to the London Conference results, under which the partners will provide expert support in the process of rebuilding Ukraine. In August, Ukraine and the UK began negotiations on signing a bilateral security agreement in line with the G7 declaration at the NATO Summit in Vilnius.

Italy



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	4	5
RESULTS	4	5
TOTAL SCORE	B+	A

Due to changes in Italy’s foreign policy priorities, Ukraine received support from the Meloni government, while the political, economic, financial, social, defence and humanitarian cooperation intensified. However, public debates over the continued provision of military assistance to Ukraine, as well as numerous pro-Russian influences, often undermined deeper cooperation and understanding at the level of society.



Political interest/engagement

Ukraine's political interest was determined by cooperation with Italy in the context of Russia's full-scale aggression. In his annual address to the Conference of Ambassadors, the President of Ukraine noted the priority of efficient work with the G7 countries, which includes Italy (22.12). The active level of bilateral cooperation also determined the high interest in Italy.

Italy is not mentioned separately in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04). It was mostly mentioned in the context of European integration, countering Russian aggression, the G7, etc.

Strategic communications

Through Italy, Ukraine has been pushing for the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of Russian aggression, European and Euro-Atlantic integration, and the use of frozen Russian assets to rebuild Ukraine, including at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Rome (26.04). V. Zelenskyy opened the conference by addressing Italian MPs and ministers online with a call to implement the largest "economic project" of reconstruction and to support Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Ukraine also responded to Italian Defence Minister G. Crusetto's repeated statements about the need to "bring Ukraine and Russia to the negotiating table" (comments by President V. Zelenskyy and Presidential Office adviser M. Podolyak).

Throughout the year, V. Zelenskyy held numerous online meetings and gave an interview to TG1 (24.10).

Activities

Bilateral dialogue was active throughout 2023. President V. Zelenskyy and Prime Minister G. Meloni officially communicated 11 times.

V. Zelenskyy personally visited Italy (13.05) in response to the visit to Kyiv by Italian Prime Minister G. Meloni (21.02). During his visit to Italy, President V. Zelenskyy said that significant decisions had been made in talks with the country's leaders to protect Ukraine's sky. The head of the Italian Council of Ministers, G. Meloni, stressed that her country expected Ukraine to win and pledged to continue to provide military support.

Ukrainian Defence Minister R. Umerov and his Italian counterpart G. Crosetto had a telephone conversation (17.11) to discuss Italian security assistance and prospects for joint arms production.

Rome hosted a bilateral conference on Ukraine's recovery (25-26.04), jointly organised by Ukraine and Italy, where support and cooperation needed for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction were discussed. D. La Cecilia was appointed Special Envoy of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Reconstruction of Ukraine. During the conference, representatives of Ukrainian ministries met representatives of large Italian businesses to discuss the prospects for strengthening cooperation.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and Italy met several times throughout the year. In Rome in April, they discussed Ukraine's next steps towards the EU and NATO, EU sanctions against Russia, further defence assistance from Italy and its active role in Ukraine's recovery, and in Brussels in November, they coordinated preparations for the European Council summit in December. Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation A. Tajani visited Kyiv (2.10) to discuss security cooperation and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Italy and Ukraine began work on bilateral security commitments in line with the Vilnius G7 Declaration (15.11). As instructed by the President of Ukraine, the first round of consultations on a bilateral agreement on security commitments was held (28.11).

Acting Minister of Culture and Information Policy, R. Karandziej, met the Special Envoy of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, coordinator of the Italian working group on reconstruction and resilience of Ukraine, D. La Cecilia. They

discussed, among other things, training for museum and natural reserve parks' staff, as well as scholarships and grants for Ukrainian artists staying abroad.

Pro-Russian narratives dominated programmes and messages on leading Italian TV channels, which the Defence Ministers and Prime Minister G. Meloni criticised.

Results

Following the Ukraine Recovery Conference (Rome, 25-26.04), Ukraine and Italy signed a joint declaration on support of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration, which will serve as a basis for further bilateral security consultations. In particular, the declaration states support for Ukraine in its reform efforts and in fulfilling the requirements necessary to start accession negotiations in 2023. Within NATO, Italy continues to focus on direct support for Ukraine, contributing to a significant expansion of NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine (13.05).

During the Recovery Conference, six memorandums were signed in the field of economic and energy recovery of Ukraine, two agreements on cooperation between Italian and Ukrainian regions were prepared, and agreements were reached on investments in the medical, chemical, and agricultural sectors of Ukraine, as well as in the restoration of Ukraine's cultural heritage.

Following bilateral negotiations (April), the Italian Council of Ministers approved the extension of military assistance to Ukraine for another year and sent the bill for Parliament vote in December (19.12). In addition, Ukraine and Italy signed a joint communiqué on the occasion of the visit by the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, A. Tajani (2.10). Italy joined the coalition on demining and the IT coalition. Italy committed to restoring after Russian attacks cultural heritage sites, in particular in Odesa.

The VRU Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Italian Chamber of Deputies signed a Memorandum of Cooperation that will allow for inter-institutional cooperation and technical assistance projects, professional capacity building, and the launch of joint events and projects to strengthen the role of parliaments.

Italy joined the G7 Declaration of Support for Ukraine (12.07) and supported all provisions of the Peace Formula. Italy joined the EU-Ukraine training programmes in Belgium, Poland, and Germany, offering specialised training modules for the military (18.05).

Italian MPs signed the Joint Statement of the Chairs of the Parliaments' Foreign Affairs Committees on the Full Implementation of the Decisions of the Bucharest NATO Summit on Ukraine's NATO Membership (01.06).

In 2023, trade in goods between Ukraine and Italy increased to USD 3.81 billion (compared to 3.44 billion in 2022) due to an increase in Italian exports to Ukraine.

Canada



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

In 2023, Ukraine and Canada maintained a high level of relations, which they reached after the start of Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine. The two countries communicated consistently, particularly in the areas of security cooperation, economic relations, and support for Ukraine, which underwent a qualitative transformation this year.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Canada regularly featured in the speeches and statements of Ukrainian top officials. The mentions of Canada mainly concerned steps to support Ukraine in countering Russian aggression. In his speeches to Ukrainian diplomats, President V. Zelenskyy cited Canada's assistance to Ukrainian refugees (02.08) and military and financial assistance to Ukraine (22.12). In addition, Canada was occasionally mentioned in the President's daily addresses and speeches by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence, particularly in the context of the demining of Ukrainian territories and the confiscation of frozen Russian assets, areas in which Canada stands out among other countries. There were also appeals to Canada as a participant in multilateral cooperation formats and initiatives, such as the G7, the G20, and NATO.

There was a slight decline at the parliamentary level, as few issues related to Ukraine-Canada relations appeared on the agendas of VRU committees and parliamentary discussions.

The Ukrainian political leadership was clearly unanimous about Canada's important place among Ukraine's partners and interpreted the development of Ukraine-Canada relations positively.

Strategic communications

In 2023, compared to the previous year, communication between Ukraine and Canada became more focused on the qualitative transformation of assistance provided to Ukraine, in particular in the context of new types of weapons and the introduction of new mechanisms to deter Russian aggression. In addition, the issue of Ukraine's potential membership of NATO was a special focus of communication.

Most of the communication took place at the level of the top political leadership. In particular, President V. Zelenskyy delivered a speech to the Canadian Parliament (23.09). Afterwards, he met representatives of the Canadian public and business, where he delivered another address. V. Zelenskyy also addressed Canada in his speeches on multilateral platforms, such as the G7 summit (21.05) and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (09.10).

The First Lady of Ukraine delivered a special address at the Halifax Security Forum (18.11).

Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal gave a press conference and interviews to some Canadian media outlets.

Activities

Ukraine and Canada took rather active steps to develop relations in 2023. In particular, representatives of both countries exchanged numerous visits. At the beginning of the year, Minister of National Defence A. Anand (18.01) and Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Joly (14-16.02) visited Kyiv. Both representatives of the Canadian government met Ukrainian officials to discuss Canada's next steps in supporting Ukraine and developing bilateral relations.

Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal paid his first visit to Canada (11.04). The sides also discussed issues related to updating the 2017 free trade agreement.

President V. Zelenskyy met Prime Minister J. Trudeau on several occasions, including at the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan (21.05), during J. Trudeau's visit to Kyiv (10.06), at the NATO summit in Vilnius (12.07) and during the Ukrainian delegation's visit to Ottawa (22-23.09). These meetings included joint press conferences and addresses to the media. The First Lady of Ukraine, O. Zelenska, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, D. Kuleba, were involved in work with foreign partners during these visits.

There were contacts at the level of military leadership. The Chief of the Defence Staff of the Canadian Armed Forces, General W. Eyre, visited Kyiv and met the Commander-in-Chief of the AFU, V. Zaluzhnyi, and Deputy Minister of Defence, A. Shevchenko (04.03).

During his visit to Kyiv, Prime Minister J. Trudeau delivered a speech to the VRU (10.06). A delegation of the Canadian Parliament visited Ukraine (30.09) to meet representatives of the VRU and the MFA. Ukrainian MPs sent an appeal to their Canadian counterparts, calling for streamlining the efforts to confiscate frozen Russian assets (20.10). In November, a Parliamentary delegation took part in an international security forum in Halifax, Canada.

Relations in the agricultural sector developed, with a Canadian-Ukrainian agricultural forum taking place in Kyiv (1.03).

On international platforms, Canadian representatives actively promoted the idea of bringing Russia to justice for its aggression against Ukraine. Proposals were made to create an international coalition to facilitate the return of Ukrainian children abducted by Russia.

Results

In 2023, as in the previous year, the main results of Ukraine's foreign policy activities were related to financial and military support. Canada continued to help Ukraine, in particular, by providing funding for long-term defence procurements, as well as loans and support for Ukraine's budget. In 2023, a decision was made to allocate CAD 1.3 billion for these purposes until 2026.

Canada was among the countries that joined the so-called tank coalition and transferred eight Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine. It also continued to supply Ukraine with other types of weapons and military equipment and sent Canadian instructors to participate in training missions for the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Subsequently, Canada was among the first countries to agree to start training Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets. Canada has become one of Ukraine's most prominent donors in demining. In 2023, the Canadian Government allocated more than CAD 22 million to pay for equipment and training for explosive ordnance disposal units.

During his visit to Kyiv, J. Trudeau signed a declaration of support for Ukraine's membership of NATO (10.06). During the Vilnius Summit, Canada, as a member of the G7, co-authored a declaration on security commitments to

Ukraine and eventually became the third country, after the United States and the United Kingdom, to begin negotiations with Ukraine on the specifics of these arrangements.

A separate topic of discussion in the Canadian political environment is the confiscation of seized Russian assets, which, despite the legislative changes adopted in 2022, has not yet been implemented. One of the steps taken to set a precedent in this area was the transfer of the seized An-124 aircraft to Ukraine from a sanctioned Russian company.

During D. Shmyhal's visit to Canada, the governments of Ukraine and Canada signed an agreement on youth mobility (11.04).

Economic relations between Ukraine and Canada were marked by the opening of Canadian markets for Ukrainian dairy products, as well as the update of the free trade agreement, which provides for the development of digital trade, protection of business interests, and a number of other innovations.

According to the State Customs Service of Ukraine, trade between the two countries in 2023 totalled USD 423.8 million, which is over USD 150 million more than a year earlier. This growth was driven by an almost twofold increase in imports from Canada, up to USD 326 million. At the same time, there was a slight decrease in the volume of Ukrainian goods exported to Canada, which remained at USD 97.8 million.

Germany



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	4
TOTAL SCORE	A	A-

A high level of political dialogue between all branches of Ukrainian authorities and German partners characterised the year 2023. The President of Ukraine visited Germany in May, and a Ukrainian-German business forum held in autumn brought together 500 representatives of political and business circles. The Ukrainian-German energy partnership was actively developing. Germany provided the largest military, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine among the EU member states. Germany's voice and influence on Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration remain critically important. The issue of providing Ukraine with long-range Taurus cruise missiles remains problematic.



Political interest/engagement

Political interest in Germany remains consistently high due to its significant political, economic, military and humanitarian support for Ukraine. As a heavyweight in European politics, Germany was the focus of attention of the President of Ukraine, the Government, and MPs in the context of Ukraine's course for EU and NATO membership, further practical steps to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities with Germany's support, as well as the development of the Ukrainian-German energy partnership, and Germany's participation in Ukraine's reconstruction. In this area, special attention was paid to the supply of air defence systems, which are critical to the defence of Ukraine, and long-range Taurus cruise missiles.

Strategic communications

The year 2023 began with an online speech by the President of Ukraine at the Munich Security Conference (February) and an address to students of leading German educational institutions: Humboldt University and European University Viadrina. He also addressed the participants and guests of the 73rd Berlin International Film Festival (February).

The Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Ambassador of Ukraine to Germany published articles and columns in leading German media and appeared on TV. Throughout the year, newly-appointed Ambassador O. Makeiev visited eastern German states and communicated with political circles and the public there, where dependence on Russian narratives and support for far-left and far-right political parties are high. To improve the German public's awareness of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Institute opened a representative office in Germany in March.

Activities

An active political dialogue between Ukraine and Germany marked the year 2023. One of the key events was the President of Ukraine's official visit to Germany (May). He and Chancellor O. Scholz discussed a number of priority issues: further support for Ukraine's defence capabilities, Germany's effective assistance in supporting Ukraine's application to join NATO and its European integration, Germany's leading role in the EU's adoption of the next sanctions package, and the promotion of the Ukrainian Peace Formula. During the visit, the President of Ukraine met members of the German Security Cabinet. This format of the meeting is unique for the two countries. In addition, attention was paid to coordinating the position on the eve of the G7 summit held in Hiroshima, Japan, in May 2023.

Ukraine was visited by various representatives of the German Government (Vice Chancellor, Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action R. Habeck (3.04), Defence Minister B. Pistorius (21.11), Finance Minister C. Lindner (14.08)). German Foreign Minister A. Baerbock visited not only Kyiv (11.09) but also Kharkiv (10.01) and Kyiv again for the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting (02.10).

During the year, the VRU Committee on Foreign Affairs met members of all leading parties represented in the Bundestag. In April, the VRU Speaker met Bundestag President B. Bas and Bundesrat President P. Tschentscher on the sidelines of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments. Berlin hosted the parliamentary breakfast "Unsung Lullabies: Deportation of Ukrainian Children" (7.09), during which H. Yanchenko MP stressed the importance of foreign parliaments showing a strong reaction to the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children and the role of the Bundestag in addressing this problem.

Traditionally active were the Embassy of Ukraine in Germany (meetings with politicians, business, representatives of the defence industry and the public) and political dialogue between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Energy and Finance.

In October, Berlin hosted the 6th German-Ukrainian Business Forum, "Recovery, Smart Growth and Security", in which a large Ukrainian delegation headed by Prime Minister D. Shmyhal took part.

Results

Germany remains steadfastly committed to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It has provided political, financial, humanitarian and military support to Ukraine bilaterally and through international cooperation within the EU, G7, NATO, the UN and other formats. Germany is the leader among the EU member states in terms of military, financial, and humanitarian support to Ukraine in absolute terms.

At a meeting of the Bundestag in June, MPs condemned the blowing up of the Kakhovka HPP dam, for which the vast majority of them (with the exception of Alternative for Germany) blamed Russia and demanded that those responsible be punished.

Germany played an important role in overriding Hungary's opposition to Ukraine's EU accession negotiations (December).

Germany continued to provide military assistance to Ukraine, supplying equipment and weapons from both Bundeswehr stocks and industry worth EUR 5.4 billion (armoured combat vehicles, air defence systems, artillery, engineering and logistics equipment, and UAVs). In close cooperation with its partners, Germany has set up technical support and maintenance centres for the systems supplied. Next year, Germany plans to provide Ukraine with at least EUR 8 billion worth of military assistance. An absolute majority of German MPs are in favour of continuing to provide assistance to Ukraine, including military aid. However, during the year, the Bundestag failed to pass a resolution on the supply of Taurus cruise missiles. An important outcome of the year was the establishment of a joint venture between the German defence concern Rheinmetall and the Ukrainian Defence Industry (Ukroboronprom).

The development of the German-Ukrainian energy partnership continued, with the German Government allocating EUR 88.5 million to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund. The Renewables for a Resilient Ukraine (R2U) project for Ukrainian communities was launched. In December, a guarantee agreement was signed with KfW to raise a EUR 24 million loan to restore energy infrastructure, namely Ukrenergo substations. The German Government has developed an investment guarantee programme for German companies in Ukraine. According to the German Ministry of Economy, investment guarantees are currently in

place for 14 companies in Ukraine with a total coverage of EUR 280 million, not including 50 applications that are under consideration. The number of municipal partnerships has increased significantly, with Berlin becoming Kyiv's other important partner in Germany in September.

In 2023, trade between the two countries totalled USD 6.9 billion (USD 4.8 billion in imports and USD 2.1 billion in exports), compared to USD 6.7 billion in 2022.

USA



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A-

In 2023, Ukraine's relations with the United States remained a priority. At all levels, the Ukrainian side showed maximum interest and made efforts to step up relations and ensure the qualitative expansion of US support. Yet, the US election campaign caused delays in the provision of security assistance. Despite the activity of Ukrainian government agencies and civil society, the second half of the year was marked by difficulties in relations due to domestic political arguments in the United States.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, the United States was the undisputed leader in terms of the number of calls, meetings, and proposed formats of cooperation with Ukraine. Both Ukrainian politicians and officials at all levels showed political interest. Each relevant ministry, at its level of cooperation and responsibility, worked with the United States throughout the year. The narrative of building strategic relations with the USA, maintaining bipartisan and bicameral support, and perceiving the USA as a key ally and security donor of Ukraine remained consistent. The Office of the President, the MFA and the MoD remained the most active in this area.

The President's speeches, in particular, the one in the VRU on the occasion of Constitution Day (28.06), as well as the speeches of the VRU Speaker and representatives of the CMU, emphasised the indispensable US assistance in strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities and supporting the economy. This was also evident in the President's speech to the Ambassadors' Conference (02.08) and in all briefings following the President's visits to the USA during the year.

The CMU's Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) mentioned the United States in the context of tightening sanctions, holding consultations on Ukraine's energy security, strengthening strategic partnership, including by using the mechanisms of the US-Ukraine Strategic Partnership Commission, the US-Ukraine Trade and Investment Council, defence consultations, cyber dialogue, etc., new joint projects on naval and air defence development, the signing of memoranda of industrial cooperation with the use of high-tech developments, and the development of cooperation in space exploration.

Strategic communications

In 2023, there was a certain decline in the media activity of Ukrainian politicians and high-ranking officials in the US information space, compared to 2022, except for the regular media presence of Ambassador of Ukraine O. Markarova, including in-studio appearances on top programmes. The biggest problem was Congress's refusal to hold a joint session to hear a speech by the President of Ukraine during his visit (21.09).

Publications for foreign media, such as President V. Zelenskyy's interviews with Sky TG24 (4.10), NBC (5.11), Associated Press (1.12), and Foreign Minister D. Kuleba's article for Foreign Affairs (14.12), show a unified position of the Ukrainian leadership on the development of defence cooperation and support for the narrative that under any circumstances Ukraine would continue to resist the aggressor, but that US assistance is an integral element of the state's defence capability and the creation of a sustainable system of stability in Europe.

Activities

The year saw active work in many areas. Military-technical cooperation, high-level and top-level political contacts, and continued wide-ranging economic and humanitarian cooperation remained the priorities.

A number of visits by Ukrainian officials and politicians marked the year 2023. President V. Zelenskyy visited the United States twice (18-21.09, 11-12.12). In addition, more than 40 high-level and top-level telephone conversations took place. The most active were the Office of the President, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, the leadership of the MoD and the MFA.

Representatives of the Cabinet of Ministers visited the USA on several occasions, including Prime Minister D. Shmyhal (21-22.04), Minister for Veterans Affairs Y. Laputina (19.04), Minister of Energy G. Galushchenko (9.11), and a Ukrainian delegation led by First Vice Prime Minister Y. Svyrydenko (13-15.11).

In addition, there were visits at the level of law enforcement agencies, such as a working visit by the Bureau of Economic Security delegation headed by its

Deputy Director O. Litvinov (22.03) and a meeting between the leadership of the National Police of Ukraine and a delegation of the US State Department (20.05). Law enforcement cooperation was also discussed during the visit of the Ukrainian parliamentary delegation to the United States (02-06.12). A joint delegation of the Prosecutor-General's Office and the Cabinet of Ministers also visited the United States (6-13.12).

The US side also actively paid visits to Ukraine, primarily at the level of bipartisan congressional delegations (06.01, 20.01, 5.05, 26.05, 23.08, 30.10). Among those who visited Ukraine were US Secretary of the Treasury J. Yellen (27.02), Secretary of State A. Blinken (06.09), Secretary of Transportation P. Buttigieg (8.11), and Secretary of Defence L. Austin (20.11).

Parliamentary cooperation was actively developing. There were visits by parliamentary delegations (March and December), as well as an extensive tour of the US states by a parliamentary delegation (November) aimed at establishing relations with representatives of the Republican Party on the ground.

Results

The key result of 2023 was continued US military and financial support for Ukraine. The United States remained the second largest donor in absolute terms of support (the EU is the first) and the first largest donor in terms of support for Ukraine by individual states. However, the last quarter of the year was marked by the political inability of the US House of Representatives to pass a decision on a new aid package for Ukraine in the amount of USD 61.8 billion.

During the year, a number of memoranda were signed between Ukrainian and US institutions in the areas of security, energy, healthcare, etc. In particular, the memoranda of cooperation and joint project development were signed between the Ministry for Strategic Industries of Ukraine, the Global Defence & Industry Alliance, the Arizona Defence & Industry Coalition, and the Utah Aerospace & Defence Association (21. 09), by the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine and the US Fuel Cell & Hydrogen Energy Association on establishing a cooperative energy partnership to promote hydrogen energy (6.11), by the Verkhovna Rada Committee

on Public Health, Medical Assistance, and Medical Insurance, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health, the State Border Service of Ukraine, the National Guard of Ukraine and Global Response Medicine (GRM) on internships for Ukrainian doctors in the USA (9.06). The United States Agency for International Development and the Energy Community Secretariat signed an agreement on a US grant contribution to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund, totalling USD 25 million (28.11).

Trade between Ukraine and the USA totalled USD 3.32 billion, with imports being four times higher than exports.

France



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	4	5
TOTAL SCORE	A-	A

In 2023, Ukraine achieved success in engaging France in a substantial expansion of military assistance. It secured France’s support for initiating negotiations on Ukraine’s accession to the EU and, bilaterally, for the Peace Formula. Economic ties were invigorated and deepened as part of Ukraine’s recovery projects, including by developing tools to attract investors.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, interest in France was consistently high both as far as the development of bilateral relations is concerned and within international structures such as the G7, G20, and the Ramstein format. The President of Ukraine's statements made it clear that France remained a leading actor in promoting Ukraine's EU membership bid and voting for a multi-year aid package from the EU. Deputy Prime Ministers Y. Svyrydenko and O. Stefanishyna, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba, Defence Minister R. Umerov, Energy Minister G. Galushchenko, and Finance Minister S. Marchenko regularly talked about relations with France in their statements and speeches.

France is mentioned separately in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy (18.04) in the context of drafting an intergovernmental agreement on youth exchanges and regarding the supply of OCEA patrol boats and Airbus helicopters.

At the parliamentary level, France was the focus of the attention of VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk and members of the VRU Committee on EU Integration. The interest was primarily focused on France's assistance in negotiations on EU accession, invitation of Ukraine to join NATO, negotiations on the Peace Formula, political and military support, energy security, humanitarian demining, reform of Ukraine's civil service, and reconstruction.

Strategic communications

Compared to the previous year, the intensity of the President's strategic communications with French political and expert circles decreased, while the quality of contacts with the French media increased. In October, V. Zelenskyy's key public appearance was a television interview with France 2's *L'Événement* show, which was watched by 3.22 million viewers.

During his visit to Paris in January, VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk delivered an address to the French National Assembly, which the leading media outlets widely broadcasted.

In August, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba spoke at a conference of French ambassadors, using an opportunity to convey information to the target diplomatic audience.

In November, First Lady O. Zelenska gave an interview to the leading French magazine L'Express, with a circulation of 150,000 copies.

Important highlights included France playing the leading role in international formats of support for Ukraine, such as the tank, F-16 and artillery coalitions, as well as in the working group on nuclear safety under the Peace Formula.

Activities

Busy and multidimensional France-related activities marked the year 2023. France's involvement in scaling up military assistance to Ukraine primarily included negotiations on a tank coalition, which was formalised during V. Zelenskyy's visit to Paris (14.05) and his meeting with E. Macron and O. Scholz in Paris (8.02).

The visit in May was one of a series of visits to EU countries that resulted in the creation of the fighter jet coalition. France did not provide Ukraine with F-16s, however, it announced plans to train Ukrainian pilots to fly the Mirage in 2024. French Minister of the Armed Forces S. Lecornu's visit to Ukraine (28.09) indicated the deepening of French involvement in the military sector. Prior to that, Ukraine's Defence Minister O. Reznikov paid a visit to Paris (1.02), where agreements were reached on the training for the Ukrainian military and additional aid packages, including the transfer of 12 CAESAR self-propelled howitzers and ammunition.

In addition, the two presidents had regular phone conversations on the grain corridor, the security situation at the front, consolidation of support from international partners, macro-financial support, Ukraine's European integration, etc. (24.01, 1.04, 30.04, 3.09, 18.10, 14.12).

Overall, government bilateral communication was quite busy throughout the year, with frequent visits by members of government teams responsible for the economy, finance, transport, energy, and agriculture. In terms of frequent contacts, reconstruction and economic development became the most important sectors.

France was one of the first countries to start negotiations under the Peace Formula proposed by V. Zelenskyy. Together with the Czech Republic, France led a working group on radiation and nuclear safety, the creation of which was preceded by numerous contacts and consultations at the level of government teams in Ukraine and France.

Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Ukraine's EU Integration met a delegation of the National Assembly representing the France-Ukraine Friendship Group in Kyiv (8.09).

In November, Ukraine suggested the creation of a joint working group with the French State Holding Agency to prepare a Strategy for the Management of State Property of Ukraine.

Activities in culture and sports were also carried out throughout the year. The Khanenko Museum's project to transfer Ukrainian icons dating back to the sixth and seventh centuries to the Louvre for temporary storage and research was implemented. France was among the priority areas for the Ukrainian Institute in 2023.

Results

France has cemented its role as a champion of Ukraine's European ambitions at the summits in Brussels, where Ukraine's progress in meeting the criteria for EU membership was assessed, as well as at the French-initiated summits of the European Political Community in Chisinau and Granada. At the political level, Paris has consistently supported the launch of EU accession negotiations with Ukraine. France also contributed to deepening Ukraine's integration into NATO in the context of the preparation and holding of the NATO Summit in Vilnius.

Over the year, France managed to significantly expand its military assistance to Ukraine, although the parties do not disclose the exact figures. Agreements were reached on the supply of AMX-10 RC wheeled tanks. France increased the production of 155-mm artillery ammunition, as well as provided SCALP long-range cruise missiles and the Franco-Italian SAMP/T air defence system, among others.

The assistance in supporting and restoring Ukraine's healthcare and education became more specific, with France allocating EUR 12 million for each sector. To encourage investors, France introduced war risk insurance in Ukraine at a record level of 95%. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, France has provided budgetary support to Ukraine, totalling around EUR 400 million.

There have also been shifts in the parliamentary dimension. The French National Assembly recognised the Holodomor as genocide against the Ukrainian people (17.05).

There has been progress in economic cooperation. In March, France appointed P. Heilbronn as a special envoy to oversee this issue, which opened up a new area of contact for Ukrainian ministries with France.

The opening of a representative office of the Ukrainian Institute in Paris in November was an important achievement for cultural diplomacy.

According to the State Customs Service, trade between Ukraine and France totalled USD 2.2 billion in 2023 (compared to USD 1.8 billion in 2022), of which imports amounted to USD 1.7 billion.

Japan



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A-	A

Ukraine has efficiently exploited the potential of bilateral relations with Japan by integrating Japan into its foreign policy discourse and coordinating the efforts of various agencies to develop security, humanitarian, financial and informational cooperation with Tokyo. Ukraine engaged Japan's support in international platforms, including G7. The Joint Statement on the Special Global Partnership signed by Ukraine and Japan laid a strong foundation for further development of cooperation.

Political interest/engagement

2023 saw Japan's growing role in Ukraine's foreign policy discourse. Ukrainian officials repeatedly mentioned Japan in their statements. Apart from expressing gratitude, they highlighted Japan's key role in international institutions – given its G7 presidency and membership in the UN Security Council in 2023-2024, among other reasons. Japan was mentioned as a special global partner and a “new powerful ally” of Ukraine that shares the same values as Ukraine. President Zelenskyy highlighted Japan's leadership “among Asian countries in protecting freedom and international law.” Ukrainian politicians repeatedly mentioned Japan as a leader, given its leading role in post-war reconstruction and innovative technology. Apart from that, President Zelenskyy highlighted the personal contribution of Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida as a “strong protector of international order” and described Japan-Ukraine relations as “the most substantial” in over 30 years.

Members of Parliament also highlighted the importance of partnership with Tokyo, emphasising the exemplary nature of Japan's assistance for Ukraine.

Strategic communications

In 2023, Ukraine strengthened its presence in Japan's information space. Among other things, President Zelenskyy's address at the G7 Hiroshima Summit contributed to this. In his addresses to the international community and the people of Japan, President Zelenskyy highlighted the urgency of creating an efficient system of global security and joining efforts around Ukraine's Peace Formula. Resonant to Japan's historical experience, his speeches strengthen the connection between the Ukrainian and Japanese nations based on shared values and aspirations of a peaceful future.

Apart from the addresses, extensive media coverage of press conferences by Ukraine's President, First Lady and other Ukrainian politicians points to Ukraine's consistent efforts to raise awareness and mobilise the support of Japan's society in wartime.

Interviews with Ukraine's top officials in reputed Japanese media – including NHK, Asahi, Kyodo, Nikkei and Sankei – also point to the increasing media openness and promotion of Ukraine's perspective in relations with Japan. The importance of strategic ties with Japan is reflected both in public speeches by well-known political and civic actors and in interviews with less well-known Ukrainians whose role in the defence of Ukraine and support from Japan is as significant.

Activities

In 2023, Ukraine worked proactively on developing bilateral relations with Japan, trying to engage Japan's support at international platforms, including G7.

Repeated telephone conversations of the leaders (6.01, 9.06, 29.08, 8.11) and personal meetings during the visit of Prime Minister Kishida to Ukraine (21.03) and of President Zelenskyy to Japan (20-21.05) pointed to a common vision of security, defence, and post-war reconstruction. The dialogue between PM Kishida and President Zelenskyy focused on Ukraine's Peace Formula, preparations for the Global Peace Summit, and the establishment of the tribunal for Russian aggression.

Seeking to add a practical dimension to these discussions, Kyiv initiated the first round of talks with Japan in October on a bilateral security agreement envisaged by the G7 joint declaration of support for Ukraine.

The significance of Japan in Ukraine's foreign policy is reflected in the video meeting of President Zelenskyy with G7 leaders in February, the attendance of the G7 Parliamentary Speakers' Meeting by VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk in September, and a number of visits of Ukrainian officials to Tokyo. These included visits by Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation V. Ionan (April), representatives of the Healthcare Ministry (November) and National Police (July), and reconstruction and recovery experts, including the Head of the State Inspectorate for Energy Supervision, R. Slobodian (May).

Ukraine and Japan showed interest in developing projects in agriculture, education, infrastructure, environmental initiatives, judiciary reform, and nuclear security. After resuming its work in Ukraine, the Japan International Cooperation

Agency (JICA) became a key partner in cooperation in humanitarian demining, rehabilitation of veterans and energy.

Interaction at the level of local self-governance – including the visits of the mayor of Odesa to Japan (March) and the mayor of Lviv (September) – contributed to partnership between cities and regions.

Ukraine implemented some cultural and sports projects in Japan, including a charity game with Shakhtar FC, the opening of a Ukrainian library in Kobe, and the tours of Ukrainian performers in Japan.

Results

Ukraine's foreign policy on Japan proved fruitful in 2023. Politically, Ukraine and Japan signed the Joint Statement on the Special Global Partnership during Prime Minister Kishida's visit to Ukraine (21.03). The Statement highlighted the potential of bilateral partnership. In a show of support for Ukraine, Tokyo stepped up the pressure of sanctions on Russia and continued to provide substantial non-lethal, security, humanitarian, energy, medical, and financial assistance to Ukraine.

When it comes to recovery, Ukraine and Japan signed important interagency memoranda and grant agreements with JICA focused on demining, reconstruction, development of local communities, education programs, and development of agriculture. Ukraine achieved an arrangement for Japan to host the Ukrainian military for rehabilitation.

Important progress was achieved in digital transformation and IT. In addition to signing a trilateral memorandum on cooperation (27.04), Ukraine participated in Japan's leading IT expo, CEATEC 2023, for the first time.

Japan remains one of the major financial donors for Ukraine. It provided USD 3.6bn in assistance in 2023 and contributed USD 25mn to MIGA for war risk insurance.

Russia's aggression continues to have a negative impact on trade between Ukraine and Japan. While Ukraine's imports from Japan increased by almost 50% in 2023, its exports to Japan decreased by 67%. Total Ukraine-Japan trade amounted to USD 943.3mn.



EU INTEGRATION

	2022	2023
EU INTEGRATION	A	A
EU	A	A

EU integration

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

In 2023, Ukraine made the opening of negotiations with the EU its strategic priority, directing the efforts of all state institutions towards meeting the obligations under the recommendations provided by the European Commission. European institutions and their leaders demonstrated strong support for Ukraine, including by holding meetings of the College of Commissioners and the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Ukraine. The Enlargement Package demonstrated Ukraine's significant progress in implementing the necessary reforms, which allowed the European Council to make a political decision in principle to open negotiations with Ukraine.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Ukraine's European integration was one of the strategic priorities of its foreign policy, which generated significant interest and constant attention from the country's top leadership and key political figures. Starting from January, the political agenda was full of high-level events that provided communication platforms for expressing Ukraine's official position. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy, Prime Minister D. Shmyhal, Deputy Prime Ministers Y. Svyrydenko, O. Stefanishyna, O. Kubrakov, Minister of Foreign Affairs D. Kuleba, Minister of Defence R. Umerov, and other members of the government team were actively involved in shaping the priorities of European integration throughout the year. In addition to the opening of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU, the following areas of sectoral cooperation were on the agenda: integration into the EU internal market, continuation of temporary trade and transport liberalisation, Ukraine's accession to the EU roaming space, further integration of energy markets, introduction of the so-called "industrial visa-free regime" for Ukrainian products, and increasing export potential by boosting the processing capacity at the border with the EU.

The political commitment to fully support Ukraine's integration with the EU was demonstrated in the Presidential Decree "On some measures to prepare for the negotiation process on Ukraine's accession to the European Union" (November), as well as at the government level in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (April). The VRU adopted a resolution calling on EU member states and institutions to support the opening of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU (December).

Strategic communications

The promotion of European integration relied on communication tools already tested in 2022, including speeches by the President of Ukraine at meetings of the European Council (February, June, December) and the European Parliament (February). Members of the government team were invited to participate in thematic meetings of the EU Council. It is also worth noting that Ukraine hosted the College of Commissioners (February) and the EU Foreign Affairs Council (September) and held joint meetings with the CMU. Such meetings are a powerful tool for informing European officials on the situation in Ukraine and its progress towards European integration.

In 2023, on the eve of important events and activities related to Ukraine's European future, high-level Ukrainian delegations visited Brussels, where they held intensive consultations in bilateral and multilateral formats with individual members of the EU Council and representatives of European institutions (in particular, on the eve of the publication of an interim report on Ukraine's progress in implementing the seven EC recommendations (June), the announcement of the so-called Enlargement Package by the EC (June), as well as the European Council meeting where the decision to open negotiations was made (December)). Active comments and interviews for Ukrainian and foreign media complemented all meetings.

When it comes to organising communication with European partners, it is worth noting active work to inform them about progress in implementing the recommendation on the language rights of national minorities. For example, in December, the ambassadors of EU member states visited the Transcarpathian Region to familiarise themselves with the situation in areas where the Hungarian national minority inhabits.

Activities

In February, the priority to ensure the opening of EU accession negotiations first appeared in the joint statement following the 24th EU-Ukraine Summit, the first event of this level since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. The political

significance of this summit for the European side was demonstrated by the participation of European Council President C. Michel, European Commission President U. von der Leyen, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy J. Borrell and 15 European Commissioners.

In March, the Government of Ukraine published the 2022 Report on the Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Progress in fulfilling commitments increased by 9% in 2022, with the overall level of implementation reaching 72%.

In Ukraine, Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration O. Stefanishyna was entrusted with coordinating preparations for the opening of accession negotiations. More than 80 Ukrainian authorities were involved in preparing decisions to implement the integration agenda.

In November, the eighth meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Committee in Trade Configuration (ACTC) took place. However, it was not possible to organise a meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Council in 2023 despite the parties' previous agreements.

The Government of Ukraine decided to establish a national contact point for the EU's Digital Europe programme on the basis of the Office for Business and Export Development and the Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine on the basis of the National Research Foundation.

In April, with the support of the EU, the Office for Support of Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to the Provisions of the European Union Acquis was established in the Verkhovna Rada. The Ukrainian parliament played a significant role by amending sectoral legislation, taking into account the conclusions of the Venice Commission and the results of an inclusive dialogue. In total, the VRU adopted 11 laws and two resolutions on European integration upon the proposal of the Committee on Integration with the EU.

Ukraine and the EU held two meetings of the Joint Committee of Ukraine and the European Commission within the framework of the Agreement Liberalising the Carriage of Freight by Road (March, December), which is an important element of the Solidarity Roads Initiative. Polish protesters' blockade of checkpoints on Ukraine's western border was a significant challenge for the Ukrainian government team and the EC in 2023. The situation was not resolved in 2023 despite significant efforts by the Ukrainian side and European institutions.

Results

In November, the European Commission's report on Ukraine as part of the Enlargement Package recommended that the EU Council open negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU, albeit subject to the implementation of four additional recommendations by March 2024. The European Council decided to open negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU, subject to the conditions set out by the European Commission in the Enlargement Package (14.12). This is a historic decision for Ukraine, paving the way for the intensification of the integration track as early as 2024. The result was not easy to achieve, given the open resistance from Hungary, which threatened to block the opening of negotiations between Ukraine and the EU. Ukraine and the EU had to make significant concessions to circumvent the blackmail by Budapest (November-December).

During the joint meeting of the Government of Ukraine and the College of Commissioners, as well as during the summit, the parties agreed on an updated Priority Action Plan to strengthen the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement for 2023-2024 (February). The government team reported on the launch of the preparation of the National Plan of Adaptation of Ukraine to the EU Acquis, as well as on the start of self-screening of Ukraine's legal framework as a prerequisite for preparing the National Plan. Ukraine became the first country to conduct self-screening prior to the official screening by the European Commission. As of the end of the year, the government team had processed more than 28,000 regulations and determined the number of both already implemented and to-be-implemented documents. However, despite previous expectations on both sides, preparatory work by Ukraine and the EU to start the official screening process of Ukraine's legislation did not begin in December.

Results were obtained in certain areas of Ukraine's sectoral integration with the EU, including the so-called "visa-free regimes". In March, the Agreement Liberalising the Carriage of Freight by Road between Ukraine and the EU was extended until June 2024. Thanks to the Agreement, in 2023, exports of Ukrainian goods by road to the EU increased by 30% compared to 2021 (before the Agreement was signed), and imports to Ukraine increased by 25%. However,

despite the liberalisation, the situation for the Ukrainian economy deteriorated in the reporting period due to the blockade of border crossings by Polish protesters.

As part of the trade liberalisation with Ukraine (the so-called “trade visa-free regime”), the EU Council waived all duties, quotas, and trade remedies on Ukrainian exports for another year (May). However, at the request of five neighbouring EU member states, the European Commission imposed restrictive measures on four types of Ukrainian exports (wheat, corn, rapeseed, and sunflower seeds). It was not until September that, thanks to the Coordination Platform, Kyiv managed to persuade the EC not to extend the restrictions at the EU level, although three countries (Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary) extended the restrictions at the national level.

An agreement between 22 European and seven Ukrainian operators on mutual reductions of international call rates was extended by 12 months (July).

In 2023, the VRU ratified the EU-Ukraine agreements on Ukraine’s participation in such EU programmes as Digital Europe (2021-2027), Customs, Single Market (2021-2027), the Connecting Europe Facility, and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Cooperation with the EU

A

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

In 2023, the EU took a leading position among international partners, helping Ukraine to fight against Russia and overcome the consequences of its aggression. The EU was active in providing macro-financial assistance, military support, mounting sanctions pressure on Russia, and shaping the dimension of justice and accountability for the crime of aggression and war crimes. In 2023, the EU managed to lay the foundation for medium-term financial support for Ukraine in the form of the Ukraine Facility.

Political interest/engagement

Given the busy dialogue between Ukraine and the EU in all areas of wartime diplomacy, relations with the EU were among the top priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy in 2023. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy, Prime Minister D. Shmyhal, vice prime ministers, and the vast majority of government team members addressed cooperation with the EU in accordance with their respective profiles. Ukrainian officials expressed their position on such key issues as tightening sanctions pressure on the aggressor, providing Ukraine with military and humanitarian assistance, economic and energy solidarity, long-term financial support, a mechanism for investigating the crime of Russian aggression against Ukraine, the establishment of a respective special tribunal, and Russia's responsibility for war crimes. A separate vital topic on which the EU's position and leadership was important to Kyiv was the reconstruction of Ukraine, in particular, the transfer of frozen Russian assets for this purpose.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine for 2023-2024 mentions cooperation with the EU in countering Russia (18.04). In its resolution, the VRU also called on the EU member states and European institutions to increase assistance to Ukraine in priority areas (9.12).

Strategic communications

An active exchange of high-level visits between Ukraine and the EU contributed to building systematic bilateral strategic communication and created opportunities for Europe to thoroughly improve its awareness of Ukraine's current and future needs for various types of support.

The President of Ukraine's speeches at special meetings of the European Council (February), special plenary session of the European Parliament (February), and multiple bilateral meetings with the heads of European institutions both in Kyiv and Brussels ensured that the EU received complete and timely information. Other interesting formats of communication included a joint statement by the President of Ukraine and the President of the European Commission on the sidelines of the European Political Community summit (June) and a statement by the President of the European Council following his meeting with President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy and President of Moldova M. Sandu (November).

A new manifestation of enhanced strategic communication in 2023 was a joint meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers and the European Commission (February), as well as a meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Kyiv (October). It is also worth noting the visit to Ukraine by the EU Political and Security Committee in its full composition (March). All such meetings and visits were broadly covered by the media and commented on.

Ukraine has also been successful in engaging the EU in international coalitions and initiatives, such as the Peace Formula, the Crimea Platform, the humanitarian programme Grain from Ukraine, the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group, the Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform for Ukraine, etc.

Activities

In addition to the integration policy, the agenda of relations with the EU involved intensive political and diplomatic consultations on the majority of key issues of wartime diplomacy. In January, the high-level dialogue began with a working visit to Ukraine by European Council President C. Michel and meetings with the country's leadership.

Members of the College of Commissioners met the Government of Ukraine in Kyiv (2.02). EC President U. von der Leyen and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy J. Borrell headed the delegation of 15 European Commissioners. The 24th EU-Ukraine Summit took place in Kyiv (3.02), the first since the outbreak of full-scale war.

President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy's visit to Brussels in February, the first since the beginning of the full-scale aggression, was important in terms of discussing military support for Ukraine. During their meetings with European counterparts, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba and Defence Minister R. Umerov also raised the issue of providing Ukraine with weapons and speeding up the transfer of 155-mm ammunition. Since May, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry and National Agency on Corruption Prevention have been taking steps at the political and diplomatic level, albeit without success, to lift Hungary's blockade of the 8th tranche of the European Peace Facility to finance military assistance to Ukraine.

Active cooperation between the Yermak-McFaul group and the relevant EU institutions with regard to sanctions continued in 2023. In April, the International Special Envoy for the Implementation of EU Sanctions, D. O'Sullivan, visited Ukraine.

The Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform for Ukraine (the EU, G7, international financial institutions) was officially launched in January. As of December, the Platform Steering Committee had had seven meetings. The European Investment Bank's Regional Office for Eastern Europe was opened.

The 8th EU-Ukraine Human Rights Dialogue took place in April to discuss accountability for war crimes, the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression, the creation of a Register of Damage and a Compensation Mechanism. In May, during her visit to Kyiv, EC President U. von der Leyen took part in the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Core Group on the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

Ukraine has also actively engaged the potential of the EU Advisory Mission to document war crimes and implement the Overarching Strategic Plan for the Reform of the Entire Law Enforcement Sector.

The EU is an important partner of Ukraine in the humanitarian demining of the affected areas. A delegation from the European External Action Service, headed by Director P. Wagner, visited Ukraine (October) to assess the practical needs in this area.

In 2023, the development of a new long-term financial instrument of the European Union, the Ukraine Facility, was the main area of cooperation. Both sides focused on updating the real needs and areas of financial support for Ukraine. Ukraine's government team was working on a draft Plan for the Ukraine Facility, an operational document that should offer a vision of how Ukraine should use these resources. The Cabinet of Ministers held extensive consultations with stakeholders, including more than 1,600 members of the business community, more than 100 NGO representatives, and more than 200 representatives of regional and local authorities.

Results

In 2023, the EU provided Ukraine with the largest amount of financial assistance compared to other donors. Concessional funds of EUR 18 billion provided to Ukraine under the Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA+) covered more than 45% of Ukraine's external financing needs.

In October, the European Parliament supported a proposal to establish a EUR 50 billion Ukraine Facility for 2024-2027. The decision in principle to launch the fund was also supported at a meeting of the European Council (December). However, due to Hungary's destructive position, final decisions and approvals were postponed until early 2024.

The EU adopted three sanctions packages (10th, 11th, and 12th) aimed at increasing pressure on Russia's financial, energy, military and industrial sectors, as well as establishing mechanisms to limit sanctions circumvention. However, it has not yet been possible to impose sanctions on the Russian nuclear industry.

When it comes to military support, the EU adopted a positive decision to increase the total budget of the European Peace Facility to EUR 6.7 billion in 2023. The EU Council approved the disbursement of the 7th tranche of EUR 500 million to Ukraine under the EPF (February). However, Hungary has blocked the disbursement of the 8th tranche since May 2023. The EU Council also approved the supply of 1 million 155-mm artillery rounds to Ukraine by March 2024 (March). However, due to various political misunderstandings and a lack of technical

capacity, by the end of 2023, Europe has only been able to provide Ukraine with one-third of the requested amount of ammunition.

In November, the EU Council decided to provide additional funding for the training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces under the EUMAM Ukraine. This support will include the necessary lethal and non-lethal weapons and services to support training. Its funding was increased by EUR 194 million to EUR 255 million. During his visit to Ukraine in February, EU High Representative J. Borrell announced that the EU would allocate EUR 25 million towards humanitarian demining. In view of the increased cooperation between the EU and Ukraine, structural changes took place within the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), in which a separate unit responsible for cooperation with Ukraine was created.

In July, the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine (ICPA) was launched in The Hague on the basis of Eurojust. The EEAS supported the Centre's activities.

In September, the EU Council extended the temporary protection mechanism for Ukrainians until March 2025.

In 2023, the total trade between Ukraine and the EU amounted to USD 56 billion, compared to USD 55.3 billion in 2022. Exports amounted to USD 23.4 billion, and imports to USD 32.6 billion. There was a significant increase in exports and a slight decrease in imports.



NATO

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	4	4
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	4	4
TOTAL SCORE	B+	B+

The results of Ukraine–NATO cooperation in 2023 did not fully meet Ukraine’s expectations or the level of political dialogue. Ukraine proactively communicated its path of NATO integration and common challenges. Activities were taking place on all levels with greater engagement from the MFA compared to previous years. The reformatting of the Ukraine–NATO Commission into the Ukraine–NATO Council and dropping of MAP as a mandatory step towards membership, as well as the launch of the adapted Annual National Program were the biggest accomplishments of 2023.

Political interest/engagement

Throughout 2023, the theme of cooperation with NATO, Ukraine's NATO integration, military support for Ukraine from NATO member-states, and provision of non-lethal support from NATO were constantly on the agenda in Ukraine. By contrast to 2022, political engagement in 2023 was unequivocal and driven by a unified, determined stance regarding the advocacy of Ukraine's NATO integration and strengthening security cooperation with partners.

Political interest in cooperation with NATO essentially consisted of three components, including membership prospects, security commitments and assistance from member-states, and domestic reforms aimed at adjusting to match NATO standards and increase interoperability.

President Zelenskyy mentioned Ukraine's NATO integration at the annual meeting with ambassadors and in his public statements.

Foreign Minister D. Kuleba consistently discussed Ukraine's NATO integration in his speeches and interviews. He focused on the urgency of joint projects in the defence industry and stronger military support, including air defence (following the first foreign ministers' meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Council, 29.11); completion of global security structure reshaping and assurance of European security with Ukraine's membership in NATO (at the Adriatic Charter Ministerial meeting, 28.03), and other points. Overall, the MFA took a more proactive public stance on Ukraine's NATO integration compared to 2022.

MPs were also engaged in communication about NATO membership of Ukraine. These included members of the respective Parliamentary committees and interparliamentary delegation, such as Speaker R. Stefanchuk, MPs Y. Cherniev, S. Bobrovska, I. Klympush-Tsyntsadze, and others.

Strategic communications

Throughout 2023, Ukraine's strategic communications on NATO were more specific compared to 2022 and did not raise any doubts about Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic choice.

In the spring and summer of 2023, Ukraine focused on calling for a clear membership prospect at the Vilnius Summit. Among other things, representatives of Ukraine used the opportunities they had to speak about it in various fora and international media. Examples include *Why NATO Must Admit Ukraine*, an article by Foreign Minister Kuleba for *Foreign Affairs* (25.04). President Zelenskyy and representatives of the President's Office kept up consistent communication of security commitments to Ukraine in interviews for international media and speeches at international security conferences before, during and after the Vilnius Summit. For example, President Zelenskyy discussed this point in his address to the European Political Community Summit in Moldova (June) and at the NATO PA meeting (9.10). At the same time, many partners and media had a negative perception of the emotional tone of the statements during the Vilnius Summit.

Representatives of all segments of government and civil society of Ukraine were engaged in advocating for more military support for Ukraine, including air defence, tanks and airplanes. This was raised at every bilateral meeting or in public events.

MPs from the Permanent Delegation of VRU to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly were proactively advocating for Ukraine's future NATO membership and military assistance. In addition, the VRU asked NATO and NATO PA to expedite Ukraine's accession (10.04).

NGOs and think tanks took on the leading role in advocating for Ukraine's NATO integration in 2023, both domestically and internationally. They conducted numerous advocacy visits and communication campaigns in NATO member-states and on social media.

Activities

President Zelenskyy met with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg in Vilnius (12.07), during Secretary General Stoltenberg's two visits to Kyiv (20.04 and 28.09), and during President Zelenskyy's visit to Brussels (11.10). The two leaders discussed the situation on the battlefield, the needs of Ukrainian defence forces and protection from Russian attacks, and Ukraine's NATO integration.

Ukraine was represented at the highest level at the NATO summit in Vilnius (12-13.07). President Zelenskyy attended NATO meetings and the newly established Ukraine-NATO Council and had a number of bilateral meetings with the leaders of NATO member-states.

Foreign Minister Kuleba met with NATO leaders repeatedly, including during the Ukraine-NATO Commission meeting in Brussels (04.04), where they discussed expedited deliveries of military assistance that had been pledged for Ukraine previously.

Defence Minister O. Reznikov met with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg (17.02) to discuss further steps in the implementation of NATO standards – including the LOGFAS logistic system – defence planning and medical rehabilitation (16.06). Defence Minister R. Umerov met with Secretary General Stoltenberg to discuss the implementation of the Vilnius Summit commitments (14.09) and military assistance for Ukraine (4.12). Apart from that, representatives of Ukraine met with Supreme Allied Commander Europe and military representatives.

O. Stefanishyna, Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, had regular meetings with NATO leadership, including the Secretary-General (14.09), to prepare the Vilnius Summit and implement the revised Annual National Program (ANP)-related tasks identified during the Summit; to discuss the roadmap for Ukraine-NATO interoperability, energy security, and Ukraine's urgent needs.

The Ukraine-NATO Commission met (4.04 and 27.06), focusing on the preparation for offering NATO membership to Ukraine and Ukraine's security and defence reform. Y. Svyrydenko, First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Ukraine, attended the Ukraine-NATO Commission ambassadors' meeting (25.05) to discuss humanitarian demining and Ukraine's economy in wartime.

After Russia's exit from the Grain Deal, President Zelenskyy summoned the first meeting of the new format, the Ukraine-NATO Council (26.07), to discuss Black Sea security and the safety of navigation. In the next Ukraine-NATO Council meeting (4.10), Ukraine presented the priority ANP vectors for 2024. In addition, the Commission had a meeting of defence ministers (12.10) and foreign affairs ministers (29.11), where they discussed steps to increase the production of weapons and ammunition for Ukraine, among other things. Deputy Energy Minister F. Safarov and representatives of Ukraine's State Service of Special

Communications and Information Protection, Air Force of the AFU, UkrEnergo National Energy Company, National Guard, and Ministry of Energy attended the Ukraine-NATO Council ambassadorial meeting focused on energy security and protection of Ukraine's critical infrastructure (8.11).

M. Fedorov, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Transformation, met with D. van Weel, NATO's Assistant Secretary-General for Innovation, Hybrid and Cyber (26.05), to launch the NATO-Ukraine High-Level Innovation Dialogue and to discuss further cooperation on technology and defence innovation.

Numerous meetings took place between the military, including the meetings with the General Staff of the AFU and MoD to discuss cooperation on innovation and engagement of Ukrainian start-ups in joint innovation projects; engagement in Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) (28.04), military education (23.05), and defence planning (20.06). Despite the war, the Ukrainian military continued to participate in important joint exercises, including CWIX annual interoperability exercises (July).

Defence Minister Umerov approved the Concept of Military Personnel Policy of the Defence Ministry by 2028. Among other things, it provides for extended cooperation between universities in Ukraine and NATO member-states.

MPs worked proactively throughout 2023 within the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and in bilateral meetings. The Ukrainian delegation led by First Deputy Speaker of the VRU O. Korniyenko attended the Ukraine-NATO Inter-Parliamentary Council in Brussels (23.01). Following the Council meeting, the statement of its co-chairs was approved. The key provisions of the statement are that NATO PA members remain united in their unconditional condemnation of Russia's violent actions and in unwavering solidarity with the VRU colleagues and support of Ukraine. VRU Speaker met with NATO PA President J. Garriaud-Maylam at the High-Level Meeting of Speakers of Parliaments (2.06) and the new NATO PA President M. Szczerba (23.10 and 24.11).

The Ukraine-NATO Inter-Parliamentary Council took place in Brussels (23.01). It focused particularly on Ukraine's future membership and assistance to help Ukraine resist Russia's aggression. The Ukrainian delegation attended the spring session of NATO PA in Luxembourg (19-22.05), where it had meetings with Assistant Secretary-General M. Geoană and delegations of the UK, Spain, Luxembourg, and Finland, among others.

Results

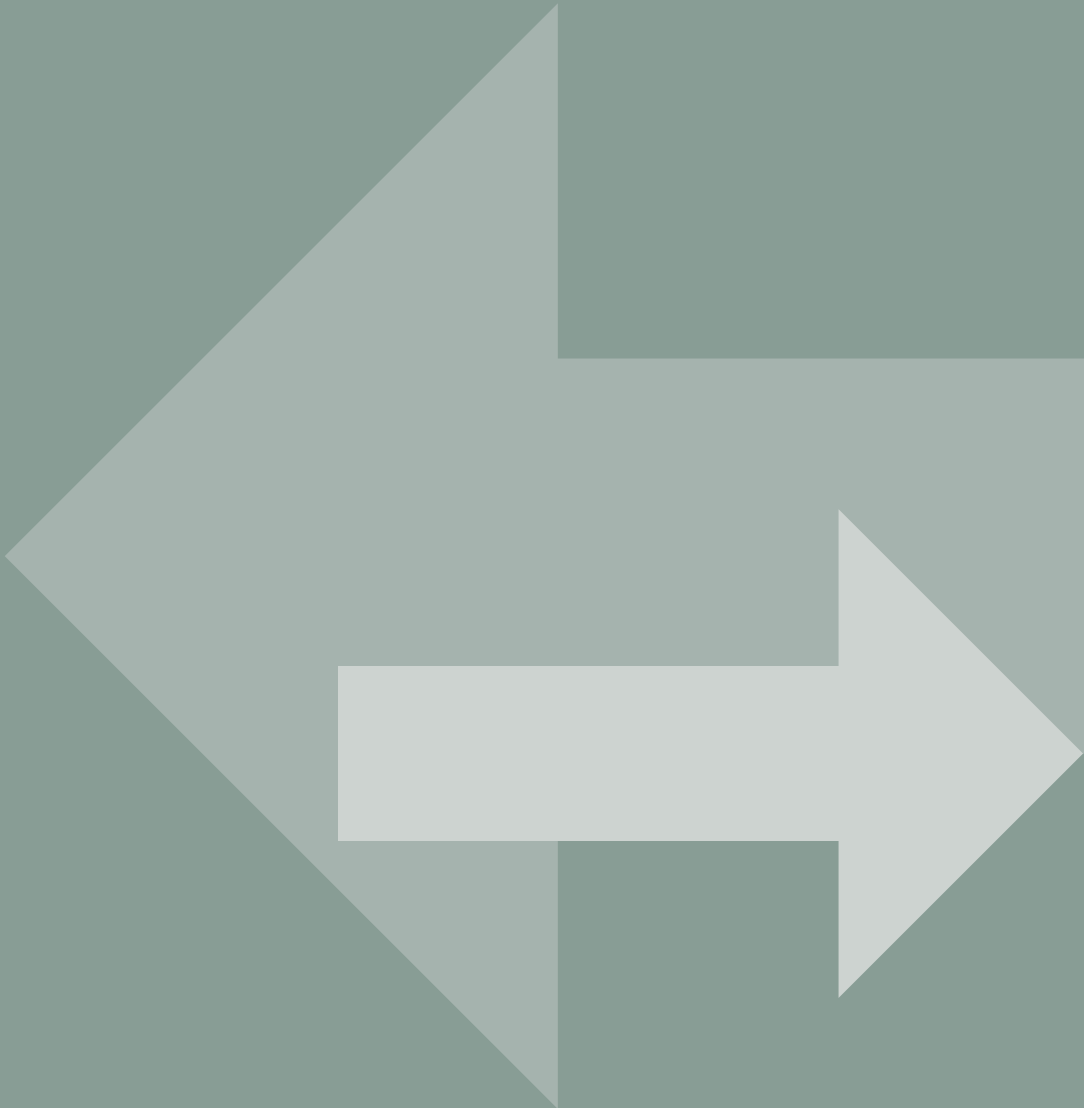
The results of Ukraine-NATO cooperation in 2023 did not fully match Ukraine's expectations or the level of political dialogue. Throughout 2023, NATO members provided comprehensive assistance to Ukraine and were open to political and security dialogue. However, they refrained from more certainty on Ukraine's future membership.

During the Vilnius Summit, the Ukraine–NATO Council was launched as the new format of interaction, and an expanded package of political and practical support for Ukraine was approved. The reshaping of the Ukraine–NATO Commission into the Council was a substantial accomplishment that enabled the unblocking of the work of this joint body. At the summit, the decision was made to drop the MAP as a mandatory document on Ukraine's NATO integration path. At the same time, Ukraine did not succeed in getting clearer phrasing on its future membership at the Vilnius Summit.

At the High-Level Meeting of Speakers of Parliaments (1.06), heads of foreign affairs committees of NATO member-states parliaments approved a statement expressing support for Ukraine's NATO membership, among other things.

In February, Ukraine, the EU and NATO agreed to set up a coordination mechanism between Ukrainian manufacturers and EU and NATO companies to streamline the production of weapons for Ukraine. The NATO–Ukraine High-Level Innovation Dialogue was launched (26.05).

In November, Ukraine presented its adapted Annual National Program for 2024.



BILATERAL RELATIONS

	2022	2023
AUSTRALIA	A	B+
AZERBAIJAN	C-	C-
BRAZIL	-	B
GEORGIA	C	D+
ESTONIA	A	A-
ISRAEL	C-	C
INDIA	C-	C
IRAN	D+	C
CHINA	D+	D+
LATVIA	A	A
LITHUANIA	A	A
MOLDOVA	B-	B+
POLAND	A	B+
ROMANIA	A	A-
SLOVAKIA	A	A
TÜRKIYE	B	B-
HUNGARY	D+	D+
CZECH REPUBLIC	A-	A

Australia

B+

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	4
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	4
RESULTS	5	4
TOTAL SCORE	A	B+

In 2023, Ukraine continued cooperation with Australia, but its nature changed slightly compared to the previous year. While substantial efforts were invested in building a top-level partnership in 2022, the subsequent year saw a decrease in political engagement despite the continued intensity of relations, with active work being predominantly carried out through the Embassy of Ukraine in Australia.

Political interest/engagement

Throughout the year, virtually all key Ukrainian government officials expressed interest in bilateral relations with Australia. These included the President of Ukraine, the Vice Prime Minister for Reintegration, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Economy, and members of the Ukrainian Parliament. Although the President did not specifically mention Australia in conversations with Ukrainian ambassadors, he highlighted the general necessity of developing relations with various countries for the sake of increasing assistance to Ukraine. Following the Vilnius Summit, the President acknowledged Australia's provision of a new package of military assistance.

During the Ukrainian Exporters Summit, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Y. Svyrydenko announced plans to sign a "customs visa-free" agreement with Australia. Despite the plans to sign the agreement in April 2023, the current status of its preparation remains unknown.

Overall, the level of political engagement was lower than in 2022. Contributing factors included the fact that the main state visits and addresses to parliaments happened last year and that Australia is geographically remote, making it more difficult to maintain active contacts compared, for example, to European countries.

Furthermore, the general decline in the role of parliament and its lower activity also affected the intensity of interparliamentary diplomacy.

Strategic communications

The top political leadership's strategic communications concerning Australia remained sporadic, primarily manifesting through media interviews and agreement coverage.

The Ukrainian Ambassador to Australia, however, actively engaged with major local media outlets, keeping the interest in Ukraine high and utilising various platforms for strategic communications. The Embassy also collaborated with universities, think tanks, and associations to promote Ukrainian narratives in Australia.

Activities

In 2023, Ukraine continued its security and economic cooperation with Australia, maintaining a high level of contacts but with a reduced intensity.

A Ukrainian parliamentary delegation representing the Australian Friendship Group visited Canberra (April) for the first time in 30 years. The delegation met the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minister for Trade, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, shadow ministers, members of the Australia-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, and addressed the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

The President of Ukraine met Prime Minister of Australia A. Albanese on the sidelines of the NATO Summit in Vilnius (12.07). They discussed a possible expansion of military support with new types of armoured vehicles and weapons, as well as the need for further sanctions on Russia. Ukrainian Defence Minister R. Umerov had a phone conversation with his Australian counterpart R. Marles (13.11) to discuss the key needs of the Ukrainian army for the winter, including air defence systems, artillery, ammunition, and anti-drone systems.

In November, Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal and Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration I. Vereshchuk met the outgoing Australian Ambassador to Ukraine, B. Edwards, to sum up the bilateral cooperation during his tenure.

Cooperation in security and defence continued, focusing on acquiring Hawkei armoured vehicles and F-18 Hornet fighter jets, the main items requested by Ukraine. Economic cooperation efforts included negotiations to extend the coal supply agreement reached in 2022.

The Embassy of Ukraine in Australia remained active, establishing contacts with government officials, businesses, civil society, and the diaspora. The Embassy played a pivotal role in arranging parliamentary visits, advocating for arms transfers, and twinning agreements with Australian cities. It was extremely active in communication through both traditional media, such as leading Australian periodicals, and social media, highlighting its work and inspiring stronger support for Ukraine on all possible platforms.

Results

Politically, Australia broadened sanctions on Russian individuals and legal entities associated with the war against Ukraine, supported Ukraine's proposal to strip Russia of its veto in the UN Security Council, and joined Ukraine's lawsuit against Russia in the International Court of Justice.

During the year, the Australian cities of Deniliquin, Gladstone and Tea Tree Gully signed agreements with the cities of Melitopol, Lozova and Borodyanka to support Ukraine's reconstruction efforts, cultural exchanges and sharing of expertise.

Military cooperation resulted in Australia providing Ukraine with 120 Bushmaster APCs by the end of the year, as well as so-called "cardboard drones", which Ukraine successfully used on the battlefield, and Slinger anti-drone systems. In addition, Ukraine reached an agreement with Australia to deploy an E-7A Wedgetail aircraft in Germany to protect the supply routes of international aid to Ukraine. As of December 2023, Australia was the largest non-NATO donor to Ukraine. Australia's total aid exceeded USD 616 million, including over USD 494 million allocated towards Ukraine's defence needs.

The extension of the import duty waiver for Ukrainian goods by another year was an important result of economic cooperation. Trade turnover dropped from USD 236 million to USD 97 million in 2023 due to a threefold decrease in Australian imports. Ukrainian exports remained largely unchanged.

In addition, 2023 was a year of achievements in education and science, with 21 Ukrainian researchers receiving AUD 330,000 in support under the Ukraine-Australia Research Fund.



Azerbaijan

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	1	2
ACTIVITIES	3	3
RESULTS	3	3
TOTAL SCORE	C-	C-

In 2023, representatives of the presidential, governmental, and parliamentary branches of power repeatedly expressed gratitude for the strong humanitarian assistance that Azerbaijan continued to provide to Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. Despite active interparliamentary contacts, practical cooperation was minimal. Ukraine failed to change Azerbaijan's position on voting in the UNGA.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, the positive dynamics of bilateral relations at the highest political level continued. During phone conversations between the heads of state, meetings at various levels, and in his evening video address (9.11), President V. Zelenskyy expressed gratitude to the Azerbaijani leadership for the humanitarian assistance provided, particularly to the energy sector ahead of winter.

Yet, the President did not mention Azerbaijan in his speech to the VRU on Constitution Day (28.06) or in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine approved by the CMU (18.04).

The MFA welcomed the steps taken by Azerbaijan and Armenia to normalise bilateral relations, supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both states within their internationally recognised borders, and spoke in favour of a final settlement of the conflict in a peaceful and diplomatic manner (8.12).

During their meetings with Azerbaijani colleagues and diplomats, MPs thanked Azerbaijan for supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and providing continuous humanitarian assistance. During a roundtable discussion at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (31.10) on the 100th anniversary of H. Aliyev, the co-chair of the Ukrainian-Azerbaijani Interparliamentary Friendship Group, V. Koliukh MP noted that due to its successful foreign policy, Azerbaijan is a strategic partner of many countries, especially Ukraine.

Strategic communications

Ukraine did not have a separate communications strategy for Azerbaijan, which was limited to congratulations on national holidays and some references to the strategic nature of bilateral relations. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy sent greetings to President of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev on Azerbaijan's Independence Day (26.05), in which he noted the deep historical roots of relations based on mutual trust, respect and effective cooperation and reaffirmed Ukraine's unwavering support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. V. Zelenskyy also sent a congratulatory letter to I. Aliyev on his birthday (22.12), in which he praised the friendly relations between the two countries and the personal constructive and frank dialogue between the two presidents. He also expressed his belief that the Ukrainian-Azerbaijani strategic cooperation, based on respect and trust, would continue to develop actively for the benefit of the peoples of both countries.

During a working visit to Azerbaijan, a VRU delegation led by the head of the Ukrainian-Azerbaijani Interparliamentary Friendship Group, V. Kreidenko MP, called on Azerbaijan to take a more principled active position with regard to condemning Russia's illegal actions (27.02), in particular in terms of supporting Ukraine's initiatives within international organisations, as Azerbaijan does not vote for Ukrainian resolutions in the UNGA.

Activities

During the year, the busiest activity was at the parliamentary level. During a working visit to Baku (27.02), a delegation of the VRU Group on Interparliamentary Relations with Azerbaijan and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan K. Khalafov discussed ways to deepen bilateral cooperation. The MPs held a series of meetings with the leadership of the Milli Majlis, the Azerbaijani-Ukrainian Interparliamentary Relations Working Group, the MFA, the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport, the State Oil Company (SOCAR), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as with representatives of business and charity organisations.

At the invitation of the VRU, R. Guliyev, the head of the Azerbaijani-Ukrainian Milli Majlis Working Group on Interparliamentary Relations, and members of the group visited Ukraine (18-20.04). As part of the visit, the delegation met Deputy Speakers O. Korniyenko and O. Kondratiuk, members of the VRU Friendship Group with Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis, the Vice-President of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, vice-rectors and professors of the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, members of the Council of Azerbaijanis of Ukraine. The delegation took part in an iftar dinner during the holy month of Ramadan. It also visited the towns of Irpin and Bucha to see the infrastructure destroyed during the war.

At the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments in Dublin, VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk met the Speaker of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan, S. Gafarova, to discuss ways of further cooperation between the parliaments of both countries (29.09). During an official visit to Azerbaijan (17.05), VRU Deputy Speaker O. Kondratiuk met Milli Majlis Speaker S. Gafarova and MPs to discuss further inter-parliamentary cooperation. O. Kondratiuk and Azerbaijani Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population S. Babayev discussed the possibility of Azerbaijan accepting two groups of Ukrainian children for rehabilitation. O. Kondratiuk also met the newly-appointed Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Ukraine (26.07) to discuss further coordination of humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

During a meeting on the side-lines of the European Political Community summit in Moldova (1.06), President V. Zelenskyy discussed the Ukrainian Peace Formula with the President of Azerbaijan and thanked him for consistent support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. V. Zelenskyy once again acknowledged the comprehensive humanitarian assistance provided by Azerbaijan. The two presidents spoke twice (15.02 and 4.10) on the phone, during which V. Zelenskyy thanked Azerbaijan for providing humanitarian aid.

During the trips to London (21.06) and Brussels (11.12), Ukrainian Foreign Minister D. Kuleba met his Azerbaijani counterpart J. Bayramov. The ministers emphasised the importance of friendly and partnership relations between the two countries and discussed prospects for cooperation in various fields, including transport, energy and the humanitarian sector.

During the year, representatives of the ministries mostly met the Azerbaijani Ambassador to Ukraine. Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs B. Drapyaty and

Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Ukraine S. Mardaliyev discussed the supply of a mechanical demining machine to Ukraine (10.08). Acting Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine R. Karandiev met Ambassador S. Mardaliyev (8.12) to discuss cooperation, including the preservation of cultural heritage, development of Ukrainian creative potential and expansion of international cultural cooperation. During a meeting with the Azerbaijani Ambassador (9.10), Minister of Energy of Ukraine G. Galushchenko expressed gratitude to Azerbaijan for its support of the national energy sector.

The Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine, co-chair of the Joint Intergovernmental Ukrainian-Azerbaijani Commission on Economic Cooperation, I. Vereshchuk, met the Azerbaijani Ambassador (13.11) to discuss the prospects for cooperation between the two countries, in particular in economy and trade; humanitarian aid to Ukraine; as well as the progress in rebuilding infrastructure in Irpin and Bucha, which Azerbaijan supported. The parties agreed to hold an online meeting of Ukrainian and Azerbaijani business circles in 2024 to deepen trade and economic ties and a joint meeting of state institutions of the two countries to discuss Azerbaijan's experience of reintegration and restoration of the de-occupied territories. The parties also discussed preparations for the 13th meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Ukrainian-Azerbaijani Commission, which is due to take place in Baku in 2024.

Results

In fact, the results of 2023 boil down to Ukraine receiving various types of aid from Azerbaijan. In January and March, Ukraine received further humanitarian aid from Azerbaijan (45 high-capacity generators worth over USD 450.000 and 13 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies worth USD 360.000). In October, November, and December, three batches of energy equipment, for the purchase and delivery of which the President of Azerbaijan directly allocated USD 7.6 million from the Presidential Reserve Fund, arrived in Ukraine.

In response to Ukraine's request and acting on the instruction of the President of Azerbaijan, the State Oil Company SOCAR sent 20 tonnes of fuel to Ukraine in June as humanitarian aid.

The State Emergency Service of Ukraine reported that Azerbaijan had handed over a Revival P mechanised demining machine to Ukrainian rescuers in accordance with earlier agreements (25.11).

The President of Ukraine announced an agreement with Azerbaijan on a new package of humanitarian support (12.11), which included demining equipment.

In accordance with earlier agreements, two groups of children of Ukrainian military personnel (60 children in total) travelled from Ukraine to Azerbaijan (3.08 and 30.09) to undergo medical rehabilitation.

During a meeting of the Ukrainian-Azerbaijani Joint Commission on International Road Transport, the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine and the Land Transport Agency of Azerbaijan agreed on a quota of permits for international freight transport for 2024 (8.07).

In 2023, trade between Ukraine and Azerbaijan decreased from USD 618 million in 2022 to USD 471.3 million. Ukraine's exports of goods and services to Azerbaijan reached USD 196.3 million, and imports USD 275.1 million.

Azerbaijan did not take part in the vote on the UN General Assembly resolution demanding that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its armed forces from the territory of Ukraine (24.02).

Brazil

B

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	-	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	-	4
ACTIVITIES	-	4
RESULTS	-	3
TOTAL SCORE	-	B

This year, Brazil was the main focus of Ukraine's Latin American policy after Kyiv realised it needed to pay more attention to the region, where Brazil, as a regional leader, could have a say. It was also necessary to reset the strategic partnership, given that the relevant agreement was signed in 2009 by the then-newly elected President of Brazil, L. da Silva. The change of political elites in Brazil gave hope for the resumption of political dialogue between the two countries, which was suspended by the administration of the previous president, J. Bolsonaro, after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion.

Political interest/engagement

Ukraine's top political leadership demonstrated its readiness to strengthen dialogue with Brazil's political elite from the first days of 2023 by sending a Ukrainian delegation to the inauguration of President-elect L. da Silva. Commenting on her visit, the head of the delegation, First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Y. Svirydenko, explicitly stated the need to reset and strengthen the Ukraine-Brazil strategic partnership. At the same time, representatives of the Ukrainian authorities publicly criticised and condemned the Brazilian President's personal vision of ending the war, which was presented in a provocative manner.

Ukraine was interested in Brazil joining the Peace Formula, as the President of Ukraine repeatedly said in his conversations with his Brazilian counterpart (March and September) and in an interview with Brazilian journalists (July). In the summer, V. Zelenskyy expressed hope for a potential opportunity for Brazil to demonstrate its regional leadership by organising a meeting between the leaders of Latin American countries and Ukraine, where the Ukrainian peace plan could be presented, and humanitarian aid and the Grain Initiative could be discussed. There were also hopes that Brazil would join the sanctions against the aggressor. Throughout the year, V. Zelenskyy repeatedly stressed his readiness to visit the country at any time. He insisted that Ukraine would not ask for weapons, understanding Brazil's position on this issue. The aerospace and food industries, electronics, and green energy were mentioned as promising areas for bilateral economic cooperation. Judging by the dynamics of contacts, Brazil was the focus of the Presidential Office's attention, with the main emphasis being on informal ties.

Strategic communications

In contacts with Brazil, it was assumed that the use of soft power instruments could have a noticeable effect when communicating with countries of the Global South, as some representatives of political elites shun publicity because of their long-standing relations with Russia. The head of the OPU, A. Yermak, managed to establish a permanent dialogue with the Special Adviser to the President of Brazil, C. Amorim.

The tools of Ukraine's soft power included the Ukrainian World Congress and the Ukrainian-Brazilian Central Representation, which urged Brazil to boost political and diplomatic support for Ukraine in 2023.

Brazilian (and, more broadly, Latin American) media played an important role in communicating with Brazilian society, conveying truthful information about Russian aggression and calling for support for Ukraine. Throughout the year, the Ukrainian leadership – President V. Zelenskyy, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba, Deputy Foreign Minister and later Ambassador of Ukraine to Brazil A. Melnyk, and the Head of the Office of the President, A. Yermak – gave several interviews to Brazilian and global media that have a Portuguese-language version.

Unfortunately, no direct communication with the Brazilian Congress was organised in the form of a speech (at least by video conference) as it was in Chile and Mexico. However, this can be explained by the formation of a new Congress after the 2022 elections.

Activities

The President of Ukraine repeatedly called on Brazilian President L. da Silva to hold a bilateral meeting and invited him to visit Ukraine. The Ukrainian delegation took part in the inauguration of the newly-elected President of Brazil. Still, the Presidents of Ukraine and Brazil met twice: during a videoconference (March) and on the side-lines of the 78th session of the UNGA (September). Another meeting failed to take place during the G20 summit (May).

The Head of the OPU, A. Yermak, established a stable dialogue and had three telephone conversations with the Adviser to the President of Brazil, C. Amorim (June, July, and October), during which they discussed the Ukrainian Peace Formula. Also, during the Brazilian delegation's visit to Kyiv, C. Amorim met President V. Zelenskyy and senior officials of the MFA and the Office of the President (May).

The ongoing interest in establishing political cooperation with Brazil is evidenced by frequent consultations with the Brazilian Ambassador to Ukraine to develop initiatives to overcome the grain crisis and implement the provisions of the Peace Formula. Brazil took part in all three meetings of national security and foreign policy advisers on the principles of peace in Ukraine and the world, which were held at the initiative of Ukraine in Denmark (June), Saudi Arabia (August), and Malta (October).

The VRU Group for Interparliamentary Relations with Brazil focused on consultations and coordination with the executive authorities (MFA), attempts to establish and maintain a dialogue with the head of the Brazil-Ukraine Friendship Group in the Chamber of Deputies of the Brazilian Congress, continued contacts with the Embassy of Brazil in Ukraine, and communication with Latin American journalists who visited Ukraine, as well as with representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora.

As part of international efforts to support Ukraine in countering Russian aggression, Ukraine's international partners – Germany, Romania, the Netherlands, and Finland – acted as its lobbyists in Brazil in the first half of 2023, with their leaders visiting the country and presenting important initiatives, including those aimed at strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities. The issue of transferring German-made ammunition from Brazilian arsenals to Ukraine was raised during German Chancellor O. Scholz's visit to Brazil (January). VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk met the President of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic (May) to discuss the mechanisms of interparliamentary cooperation used by the Portuguese side in cooperation with Brazil and its readiness to work in support of Ukraine.

Results

The results of 2023 are controversial. Despite repeated invitations from the President of Ukraine, the President of Brazil did not visit Ukraine in person, although he was close by several times during 2023, visiting European countries.

In 2023, Deputy Foreign Minister A. Melnyk was appointed as Ukraine's Ambassador to Brazil. Ukraine has been keen to develop political cooperation, but Brazil has not expressed any intention of taking Ukraine's side in security issues. Attempts to persuade Brazil to provide weapons to Ukraine to repel Russian aggression failed. Although the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine described the consequences of Russia's terrorist act of blowing up the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant during a telephone conversation with C. Amorim, there was no official reaction from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to this act of environmental terrorism.

President L. da Silva personally expressed strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Brazil supported the UN General Assembly resolution on peace on the principles of the UN Charter (February) on the anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion but abstained from voting on the resolution "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol" (December).

The results of economic cooperation remain disappointing. According to the State Customs Service, there was a further drop in trade between the two countries from USD 249.5 million in 2022 to USD 215 million in 2023. A significant negative balance remains. Ukrainian exports are at a minimum level of USD 9.9 million (compared to USD 18.4 million in 2022).

Georgia



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	3	2
ACTIVITIES	3	2
RESULTS	2	2
TOTAL SCORE	C	D+

In 2023, Ukraine continued attempts to improve deteriorating bilateral relations, in particular when it comes to issues of de-occupation and promotion of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Ukrainian diplomacy made efforts to protect national interests in matters of the sanction's regime, etc. To be effective, Ukraine had to take into account the existing domestic political contradictions in Georgian society and manoeuvre between the administration of the President of Georgia and the government.



Political interest/engagement

Throughout 2023, the Office of the President of Ukraine, in coordination with the MFA, supported the official rhetoric of promoting common strategic interests with Georgia. Ukraine's political interest in Georgia was driven by common challenges and threats due to Russia's aggression, the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the two countries, and crises in bilateral relations, particularly when it comes to the fate of former Georgian President M. Saakashvili, and sanctions against Russia. In a statement on the 15th anniversary of Russia's armed aggression against Georgia (7.08), the MFA of Ukraine condemned Russia's military aggression against Georgia and Ukraine, while President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy expressed solidarity with the Georgian people and strong support for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. He also called for the complete de-occupation of Ukrainian and Georgian territories (8.08).

In his speech to the VRU on Constitution Day (28.06), the President mentioned Georgia in the context of further prospects for bilateral relations with the Black Sea countries.

The Cabinet of Ministers' Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) envisaged measures to use the opportunities for closer naval cooperation in the Black Sea with Georgia, among others.

Ukraine has not had an ambassador to Georgia since June 2022.

Strategic communications

Strategic communications targeted two separate audiences: the people of Georgia and its government.

Communication with the government took place mostly in times of crisis and concerned support for Georgia's European course and the Saakashvili case. In spring, bilateral relations were in crisis as a result of the Ukrainian Government's

response to the political confrontation in Georgia, which threatened to disrupt the country's European integration prospects. In a video address (8.03), President V. Zelenskyy supported Georgian protesters in their fight against the law on so-called "foreign agents". The MFA of Ukraine issued a commentary on the events in Tbilisi (8.03), taking into account Georgian President S. Zurabishvili's intention to veto this law, and expressed solidarity with the Georgian people in their desire to continue building a European future and protecting fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to peaceful protest. In response to the accusations by Georgian Prime Minister I. Garibashvili of interfering in Georgia's internal affairs, MFA spokesperson O. Nikolenko said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine categorically rejected the insinuations of the Georgian authorities that Ukraine was preparing a coup in Georgia and stressed that "Ukraine has been and will remain a friend of the Georgian people, whom we wish to continue building a European future" (13.03).

In conditions of a significant deterioration of bilateral relations in 2023 and the absence of the Georgian Ambassador to Ukraine since June 2022, Ukraine focused considerable attention on appealing to the international community over the Saakashvili case. At various levels, Ukraine appealed to representatives of the Georgian authorities and the international community about M. Saakashvili's possible transfer for treatment abroad due to his ailing condition. The MFA of Ukraine protested (2.02) against the inhumane treatment of Ukrainian citizen M. Saakashvili and threats to his life, asking foreign governments and international organisations to publicly defend the Ukrainian citizen whose life is at risk due to political repression by the Georgian authorities. At a press conference with his Austrian counterpart (1.02), President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy showed photos of M. Saakashvili in a Georgian prison, effectively accusing the Georgian authorities of poisoning, torturing, and killing him. He said that the Georgian leadership's actions were proof that Georgia is not neutral in its attitude to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and that it aligns with the aggressor in its treatment of Ukrainian citizens. The President also spoke about this in his daily video address (3.07).

Activities

Throughout the year, tensions in relations with Georgia were fuelled by the Saakashvili factor. The MFA of Ukraine expressed disappointment with the decision of the Tbilisi City Court to reject the motion of Ukrainian citizen M. Saakashvili's defence to postpone or exempt him from punishment due to his grave health condition (7.02). The MFA of Ukraine, on behalf of the President, suggested that Ambassador of Georgia G. Zakarashvili should "return to Tbilisi for consultations to find ways to resolve the current situation" (4.07).

Ukrainian diplomacy used the platforms where it could engage the Georgian side the most in supporting Ukraine's national interests in the face of Russian aggression. The MFA of Ukraine ensured that Georgian President S. Zurabishvili could take part in the Bucha Summit (31.03) by video link. With the assistance of the Embassy of Ukraine in Georgia, representatives of Ukraine's MFA, Parliament and expert community promoted the implementation of the Peace Formula and Black Sea security issues at the annual security conference organised by the Rondeli Foundation (May).

The VRU adopted a resolution "On the Appeal of the VRU to Georgia, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the parliaments of the EU member states on the need to immediately transfer the third President of Georgia (2004-2013), Ukrainian citizen M. Saakashvili for treatment abroad" (6.02). Ukrainian MPs called on the President of Georgia to grant Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights D. Lubinets access to Ukrainian citizen M. Saakashvili and appealed to the parliaments of EU member states over the need to take a humanitarian act and pardon him (14.07).

In a phone conversation with Georgian President S. Zurabishvili (8.11), President V. Zelenskyy congratulated the friendly Georgian people on the European Commission's positive assessment of Georgia's efforts on its path to the EU, thanked the country for its delegate's participation in a meeting

of national security and foreign policy advisers on the implementation of the President's Peace Formula for Ukraine, and raised the issue of Ukrainian citizen M. Saakashvili's access to proper medical treatment. In the next phone conversation with S. Zurabishvili (14.12), the President of Ukraine congratulated the Georgian people on the granting of the EU candidate status to Georgia. In his regular evening video address the same day, President V. Zelenskyy noted that Ukraine supports independent Georgia and sincerely hopes it will restore its territorial integrity.

On the initiative of MP I. Klympush-Tsyntsadze, the VRU Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation registered a "Draft resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the use of Sakartvelo as the historical name of the country of Georgia in Ukraine" (26.05).

Ukraine continues to support Georgia's initiatives in bilateral and international formats aimed at preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity. In particular, Ukraine supported the second UNGA Resolution initiated by Georgia on the "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia" (07.06), the adoption of the CoE Secretary General's report on the conflict in Georgia (19.04), and Georgia's nomination to the UNEP INC Bureau (26.04).

Georgian civil society and business continued to provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine. During a meeting with Ambassador of Georgia to Ukraine G. Zakarashvili (5.01), Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Y. Perebyinis expressed gratitude to the Georgian side for providing generators to the cities of Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, and Hostomel, as well as for health recovery programmes for Ukrainian children in Georgia. However, Perebyinis expressed hope that Georgia would reconsider its position and join the ranks of partners providing Ukraine with weapons and military equipment and that Tbilisi would join all sanctions imposed by the EU against the aggressor state.

The Embassy of Ukraine in Georgia participated in the organisation of various conferences and roundtables on countering Russian aggression, as well as on Ukrainian studies.

Results

In 2023, relations between Ukraine and Georgia continued to degrade. Georgian President S. Zurabishvili's planned visit to Ukraine in August did not happen due to the domestic political crisis in Georgia. The expected appointment of a new Ambassador of Ukraine to Georgia did not take place, and the representation remained at the level of a chargé d'affaires. The Ambassador of Georgia to Ukraine, G. Zakarashvili, left Ukraine in July. Numerous appeals by the Ukrainian side, including at the level of the President, did not bring the desired result in terms of releasing or at least easing the conditions of M. Saakashvili's detention in a Georgian prison. Georgia continued its policy of not joining the sanctions against Russia.

“The draft resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the use of Sakartvelo as the historical name of the country of Georgia in Ukraine”, registered in the VRU (26.05), was included in the agenda of the 10th session of Parliament's ninth convocation. However, it was still being considered by the VRU Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation by the end of 2023.

In 2023, trade between Ukraine and Georgia increased, compared to the previous year, and amounted to USD 374.9 million (USD 353.2 million in 2022). Ukraine's exports of goods and services to Georgia amounted to USD 236.6 million, and imports to USD 138.4 million.

Georgia supported the UNGA resolution demanding that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its armed forces from the territory of Ukraine (24.02).

Estonia



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A-

In 2023, Estonia provided military, humanitarian, economic, and digital support to Ukraine. In addition, Estonia’s support for Ukraine’s membership of the EU and NATO and bringing the aggressor to justice, as well as Estonia’s participation in the group investigating Russia’s crimes against Ukraine, contributed towards winning the war and starting the recovery process. Estonia has also joined and adhered to all political and economic sanctions of the EU against Russia, including personal sanctions.



Political interest/engagement

Estonia is regularly mentioned in Ukraine's political discourse as one of its most active and reliable partners. The priority was Estonia's unwavering position on strengthening sanctions against Russia and bringing the terrorist state to justice for its actions in Ukraine.

Estonia is not mentioned separately in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) or in the main speeches of the President and the MFA. However, Ukraine's leadership has consistently cited cooperation with Estonia and the amount of assistance received as an example for other countries to follow. A new Ambassador of Ukraine to Estonia (M. Kononenko) was appointed in March.

Strategic communications

President V. Zelenskyy and high-ranking Estonian officials have repeatedly called for the establishment of a special tribunal for Russia, urged support for efforts to use frozen assets to rebuild Ukraine, and the IT coalition. In addition, V. Zelenskyy emphasised Estonia's important role in supporting Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO.

Minister of Defence O. Reznikov thanked the Government and people of Estonia, and personally Minister of Defence H. Pevkur, for the largest contribution of military aid to the Ukrainian Armed Forces in proportion to their country's GDP and active participation in meetings of the Ramstein Contact Group. Ukrainian Defence Minister R. Umerov, in turn, expressed his gratitude to Estonia for developing a sustainable long-term strategy for Ukraine's victory.

Activities

The intensity of bilateral dialogue between the countries was high, with the President and Prime Minister of Estonia paying visits to Ukraine. In particular, A. Karis and V. Zelenskyy discussed the possibility of establishing joint defence production in Ukraine, deepening cooperation between business circles, and risk insurance for entrepreneurs. They stressed the importance of further cooperation in the digitalisation of Ukraine (02.06).

Minister of Defence H. Pevkur and V. Zelenskyy discussed the possibility of additional defence assistance mechanisms and Estonia's leading role in launching an IT coalition for Ukraine (the Ramstein 15th meeting in Germany, 19.09).

President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy and Minister of Foreign Affairs D. Kuleba met Estonian Foreign Minister U. Reinsalu on the side-lines of the United for Justice international conference (March). Estonian Foreign Minister U. Reinsalu visited Kyiv twice (21-23.03 and 02.08).

Estonia continues to help Ukraine rebuild the Zhytomyr Region. The Estonian Prime Minister visited the region in April, where she was awarded the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise II class. During the meeting, President V. Zelenskyy thanked K. Kallas for Estonia's decision to transfer all of its 122-mm and 155-mm howitzers (ed. – transferred in January 2023), assistance in the treatment and rehabilitation of Ukrainian soldiers, and support in cybersecurity (24.04). The bridge over the Irsha River, destroyed by a Russian missile on 6 March 2022, was re-opened in Malyn, Zhytomyr Region, with the participation of VRU First Deputy Speaker O. Korniyenko and Estonian Foreign Minister M. Tsahkna (04.10).

Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine I. Zhovkva met Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia K. Sillaste-Elling (16.03), where they noted Estonia's active engagement in the Core Group, which is dealing with the issue of establishing a special tribunal to investigate the crime of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The head of the group for interparliamentary relations with the Republic of Estonia, A. Pushkarenko, visited Estonia (23.02) and addressed the Riigikogu.

Results

Support for Ukraine is one of the foreign policy priorities listed in the coalition agreement of the new government led by K. Kallas (10.04) and approved in the government's Action Plan for 2023-2027 (18.05).

More than 90 members of the Estonian parliament (Riigikogu) issued a joint statement supporting Ukraine's bid to join NATO (12.05). In addition, the Riigikogu adopted a statement in support of the Ukrainian people, condemning Russia's military aggression, supporting the Peace Formula plan proposed by the President of Ukraine, and the establishment of a European Union Centre for the Investigation of Crimes of Russian Aggression in The Hague.

At the end of March, 20 European countries, including Estonia, joined the agreement on the purchase of ammunition for Ukraine, proposing such an approach at the European level. In 2023, Estonia donated a record amount of military aid, including semi-automatic rifles, sniper rifles, optical sights, Javelin systems, anti-tank mines, mortars, grenade launchers, ammunition, personal and special equipment, patrol boats, and thermal imagers.

Estonia is among the countries that have signed a declaration of unwavering support for Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations (including the opening of negotiations with the EU). During a meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, the President of Estonia, along with the leaders of nine Central and Eastern European countries, officially supported Ukraine's membership of NATO (4.05).

During the visit to Ukraine, Estonian Prime Minister K. Kallas and the President of Ukraine signed a Joint Declaration (24.04), which outlined Estonia's priorities in supporting Ukraine in opening negotiations with the EU. Estonia campaigned for Ukraine's membership of NATO on the eve of the Vilnius Summit. In addition, Estonia supported the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the Grain from Ukraine humanitarian programme.

Estonia is the leader of the IT coalition and provides funding for its activities. It is committed to increasing security investments in ammunition production in

the coming years. In addition, based on the results of the Core Group's activities, Estonia will become the first country to introduce a legal mechanism for using Russian assets to rebuild Ukraine.

Estonia has provided military assistance to Ukraine worth almost EUR 500 million, which is more than 1.4% of Estonia's GDP. In cooperation with Germany, Estonia donated two field hospitals and medical equipment worth almost EUR 15 million to Ukraine.

In March, the Government of Estonia allocated EUR 25.4 million to cover the costs of temporarily displaced persons from Ukraine. The funds were distributed among the Ministry of Culture (A1 Estonian language training), the Ministry of Social Affairs (medical and social services) and the Ministry of the Interior (strengthening border surveillance and migration monitoring).

Trade between Ukraine and Estonia totalled USD 220 million in 2023, almost as much as in 2022, but the balance of exports over imports has shifted in favour of Estonia.

Israel



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	3	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	3	3
ACTIVITIES	3	4
RESULTS	2	2
TOTAL SCORE	C-	C

In 2023, Ukraine's foreign policy towards Israel continued to be conditioned by the context of Russia's full-scale aggression and Israel's ambiguous position in this regard (refusal to provide military assistance, artificial obstacles to Ukrainians crossing the Israeli border, and closer cooperation with Russia). There were crisis moments in bilateral relations, but the sides managed to intensify dialogue at the level of the MFAs and parliaments. The humanitarian sector remained a key area of cooperation.

Political interest/engagement

As in the previous year, Ukrainian politicians' attention to Israel in 2023 was shaped by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which was reflected in Kyiv's interest in Israel's deeper involvement in supporting Ukraine at both the international and bilateral levels. Ukrainian Foreign Minister D. Kuleba noted that "there is no objective reason why Israel and Ukraine should not stand side by side today, tomorrow and always" (16.02), thus emphasising the unrealised potential for cooperation. However, Israel was not mentioned in the key foreign policy speeches of the country's leadership.

When it comes to global advocacy, Israel is one of the countries whose support Ukraine would like to enlist for its Peace Formula. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy emphasised this during his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister B. Netanyahu on the side-lines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (September).

Despite Israel's open unwillingness to provide military assistance to Ukraine, Kyiv continues to make efforts to achieve progress in this regard. Getting Israel's military support, in particular the latest air defence systems, remains a priority interest of Ukraine, as stated repeatedly by Foreign Minister D. Kuleba (03.02 in an interview with the BBC Ukraine, 16.02 during the visit of the Israeli Foreign Minister to Ukraine, etc.).

Ukraine actively expressed its position on the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel in October in statements by the MFA, the President, and other representatives of Ukrainian political circles. Ukraine supported Israel's right to self-defence and protection against terrorism but, at the same time, insisted on the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy expressed his readiness to pay a visit of solidarity. However, Ukraine's support for Israel after the Hamas terrorist attack did not affect Israel's ambiguous position on supporting Ukraine.

Given Israel's experience in organising the country's life during the war and its expertise in medical and psychological rehabilitation, Ukraine was interested in continuing cooperation in these areas. In particular, during a telephone conversation with the Speaker of the Knesset (29.06), VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk highlighted Ukraine's interest in expanding the rehabilitation programme for

its military personnel. In addition, Ukraine seeks to adopt Israel's experience in organising civilian security, demining, and to involve Israel in post-war reconstruction.

Strategic communications

Compared to the previous year, the Ukrainian leadership had a lower presence in the Israeli media. Neither the President of Ukraine nor the leaders of the government or parliament gave detailed interviews to the Israeli media or made public speeches to the Israeli audience. There were no organised media campaigns. Diplomatic channels were primarily used to promote the Ukrainian agenda.

However, there were examples of strategic communications. In particular, the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, A. Yermak, held an online meeting with representatives of the Jewish community, Jewish organisations and media (21.06), during which he mentioned the close historical ties between the two countries and called for increased military assistance.

The main goal of the current level of strategic communication was to promote closer cooperation and change Israel's ambiguous position on Russian aggression (refusal to provide military assistance to Ukraine, obstruction of Ukrainian citizens' access to Israel), including by conveying the idea of common security challenges and the link between Russia's aggression and the strengthening of its allies, which pose a threat to the stability of the Middle East and Israel in particular. The President of Ukraine emphasised this during his meeting with representatives of the Knesset during their visit to Ukraine (February). The Ukrainian side organised a visit to Bucha for the Knesset representatives.

There were examples of crisis communications. In particular, in an interview with national media, the Ambassador of Ukraine to Israel explained the widely-circulated story of the Israeli side's refusal to receive the President of Ukraine, who wanted to pay a solidarity visit. Ukraine's diplomatic mission reacted strongly to the Israeli Prime Minister's interview with the Jerusalem Post (22.06), accusing the Israeli government of pro-Russian leanings.

Russian propaganda was behind a fake news story about Ukraine's alleged sale of Western weapons to Hamas, which was aimed at undermining Ukraine's

relations with its partners, including Israel. The Ukrainian MoD denied this fake, explaining that the weapons provided to Ukraine were under control. However, there is no open-source information on how Israel and Ukraine communicated directly on this issue.

Activities

In 2023, Ukraine's foreign policy activity with regard to Israel remained low, partly because Israel was closed to intensifying cooperation. There were almost no top-level contacts during the year. The leaders of Israel and Ukraine had several telephone conversations (07.09, 08.10) and a meeting on the side-lines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (20.09).

The activities were primarily focused on humanitarian interaction, which was reflected in a number of contacts on deepening cooperation in healthcare and rehabilitation. First Lady O. Zelenska visited Israel (18-20.06), where she met the wife of the Prime Minister of Israel, as well as the President of Israel and his wife. Ukraine's First Lady called on Israel to provide smart missile early warning systems in line with its earlier promises. The parties also discussed humanitarian issues, including assistance to children affected by the war and treatment of post-traumatic conditions. Ukraine's Minister of Social Policy, O. Zholnovych, visited Israel (June). Health Minister V. Liashko and his Israeli counterpart worked together to address the termination of free health insurance for Ukrainian refugees.

On the invitation of his Ukrainian counterpart, the Israeli Foreign Minister paid his first visit to Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale invasion (February), during which he met Ukraine's President and Minister of Foreign Affairs and visited Hostomel. At the interparliamentary level, representatives of the Israeli Interparliamentary Friendship Group with Ukraine visited Kyiv (21.02).

Activities were also aimed at resolving the crisis in bilateral relations. In particular, the Embassy, the MFA and the country's top leadership made efforts to resolve the problem of Ukrainian citizens being prevented from entering or deported from Israel in violation of visa-free travel between the two countries. For its part, the Ukrainian side adhered to the agreements reached, which was reflected in the unimpeded visit of Hasidim to Uman to celebrate the Jewish New Year.

Thanks to the effective cooperation between the MFA, the Ukrainian diplomatic mission in Israel, the Office of the President, and the Ukrainian Defence Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate with the leadership of Israel and Egypt, more than 300 Ukrainians could be evacuated from the Gaza Strip, which was critical after the start of the next wave of escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Results

The year 2023 was marked by crises in contacts between the two countries, which Ukraine tried to overcome. Ukraine succeeded in restoring free medical insurance for Ukrainian refugees in Israel. However, the issues concerning difficulties in crossing the Israeli border by Ukrainian citizens and their deportation are still on the agenda.

The absence of the pre-war level of cooperation in key areas of mutual interest affected the results of activities in the abovementioned area. Like last year, Kyiv has failed to engage Israel in introducing sanctions against Russia and providing military assistance to Ukraine. Moreover, Ukraine accused Israel of pro-Russian sentiments, which led to a diplomatic scandal.

Nevertheless, Ukraine continued to receive humanitarian aid from Israel and the two countries engaged in humanitarian cooperation. Israel's NATAL Trauma and Resiliency Centre held six open, free webinars, which were attended by more than 2,000 Ukrainian experts. About 3,000 Ukrainian professionals from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, education, social assistance, critical infrastructure, and other sectors were trained in self-care and first aid skills in crisis situations by the Israel Trauma Coalition, etc. Ukrainians are undergoing rehabilitation in Israel.

According to the Customs Service of Ukraine, in 2023, trade between Ukraine and Israel totalled USD 599.4 million, or 5% lower than last year. Exports amounted to USD 305.5 million, and imports to USD 293.8 million.

India



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	3	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	2	2
ACTIVITIES	3	4
RESULTS	3	3
TOTAL SCORE	C-	C

2023 saw intensified political dialogue between Ukraine and India. Resumed political consultations at the level of ministries of foreign affairs and mutual visits of the ministers of foreign affairs contributed to this. However, this is insufficient to change India’s stance on Russia’s war against Ukraine. Ukraine’s exports to India halved from the pre-war rate. At the same time, Ukraine substantially increased imports of goods from India.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, President Zelenskyy, representatives of the OPU and the MFA mentioned India repeatedly in their comments and speeches. President Zelenskyy mentioned India, along with other countries of the Global South, in the context of their engagement in Ukraine's Peace Formula at his big press conference (24.02) and in the context of developing cooperation, economic relations with global actors, and food security in his address to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Constitution Day (28.06).

VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk said at the Ambassadorial conference (3.08) that he “would be happy to welcome heads of parliaments” of the Global South countries – including India – in Ukraine. The leadership of Ukraine's MFA referred to India in their comments and speeches given its presidency in G20, on top of the Peace Formula theme. Deputy Head of the Presidential Office I. Zhovkva mentioned Ukraine's continued work with India in his interview (21.08), answering the question on India's “drop out” for Ukraine because President Zelenskyy had not been invited to the G20 summit. At the same time, the Action Plan for Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) does not mention India.

O. Polishchuk was appointed Ukraine's Ambassador to India (20.06) after almost a year without a Ukrainian envoy to the country.

Strategic communications

Throughout 2023, Ukraine's strategic communication on India was sporadic and inconsistent. It did not match the level of Ukraine's expectations of building the bilateral dialogue. In her visit to India (10-12.04), Deputy Foreign Minister E. Dzhaparova gave an interview for CNBS-TV18, a major Indian TV channel. Ukraine's Foreign Minister D. Kuleba gave an interview to the Indian Times Now TV channel (31.10). The topics raised by Minister Kuleba included the implementation of Ukraine's Peace Formula. He expressed gratitude for India's humanitarian aid. Head of the OPU, A. Yermak, wrote an op-ed for The Hindu

newspaper (12.04) where he supported Prime Minister Modi in his campaign to reform the UN, among other things.

Times of India published an interview with Ambassador Polishchuk (16.11), and The Print, a digital newspaper, published his interview as well (23.12).

Activities

President Zelenskyy had a meeting with India's Prime Minister Modi on the side-lines of the G7 summit (20.05). He invited India to join Ukraine's Peace Formula, thanked for humanitarian assistance and spoke about Ukraine's needs. Throughout 2023, the Head of the OPU, A. Yermak, had telephone conversations with Ajit Kumar Doval, National Security Advisor to Prime Minister Modi, on a regular basis (February, June, August, October, and November). The key aspect of the conversations was updates on the meetings and events focused on the implementation of President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula.

Deputy Foreign Minister E. Dzhaparova had a two-day visit to India (10-12.04). Following this visit, Ukraine and India agreed to hold foreign policy consultations, resume the work of the governmental Ukraine-India commission on trade, economic, scientific, technical, industrial and cultural cooperation, and increase humanitarian assistance. However, it did not resume its work in 2023. During her visit to India, Deputy Minister Dzhaparova met with Meenakshi Lekhi, India's Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture of India, and handed over the letter from President Zelenskyy for Prime Minister Modi. Also, Deputy Minister Dzhaparova met with S. Verma, Deputy Minister of External Affairs of India. Deputy Minister Verma visited Kyiv (July).

The 9th round of the Ukraine-India political consultations took place for the first time since 2012 (13.07). India's Deputy Minister Verma attended the consultations. The participants discussed various aspects of bilateral cooperation, interaction within international organisations, humanitarian assistance, and post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. During his visit to Kyiv, Deputy Minister Verma met with VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk.

Ambassador Polishchuk met with representatives of Indian businesses (16.09) to discuss mutually beneficial bilateral projects, including the post-war reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. He also met with the Minister of State for Culture Lekhi (16.10). The embassy organised expert meetings on the Peace Formula and participated in expert events with Indian think tanks.

The Embassy of Ukraine to India hosted the ceremony to celebrate the founding of the India-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (26.04).

The first visit of a delegation of Ukrainian experts to India took place (14-16.12). Organised by the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”, it included various meetings with India’s top think tanks and a roundtable.

Results

The export of Ukrainian grain to India was liberalised in 2023 thanks to the fact that Ukraine entered the list of countries that do not use methyl bromide (CH₃Br) containing fumigants to grow crops. India continued to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. New Delhi sent 14 tranches of humanitarian assistance by the end of 2023. Ukraine’s MFA and India-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (24.05) that offers new opportunities to Ukrainian exporters.

India abstained in the voting on the UNGA Resolution “Principles of the Charter of the UN underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine” at the UNGA extraordinary session (23.02).

Overall, trade between Ukraine and India was USD 2.42bn in 2023. Ukraine exported USD 542.8mn worth of goods to India and imported USD 1.88bn from India. The key items were oil and oil products (over USD 900mn) and pharmaceutical products (USD 157.05mn). Sunflower oil was Ukraine’s key export item. The balance of trade changed substantially in 2023 compared to the pre-2022 dynamics. Before 2022, Ukraine’s exports to India were 2-3 times higher than its imports from India. 2022-2023 saw the opposite development.

Before the full-scale invasion, nearly 18,000 students from India studied in Ukrainian universities. In 2023, a small share returned to Ukraine to continue their studies in Western regions. Some are studying online. Just a handful of students from India entered Ukrainian universities in 2023.

Iran



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	1	3
ACTIVITIES	2	3
RESULTS	2	1
TOTAL SCORE	D+	C

In 2023, relations between Ukraine and Iran were in a state of crisis, which continues to deepen. Ukraine is curtailing trade, economic, and financial ties with Iran. Diplomatic relations may still be cut in the event of the use of Iranian ballistic missiles. The revision of the legal framework with Iran and the introduction of sanctions by Ukraine signal the seriousness of Kyiv's intentions to ensure international legal responsibility of all countries that, in one form or another, contribute to Russia's genocidal war against Ukraine.



Political interest/engagement

During the reporting year, political interest in Iran remained high, staying in the focus of the President of Ukraine, individual representatives of the Office of the President, the NSDC Secretary, the MFA, the Air Force of the AFU, the Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine's MoD, the VRU, the PGO, etc.

At the same time, representatives of the security and defence sector publicly stated that they were taking appropriate measures together with their partners to prevent Iran from transferring ballistic missiles to Russia. The framing of Iran as part of a new “axis of evil”, “an accomplice of the terrorist state of Russia”, and “a terrorist regime” by Ukrainian political actors indicates the existence of a domestic consensus on the perception of Iran as a serious threat to Ukraine's national security.

Expert interest in the country has focused mainly on various aspects of cooperation with Russia, as well as on Iran's role in fuelling instability in the Middle East through proxies (especially after the terrorist attack on Israel on 07.10) and support for Yemen's Ansar Allah (Houthis) movement.

Strategic communications

Strategic communications with the Iranian audience took place at all levels but through third countries and the media. In an interview with the Arab TV channel Akhbar Al Aan, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba said that Iran's supply of missiles to Russia would be a “red line” (05.01). The minister repeatedly stressed that any assistance to Russia is the destruction of the world order based on the principles of the UN Charter. The decision to sever diplomatic relations with Iran depends on its further behaviour. On the third anniversary of the PS752 tragedy, Ukraine's Special Representative for the Middle East and Africa, M. Subkh, published his first article in Farsi, in which he noted Ukraine's determination to seek justice (Radio Farda, the Iranian service of Radio Liberty, 19.01). In a commentary for Radio Farda on the anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, M. Subkh called on Iran to stop cooperating with the Russian regime in the war against Ukraine (23.02).

President of Ukraine V. Zelensky delivered a symbolic address to the Iranian people (24.05), which was translated into Farsi and distributed by the Persian-

language services of Western broadcasters (the British BBC, German DW, French Euronews and RFI, Czech Radio Farda, etc.), and discussed on the air of the British Iran International. The address might be the only successful case of communication with the target audience.

Parliamentary communication is limited to the efforts of the head of the parliamentary committee, O. Merezhko, who communicated with the BBC Persian audience (30.05, 27.12) and explained Ukraine's sanctions against Iran on the air of Radio Farda (07.06).

Although communication efforts with regard to Iran are complicated due to a number of factors that Ukraine has not yet been able to overcome, Ukrainian officials also tried to use various media platforms to deliver messages to the Iranian audience (Iranian diaspora) through third countries.

Activities

Ukraine has substantially adjusted its foreign policy towards Iran and taken a number of legal steps in the national legislative field. In particular, the Verkhovna Rada approved the decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine to impose sectoral special economic and other restrictive measures (sanctions) against Iran (27.05). The sanctions were imposed for a period of 50 years.

The legal framework of bilateral relations was revised. The VRU terminated the Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and Property (23.08).

Having exhausted all options of diplomatic settlement, this year, Ukraine filed a joint lawsuit with the ICJ against Iran for violation of the 1971 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, seeking justice in the case of PS752 (05.07). Ukraine also aligned with the EU sanctions against Iran over its transfer of locally designed and manufactured UAV technology.

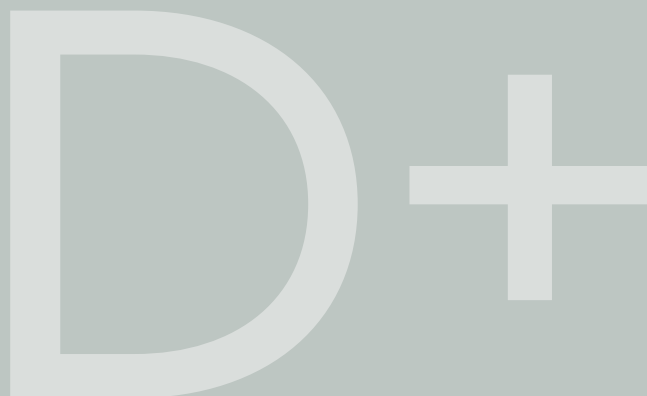
Since the recall of Ukraine's ambassador in 2022, diplomatic representation has been limited to the level of charge d'affaires. The post of ambassador to Iran was put up for open competition in March 2023 but has remained vacant.

Results

Iran remained a challenge for Ukrainian diplomacy. The Iranian authorities deny assisting the aggressor state, trying to manipulate the opinion of the international community. The way the Iranian delegation has voted on UN resolutions important for Ukraine does not indicate any potential change of its position. The Iranian delegation abstained from voting on the UNGA resolutions “Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine” (23.02) and “Cooperation between the UN and the Council of Europe” (26.04). It voted against the UNGA resolution “Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol” (19.12).

Economic relations significantly declined over the year. According to the State Customs Service of Ukraine, trade between the two countries in 2023 amounted to USD 20.4 million, compared to USD 267 million in 2022 and USD 723.7 million in 2021. Meanwhile, exports amounted to about USD 1.7 million and imports to about USD 18.7 million. The trade deficit for Ukraine reached about USD 17 million for the first time in recent years. Ukraine mainly exported agricultural products and foodstuffs.

China



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	2	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	2	1
ACTIVITIES	2	3
RESULTS	2	3
TOTAL SCORE	D+	D+

Ukraine’s relations with China intensified in 2023, given China’s diplomatic efforts to promote its peace proposal. However, this did not bring about a change in China’s stance on Russia’s aggression to Ukraine or practical help on the path to ending the war. Ukraine worked to engage China in supporting its Peace Formula and tried to maintain dialogue with Beijing by boosting trade and economic cooperation. China became the key trade partner for Ukraine, with a substantial negative trade balance in favour of China.



Political interest/engagement

Ukraine's political interest in China increased at the beginning of 2023, driven by China's intensified diplomatic effort to end Russia's war against Ukraine. Among other things, Ukraine commented on China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis (February). In his press conference for Ukrainian and international media (February), President Zelenskyy stressed that China's interest in ending the war is important, but he would like to have more details on the steps proposed for a peaceful settlement. President Zelenskyy highlighted the importance of taking into account respect for territorial integrity in Beijing's peace initiative. At the same time, he highlighted that if the principle of territorial integrity did not include the withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine, this did not meet Ukraine's interests.

In his public speeches and interviews, President Zelenskyy said repeatedly that he would like to meet with the leader of China.

At the discussion panel of the 18th Yalta European Strategy (8.09), President Zelenskyy reiterated the importance of engaging China in the Peace Formula and highlighted the significance of China's message about the inacceptability of nuclear intimidation by the Russian Federation. The Head of the President's Office, A. Yermak, admitted that communication with China was "not easy" and highlighted the importance of a personal meeting between President Zelenskyy and the leader of China.

China was mentioned in the Action Plan for Implementation of Ukraine's Foreign Policy Strategy (18.04) in the context of signing memoranda on industrial cooperation using high-tech developments and space exploration cooperation.

China appointed its ambassador to Ukraine (April) after two years of not having one.

Strategic communications

Ukraine's strategic communication on China was very limited. As Ukraine's Ambassador to China, P. Riabikin, said in the first interview following his appointment (24.11, Glavcom), the media space in China was strongly regulated

and controlled and leaned towards the Russian perspective of war against Ukraine. Ukraine tried to draw Beijing's attention to Russia's targeted and consistent shelling of the Ukrainian port infrastructure and grain storage facilities used to export agricultural products. For example, President Zelenskyy pointed out that one shelling damaged the port terminal, which had 60,000 tons of agricultural products stored to be delivered to China. China's General Consulate in Odesa was damaged (20.07). However, Beijing maintained its distancing position and did not condemn Russia's actions.

In an effort to counter Russia's propaganda and disinformation, Ukraine's Embassy implemented a number of projects aimed at spreading objective information about developments in Ukraine in China. This helped increase the following of the Embassy's account on Weibo, the Chinese microblogging platform, and increase the views of its content substantially. Thanks to its Weibo account, Ukraine's Embassy was able to convey information to a wider audience in China. Embassies of partner countries in Beijing help Ukraine's Embassy prepare and spread Chinese-language content. However, this is not sufficient for efficient communication.

Activities

Compared to 2022, the Ukraine-China dialogue intensified. However, it did not meet the expectations of Ukrainian leadership compared to the efforts it invested in engaging China to support and push it to play a constructive role in ending the war.

President Zelenskyy and Chinese leader Xi Jinping had the first telephone conversation since Russia's full-scale invasion (26.04). They discussed the need to restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within the 1991 borders and the importance of compliance with the UN Charter, the return of deported Ukrainian children from Russia, the release of prisoners, and keeping the Black Sea Grain Deal working. President Zelenskyy described Ukraine's Peace Formula and expressed hope that China would engage proactively in the effort to restore peace. Following the telephone conversation, Li Hui, the Chinese government's special envoy for Eurasia, visited Kyiv (16-17.05) to meet with President Zelenskyy and attend the briefing on the current security situation in Ukraine with Head

of the President's Office A. Yermak, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba, Head of MoD Main Intelligence Directorate K. Budanov, Ombudsman D. Lubinets, Vice Prime Minister for Ukraine Reconstruction and Minister of Development of Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure O. Kubrakov, and Energy Minister H. Halushchenko.

Foreign Minister Kuleba had a meeting with Wang Yi, Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, on the side-lines of the Munich Security Conference (19.02). The parties agreed in the meeting that the fundamental principle of territorial integrity, as recorded in the UN Charter, was sacred for both countries.

T. Kachka, Deputy Minister of Economy, was the first Ukrainian official to visit China since 2019 (20.07). In his meeting with Vice Minister for Trade Ling Ji, they discussed trade and economic cooperation, including the expansion of Ukrainian agricultural exports to China. Despite the intense cooperation between China and Russia, Ukraine tried to intensify its economic cooperation with China. Among other things, T. Kachka attended the 7th meeting of the Ukrainian-Chinese sub-commission on trade and economic cooperation during his visit to Beijing.

VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Ukraine (17.03). He pointed out that Ukraine was interested in maintaining top-level relations between the two countries, including strengthening and deepening parliamentary relations and continuing dialogue between parliamentary committees for foreign affairs and parliamentary groups of friendship.

In the second half of 2023, China decreased its diplomatic efforts, given the lack of support for its "peace proposal" from the stakeholders. By contrast, the Ukrainian leadership's efforts focused on engaging Beijing in supporting Ukraine's Peace Formula increased. The representatives of China attended the meeting in Jeddah but ignored the meeting in Malta.

P. Riabikin, Ukraine's newly appointed Ambassador to China, had a number of meetings with China's MFA and Ministry of Commerce and spoke with the Chinese government's special envoy for Eurasia, Li Hui.

Results

Despite the intensification of dialogue with Kyiv, China substantially ramped up its political dialogue and trade cooperation with Russia and never joined the international anti-Russia sanctions. Analysis by the International Working Group on Russian Sanctions showed that China is the key supplier of critical components for Russian drones, accounting for 67% of deliveries, including 17% through Hong Kong. Also, Chinese businesses continue to work proactively in Russia. Ukraine's National Agency on Corruption Prevention included a number of Chinese companies in the list of international sponsors of the war. These include Xiaomi Corporation, China State Construction Engineering Corporation, China National Offshore Oil Corporation, China Petrochemical Corporation, China National Petroleum Corporation, Alibaba Group Holding Limited, Shandong Odes and others.

China abstained in the vote on the UNGA resolution on the "Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" (23.02) and voted against the resolution on the "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine" (19.12).

In 2023, trade between Ukraine and China amounted to USD 12.8bn, up from USD 11.14bn in 2022. Out of this, Ukraine's imports from China amounted to USD 10.4bn and exported USD 2.4bn worth of goods to China. China remains the key buyer of Ukrainian grain and other cereals. According to Ukraine's Infrastructure Ministry, Ukraine exported 15 million tons of cereals – of these, 33% headed to China – since the opening of the temporary grain corridor in August 2023. The key items imported from China were electric machinery, equipment and components; TV and audio equipment; nuclear reactors; boilers; ground vehicles; plastics and polymers; ferrous metal products; various chemical products, etc.

Latvia



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

Russia's armed aggression has proven Latvia to be a steadfast and reliable partner of Ukraine. Thanks to political, economic, financial, social, defence and humanitarian cooperation, Ukraine was able to strengthen its dialogue with the EU and NATO, taking into account the statements made on the eve of the NATO Vilnius Summit and the opening of negotiations with the EU. Latvia became a founding member of the drone coalition and will work with Ukraine to establish a special tribunal to prosecute Russia for crimes of aggression.

Political interest/engagement

Latvia is regularly mentioned in Ukraine's political discourse as one of its most active and reliable partners. In particular, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba said that Latvia was one of the first countries to address Ukraine's military needs, including by actively contributing to the supply of ammunition and coordinating the drone coalition.

At the parliamentary level, Deputy Speaker O. Kondratiuk noted Latvia's special role in supporting Ukraine and the initiative to create an international centre for the return of children deported by Russia from Ukraine.

Strategic communications

In 2023, President V. Zelenskyy repeatedly mentioned Latvia in his addresses and during bilateral press conferences held in Kyiv and Lviv on the occasion of the launch of the United for Justice conferences (Lviv, 03-04.03) and during the visit of the President of Latvia to Ukraine (24.11). Latvia recognised Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism, and this recognition is the foundation of Latvia's principled support for joint European sanctions, for which V. Zelenskyy thanked his Latvian counterpart E. Rinkēvičs during their meeting.

VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk, along with his colleagues from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland, called on the international community to provide political support for Ukraine in NATO (9-10.07).

Activities

President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy held several meetings with President of Latvia E. Rinkēvičs (11.01 and 24.11) to discuss, among other things, the sustainable supply and production of shells and weapons for the defence forces and Latvia's support in the fight against Russian aggression, Latvia's participation in the reconstruction of Ukraine, in particular Chernihiv Region, and demining. During the November meeting, the presidents also discussed efforts to implement the Peace Formula.

During the meeting in December, Ukrainian Defence Minister R. Umerov and his Latvian counterpart A. Sprūds discussed the initiative to create a drone coalition. According to the Latvian Defence Minister, this would help the Ukrainian military in the war, where the use of drones has become an important element of combat operations. Latvia also took part in the Defence Industries Forum (30.09).

Foreign Minister D. Kuleba met Latvian Foreign Minister K. Kariņš (11.12) in Riga. The parties focused on the opening of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU and Ukraine's military needs, including ammunition and FPV drones.

During the visit of the Latvian State Border Guard delegation to Kyiv (28.11), the Cabinet of Ministers and the Latvian Government signed the Implementation Protocol to the EU-Ukraine Agreement on the Readmission of Persons.

The Intergovernmental Ukrainian-Latvian Commission on Economic, Industrial, Scientific and Technical Cooperation held its 9th meeting (23.03) to discuss priorities for cooperation in the areas of security and defence, energy, transport and logistics.

VRU Deputy Speaker O. Kondratiuk visited Riga and met Latvian Foreign Minister K. Kariņš (13.12). During the meeting, Ukrainian officials raised the topical issues of bilateral cooperation, including Latvia's commitment to continue the training and rehabilitation of the Ukrainian military next year, as well as the reconstruction of the Chernihiv Region.

First Lady of Ukraine O. Zelenska and First Lady of Latvia A. Levite visited the Ukrainian Catholic University and a perinatal centre in Lviv (04.03).

Results

Latvia supports Ukraine by providing military, financial, and humanitarian assistance and within the framework of international organisations. Latvia is one of the three largest donors of military aid to Ukraine by percentage of GDP. In 2023, Latvia allocated EUR 5.1 million for the reconstruction of Ukraine, of which projects worth EUR 3.1 million were implemented by the MFA. Latvia continues to be involved in Ukraine's recovery efforts, with a specific focus on Chernihiv Region. In particular, a EUR 2 million agreement was signed with the UNDP to restore social infrastructure in the region. To overcome the consequences of the tragedy in Kakhovka, the Latvian Government agreed to provide approximately EUR 430,000 in additional humanitarian aid to Ukraine (13.06).

Latvia became one of the first EU countries to sign a Joint Declaration with Ukraine, which confirms Latvia's support for Ukraine's full European and Euro-Atlantic integration (03.03). Alongside the implementation of projects to overcome the consequences of the war, projects to support Ukraine's European integration continued, with the Latvian MFA allocating more than EUR 500,000 for this purpose.

A decision was made to establish a drone and electronic warfare coalition to be joined by allied countries (December).

Latvia helped Ukraine host the United for Justice conference in Lviv and became a strong supporter of Ukraine's efforts to bring those responsible for crimes of Russian aggression to justice (03.03).

Latvia's assistance was aimed at meeting Ukraine's urgent needs for reconstruction, support for Ukrainian media, health and psychological rehabilitation programmes, good governance, business and education. In addition, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, 240 Ukrainian soldiers have been treated and rehabilitated in hospitals and rehabilitation centres in Riga.

The Latvian State Revenue Service reported that as of the end of December, the country had transferred 271 confiscated cars to Ukraine worth EUR 903,000. In addition, the Latvian Saeima gave the first reading to amendments to the Law on Road Traffic, which would ban Russian-registered vehicles from entering the country, and adopted a number of amendments to the law on support for Ukrainian civilians.

Latvian civil society, entrepreneurs and the non-governmental sector continue to actively support Ukraine by providing humanitarian and military assistance. The Ziedot.lv charity fund received donations worth over EUR 23.7 million, which were directed to meet the needs of Ukraine's defence sector, medical institutions, and Ukrainian refugees in Latvia.

In addition, First Lady A. Levite became a patron of Ukrainian young mothers and babies born in her country, and the Latvian Parliament adopted a special statement condemning the forced deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia and Belarus and initiated the creation of an international centre for the return of such children to Ukraine.

Trade between Ukraine and Latvia increased in 2023 and totalled USD 614.9 million, compared to USD 533.8 million in 2022, mainly due to an increase in Ukrainian exports.

Lithuania



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

In 2023, bilateral relations between Ukraine and Lithuania reached a new level of efficiency, demonstrating the strength of the strategic partnership. Joint initiatives in defence, energy, culture and education not only underscored mutual commitment to the values of freedom and democracy but also played a key role in strengthening Ukraine’s position on the path to European integration and post-conflict recovery.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Ukraine's bilateral relations with Lithuania remained efficient, consistent and friendly. President V. Zelenskyy repeatedly expressed his gratitude to the government and people of Lithuania in his speeches and video messages. In April, he addressed the Lithuanian parliament, stressing the need to punish Russia for its war crimes against the people of Ukraine and impose new sanctions, in particular against Russian energy supplies. During the Lublin Triangle summit (January), the President thanked Lithuania for its military assistance, including the transfer of anti-aircraft systems.

Lithuania's unwavering support for Ukraine covered political, military, economic and humanitarian dimensions. Prime Minister D. Shmyhal emphasised Lithuania's significant military support following talks with his Lithuanian counterpart I. Šimonytė (November). Defence Minister R. Umerov expressed gratitude to his Lithuanian colleagues for their willingness to support Ukraine in the fight against corruption and share their specialists and expertise (November). Various political actors noted Vilnius's role in the implementation of the Ukrainian Peace Formula.

Lithuania is mentioned in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) in the context of the Lublin Triangle and strengthening cooperation within the framework of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade.

Important activity was observed in cultural diplomacy. The First Lady of Ukraine, O. Zelenska, played an important role in this. Her efforts helped to significantly increase the number of opportunities for Ukrainian and Lithuanian youth, as well as to develop cultural and educational spaces for the needs of Ukrainian displaced persons, etc.

Strategic communications

In 2023, Ukraine's strategic communications with Lithuania were marked by a number of symbolic interactions. These included V. Zelenskyy's address to the Lithuanian people in Vilnius (July), where he expressed gratitude to Lithuania for its support during the Russian invasion, as well as the President's participation in notable events, such as the "Raise the Flag of Ukraine in NATO" campaign (July). V. Zelenskyy spoke at a solemn session of the Seimas of Lithuania on Defenders of Freedom Day (January) and stressed that Lithuania "has been and remains one of the sincerest defenders of freedom". The designation of Vilnius as a "Saviour City" and the awarding of V. Zelenskyy with the 2022 Lithuanian Freedom Prize, which was unanimously supported by Lithuanian lawmakers, further strengthened ties between the two countries (January).

Notable events included the Lithuanian President G. Nausėda accompanying V. Zelenskyy to St Sofia Square on Ukraine's Independence Day (24.08), as well as his participation in the 3rd Summit of the International Crimea Platform.

The Ukrainian Peace Formula continues to be one of the cornerstones of strategic communications between Lithuania and Ukraine. An international forum held in Kaunas (24.02) provided a platform for discussing the Peace Formula with a focus on energy security and restoring justice. The forum not only highlighted Lithuania's role in these sectors but also reaffirmed the mutual commitment to finding lasting peace.

Ukrainian MPs also made an important contribution. During a working visit to Lithuania, VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk expressed his gratitude for the support provided by the country (June). In addition, a parliamentary delegation that visited Lithuania (September) called on its Lithuanian counterparts to continue supplying weapons to the Ukrainian army and initiated further discussions on support for Ukraine on its path to the EU and NATO.

Activities

The exchanges between Ukraine and Lithuania in 2023, including numerous visits by the President, Ukrainian MPs, the VRU Speaker and the Minister of Defence, demonstrated a comprehensive approach to strengthening bilateral relations.

The President visited Lithuania to take part in the NATO Summit (July) and met Lithuanian President G. Nausėda, who came to Kyiv in August for the Third Summit of the International Crimea Platform.

The visit of the Ukrainian parliamentary delegation to Vilnius (September) provided an opportunity to discuss Lithuanian support for Ukraine in various areas, including defence and energy. In addition, while in Lithuania, R. Stefanchuk discussed Ukraine's accession to NATO and the EU, as well as the need to continue support in countering Russian aggression. The VRU Committee on State Building, Local Governance, Regional and Urban Development and the Seimas Committee on State Administration and Local Authorities held a joint online meeting (June). They discussed prospects for cooperation in urban development.

The focus on improving transport routes, especially through the port of Klaipėda, reflected a strategic move to strengthen economic and logistical ties. During a meeting (August), Ukrainian Railways CEO Y. Liashchenko and Lithuanian Railways CEO E. Lazauskas discussed the organisation of an alternative route for the delivery of Ukrainian agricultural products and rolled metal to Baltic seaports, as well as for energy imports to Ukraine.

Results

In 2023, Ukraine and Lithuania signed a number of important agreements on cooperation in various sectors, attesting to the further strengthening of bilateral relations.

The establishment of the Ukrainian-Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania shows that both countries are inclined to develop economic ties. The MFA of Ukraine and the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists signed the Memorandum of Understanding. Agreements on the distribution of Ukrainian

products in the Baltic region open up new export opportunities for Ukraine. In addition, Lithuania's allocation of funds under the Grain from Ukraine initiative and an agreement on a transit corridor for Ukrainian grain to Baltic ports have further strengthened economic cooperation.

Military support was also significant. Lithuania donated a powerful auto-transformer to Ukraine, capable of supplying electricity to a large number of households. In addition, Lithuania's nationwide fundraising campaign for tactical radars demonstrated popular solidarity in support of Ukraine's defence.

Cultural and educational initiatives, such as the establishment of the Ukrainian Centre in Alytus under the patronage of the first ladies of both countries (April), have played a significant role in promoting community ties and cultural exchange. These events, among other things, contributed to the preservation of an active Ukrainian community in Lithuania.

Trade between the two countries totalled USD 1.91 billion in 2023, compared to USD 1.99 billion in 2022.

Moldova

B+

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	3	3
ACTIVITIES	4	5
RESULTS	4	4
TOTAL SCORE	B-	B+

The granting of EU candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, along with the decision to open EU membership negotiations, became an additional trigger for bilateral contacts between the two countries. The Year of Ukrainian Culture in Moldova created additional opportunities for strategic communications. Considerable attention was paid to simplifying and speeding up the crossing of shared borders and infrastructure projects.

Political interest/engagement

The high frequency of contacts between the two countries top-level officials attested to political engagement by the President, the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet of Ministers. In his opening speech at the Black Sea Security Conference of the International Crimea Platform (13.04), Ukraine's Foreign Minister D. Kuleba noted that while Russia is using its entire hybrid arsenal to destabilise Moldova, Ukraine welcomed the leadership of President M. Sandu and reaffirmed its strong commitment to support Moldova and work together to thwart any attempts by Moscow to sow chaos and instability in the region.

Strategic communications

The Year of Ukrainian Culture in Moldova in 2023 created a favourable backdrop for strategic communications. It featured various exhibitions, festivals, and performances by academic theatres. Ukraine's Ambassador to Moldova, M. Shevchenko, took part in the Year of Ukrainian Culture events and spoke to Moldovan media. Despite the high-level contacts and active political dialogue between the two countries, Moldova did not hold a central place in Ukraine's communication strategies or active media communication at the level of the state leaders.

Activities

President of Moldova, M. Sandu, visited Kyiv on the 10th anniversary of the Revolution of Dignity (21.11). Together with President V. Zelenskyy, she paid tribute to those killed during the Revolution of Dignity and issued a statement in which she noted that Kyiv symbolised resilience and hope. M. Sandu pointed out that the Ukrainian people defended the independence of not only Ukraine but also Moldova. Therefore, Moldova would stand firmly behind Ukraine, accept Ukrainian citizens, and invest in resilience and solidarity.

Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal and Prime Minister of Moldova D. Recean held their first online conversation (24.02). They discussed security issues in the region, EU integration, joint cross-border cooperation projects, and support for Ukraine in the wake of Russia's full-scale aggression. The head of the Ukrainian government also noted that Ukraine supported Moldova's position on the need for Russian troops to withdraw from the Transnistrian region and thanked the people of Moldova and its political leadership for helping Ukraine during Russia's full-scale aggression, in particular for sheltering Ukrainian refugees.

Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine I. Klymenko had a telephone conversation with his Moldovan counterpart A. Revenco (24.02), during which they discussed the current situation and measures taken by the Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities at the state border. They agreed to support cooperation between the units of the National Police of Ukraine and the Border Police of Moldova.

Ukraine's Energy Minister G. Galushchenko met his Moldovan counterpart V. Parlicov on the side-lines of the Partnership for Transatlantic Energy and Climate Cooperation forum in Zagreb (02.03) to coordinate efforts in strengthening Europe's energy security, electricity market and the potential for Ukrainian electricity exports.

Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine M. Solskyi met Moldova's Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry V. Bola in Chisinau (06.05) amid Moldova's declared intentions to follow suit of some EU countries and temporarily take measures with regard to imports of grains and oilseeds from Ukraine. M. Solskyi expressed disagreement with Moldova's decision, saying that it was taken on unclear grounds since Ukraine does not export these crops to Moldova. The two ministers discussed steps aimed at boosting the volume of Ukrainian products transported by the Moldovan railway, including by reducing the relevant tariff.

The heads of the border guard agencies of Ukraine and Moldova discussed cooperation in the context of European integration (24.07). They exchanged information on the situation along the common section of the state border, paying attention to the detection of smuggling schemes and the prevention of illegal border crossings.

The co-chairs of the Intergovernmental Ukrainian-Moldovan Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, Vice Prime Minister and Minister for

Reintegration of the TOT I. Vereshchuk and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova O. Serebrian met in Odesa (29.09). They discussed cooperation in the energy and infrastructure, border and customs sectors, as well as prospects for European integration of Ukraine and Moldova.

The Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development launched talks with Moldova and Romania (25.10) on creating a “green corridor” between Reni (Ukraine) - Giurgiulesti (Moldova) - Galati (Romania) border crossing points to speed up the movement of goods and exports of Ukrainian agricultural products. Ukraine’s Deputy Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development, S. Derkach, Moldova’s State Secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, M. Pascaluta, and Romania’s State Secretary of Transport and Infrastructure, I. Scriosteanu, took part in the negotiations.

Following a meeting of the Ukrainian-Moldovan Mixed Commission on International Road Transport (13-14.09), the sides signed a protocol registering their decision to extend the Agreement on the Liberalisation of Freight Transport. Additional agreements to simplify and speed up the crossing of the Ukrainian-Moldovan border by individuals and freight were reached during an online meeting between Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal and Prime Minister of Moldova D. Recean (21.12).

Head of the State Migration Service of Ukraine, N. Naumenko, met representatives of Moldova’s General Inspectorate for Migration to discuss the stay and legalisation of Ukrainian citizens in Moldova (2.11), including residence permits, international and temporary protection, etc. The parties exchanged views on cooperation with UN agencies in the field of migration, as well as their role, impact, and effectiveness with regard to the migration policies of both countries.

The Year of Ukrainian Culture in Moldova featured a number of joint events, such as the exhibition “Culture in the Crosshairs” at the National Art Museum of Moldova; SKhID Opera’s Sound of Ukraine festival, during which the Kharkiv National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre performed seven plays; the presentation of the photo project “Postcards from Ukraine: How the ‘Russian World Destroys Culture’”; a large-scale exhibition of documents from the collections of the National Library of Moldova “Ukraine: Between Peace and War”; and the exhibition “Through Suffering and Heroism: A Retrospective of the Ukrainian War Through Art”.

Results

During the year, the most significant results were achieved in the transport sector and coordinating positions on the European integration of the two countries.

Vice Prime Minister for Restoration of Ukraine O. Kubrakov and Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development of Moldova L. Dabija signed the Protocol on Amendments to the Agreement between the governments of the two countries on railway transport (27.04). The protocol provides for simplification of control procedures for rail freight transit with the point of departure and destination in Ukraine or Moldova or when the point of departure or destination is in a third country, such as Romania, which will increase the volume of freight transported by rail.

A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between JSC Ukrainian Railways (Ukrzaliznytsia) and the state enterprise Moldova Railways (Calea Ferata din Moldova) on the restoration of the 400-kilometre-long Valcinet–Ocnita–Balti–Ungheni–Chisinau–Cainari railway corridor (31.05). The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2024. In addition, in July, Moldovan Railways agreed to provide a 27% discount on existing transit tariffs for Ukrainian agricultural products to the ports of Reni, Giurgiulesti, and Galati.

The Cabinet of Ministers approved a bill ratifying an intergovernmental agreement on the construction of a bridge across the Dniester (8.08), which will become a key component of the Kyiv-Chisinau transport corridor.

The Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development of Moldova have agreed to extend the Agreement on Liberalisation of Freight Transport between the countries until the end of 2025 (14.09). The agreement enables bilateral and transit road transport without special permits.

A protocol was signed on the organisation of joint control at the Novosavitcaia-Kuchurhan railway crossing point in Ukraine (13.10).

Trade between the two countries reached USD 980 million in 2023, marking a slight decrease compared to 2022.

Poland

B+

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	4
TOTAL SCORE	A	B+

Poland remained a strategic partner of Ukraine, providing significant diplomatic, military and humanitarian assistance. Warsaw became the driving force behind the tank coalition and actively engaged in advocacy for Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as in forming a platform for its reconstruction and recovery. Further steps were taken at the highest level to reconcile the tragic pages of history. However, Ukrainian-Polish relations deteriorated due to the blockade of Ukrainian agricultural exports and the beginning of the border blockade by Polish hauliers.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Poland remained on Ukraine's strategic agenda in the context of wartime diplomacy. Ukraine's top leadership, including President V. Zelenskyy, Prime Minister D. Shmyhal, members of the government team Y. Svyrydenko, O. Kubrakov, D. Kuleba, I. Klymenko, O. Reznikov, M. Solskyi, and G. Galushchenko, during the year addressed such issues in the context of Ukrainian-Polish relations as military assistance to Ukraine, including the creation of the tank coalition, energy security, and support for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, the transfer of frozen assets for the reconstruction of Ukraine, the participation of Polish companies in reconstruction efforts, the export of Ukrainian products to the EU, etc.

The blocking of certain types of Ukrainian agricultural exports, protests by Polish hauliers and farmers at the Polish-Ukrainian border demanded considerable political attention from the state leadership and the Ukrainian government team. At various stages of the bilateral dispute, Ukraine's President, Prime Minister and ministers stated that the situation should be resolved as fast as possible, mentioned Warsaw's unfriendly steps, helping Russia's interests, etc.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) contains some points related to Poland, but mostly in a multilateral format (e.g., the Ukraine-UK-Poland alliance, the partnership within the Lublin Triangle).

Strategic communications

The joint speech by the President of Ukraine and the President of Poland at the Royal Castle in Warsaw during V. Zelenskyy's official visit to Poland (April) was a milestone in terms of communication with Polish society. In his speech, V. Zelenskyy emphasised the need for joint Ukrainian-Polish efforts to counter Russian aggression.

Poland has been effective in international initiatives, including the Peace Formula, the 3rd Crimea Platform summit (23.08), the 2nd Grain from Ukraine summit (25.11), the launch of the Compensation Mechanism (February), and the Tallinn Mechanism (December).

Unfortunately, in the second half of 2023, strategic communication was completely replaced by crisis communication in order to resolve the situation with trade arguments between Ukraine and Poland over the export of Ukrainian grain to Poland. Mentions of these disputes by V. Zelenskyy and A. Duda, the Presidents of Ukraine and Poland, respectively, in official speeches and side events at the UNGA (19.11) led to a diplomatic scandal. Both sides traded emotional blame for unfriendly steps.

Activities

The year 2023 was full of high-level bilateral contacts, attesting to the strategic level of cooperation. In January, President of Poland A. Duda visited Lviv to take part in a meeting of the Lublin Triangle leaders. A. Duda visited Ukraine two more times (June and July) and attended international forums that were significant for Ukraine (August) by video link. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy's official visit to Poland (April) was important for bilateral relations. During the visit, the sides signed deals on the purchase and production of weapons, and it was confirmed that Ukraine would receive 14 Polish MiG-29 fighters.

The two governments were engaged in a busy dialogue. Prime Minister of Poland M. Morawiecki paid a working visit to Ukraine (February). Poland appointed a government commissioner for Polish-Ukrainian development cooperation (May). The local office of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency resumed its activities in Kyiv (July) to attract Polish investment in reconstruction projects.

In 2023, Kyiv faced Warsaw's protectionist measures regarding the export and transit of Ukrainian agricultural products. In March, delays at the border began due to increased phytosanitary inspections by Polish authorities, and in April, the ban on the export and transit of Ukrainian products through Poland was imposed. The trade dispute reached the level of the European Commission, and a Coordination Platform was established. After the EC lifted the restrictive measures (15.09), Poland imposed unilateral restrictions on Ukrainian agricultural imports. This provoked another round of political confrontation, including at the highest level.

Polish hauliers began blocking truck traffic at a number of checkpoints on the Polish-Ukrainian border (November), protesting against excessive competition following the liberalisation of international transport between Ukraine and the EU. Polish farmers also joined the strikes at the border.

The formation of a new parliamentary coalition and the election of D. Tusk as Poland's new Prime Minister prompted Kyiv to step up diplomatic efforts to establish contact and resolve trade disputes.

Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal met newly-appointed Polish Foreign Minister R. Sikorski in Kyiv (December). Also, in December, the first meeting of the interagency group appointed by Polish Minister of Infrastructure D. Klimczak to address the problems on the Ukrainian-Polish border took place.

Results

The Presidents of Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania signed a joint declaration following the 2nd summit of the Lublin Triangle (January), which defines areas of cooperation on Ukraine's membership of the EU and NATO and on providing military, humanitarian and other support to Ukraine.

During international forums, the President of Poland declared his support for Ukraine, condemned Russia's aggression, and spoke for Ukraine's accelerated accession to the EU and NATO. The Polish parliament – at the level of the Senate (May) and the Sejm (June) – supported Ukraine's NATO bid in the form of resolutions. The strategic level of support for Ukraine is also demonstrated in the Action Programme of new Polish Prime Minister D. Tusk.

Poland remained the leader in providing aid to Ukraine, which amounted to 3.2% of its GDP, the highest figure in the world, according to the World Economy Research Institute. Warsaw's proactive stance accelerated the activities of international partners within the tank coalition. The Ukrainian and Polish Prime Ministers welcomed the first four Leopard tanks provided by Poland (February). Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale aggression, Poland has transferred to the AFU more than 300 tanks and 72 Krab howitzers, or 30% of the Polish army's pre-war resources. In 2023, Poland trained 10,000 Ukrainian military personnel as part of the EUMAM military training mission.

Polish support also covered other needs, such as fuel supplies and wartime communications. Poland sent 19,500 Starlink kits to Ukraine. Ukraine received 1,500 tonnes of equipment for the energy sector from Poland. The work of the rescEU logistics hub in Poland is also important.

Trade between the two countries remained high. According to the State Customs Service, in 2023, Poland ranked first in terms of exports from Ukraine, totalling USD 4.7 billion, and second in terms of imports to Ukraine, which amounted to USD 6.6 billion. Appropriate steps were taken to improve transport links between the countries. In particular, the Nyzhankovychi–Malhowice checkpoint was opened (February) to relieve congestion at checkpoints and reduce queues on the Ukrainian-Polish border. Ukrainian Railways (Ukrzaliznytsia) and the Polish operator PKP S.A. signed an agreement to increase the export and import potential (August).

Poland has been playing a key role as an energy bridge between Ukraine and the EU. The Khmelnytskyi NPP-Rzeszów interconnector was put into operation after modernisation (April). Poland is also a member of the G7+ Coordination Group to support Ukraine's energy system. Within the framework of the Peace Formula, Poland, together with Denmark, chairs the working group on energy security.

In 2023, stable and predictable relations with Poland were hampered by the results of the so-called trade and transport “visa-free regimes” that the EU granted to Ukraine in 2022. The abolition of tariff restrictions on Ukrainian products and licences for road transport has led to a certain imbalance in the internal markets of some of Ukraine's neighbouring EU members. This overlapped with the parliamentary election campaign in Poland, which led to a political confrontation with an economic context that failed to be resolved in 2023.

In April, the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Poland signed a memorandum on Ukraine's reconstruction.

Romania

A-

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A-

Ukraine's relations with Romania were marked by a high intensity of top-level contacts, the first-ever joint meeting of the governments of Ukraine and Romania, and joint statements by the presidents and heads of government of both countries. The high common political interest also had a positive impact on the efficiency of bilateral cooperation.

Political interest/engagement

The high intensity of contacts at the level of the top political leadership demonstrated the political interest on the part of the President, the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The President of Ukraine mentioned Romania among the states that joined the G7 Vilnius Declaration on Security Commitments for Ukraine during an emergency meeting with the heads of Ukraine's foreign diplomatic missions (August). During a meeting with Romanian Prime Minister M. Ciolacu and other officials in Kyiv (18.10), the VRU Speaker stressed that Kyiv deeply appreciates Romania's consistent position on Ukraine's territorial integrity and its ongoing multidimensional support for the country and its people.

Strategic communications

Ukraine's Ambassador to Romania, I. Prokopchuk, actively engaged with the Romanian media and participated in various public events, including conferences, forums, and exhibitions. He spoke at a joint meeting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament (27.02) in support of Ukraine and held a minute of silence in memory of those killed in the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Strategic communications were significantly strengthened by the Joint Statement of President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy and President of Romania K. Iohannis (12.10) and the Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of Ukraine and Romania following the first meeting of the two governments (18.10).

Activities

Active contacts at the level of presidents, heads of government and parliament, and individual ministers took place throughout the year. The main areas of discussion were energy, agricultural transit, and security.

At a meeting with Romanian President K. Iohannis (10.10) in Bucharest, President V. Zelenskyy mentioned an important decision to train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16 fighter jets at the newly created Pilot Training Centre in Romania and cooperation in one of the strategic areas in the Ukraine-Romania-Moldova triangle (grain corridor). The Presidents of Ukraine and Romania formalised the outcome of the talks in a joint statement.

President V. Zelenskyy, VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk, and Prime Minister D. Shmyhal met Romanian Prime Minister M. Ciolacu and other officials (18.10), who arrived in Kyiv for the first in the history of Ukraine-Romania relations joint meeting of the two governments. The two sides discussed a number of important issues, including further strategic partnership, food security, Ukraine's integration into the EU and NATO, and the implementation of the Peace Formula.

A trilateral meeting between Ukraine, the European Commission, and Romania was held with the support of the EU (9.03). The talks focused on coordinating efforts to improve and develop export capacities through the Ukrainian and Romanian channels of the Danube River. All parties agreed that efficient and safe navigation on the Danube could develop productive and coordinated cooperation with colleagues from the EC, Romania, and the Danube Commission.

On the side-lines of an informal meeting of EU energy ministers in Stockholm (1.03), Ukraine's Energy Minister G. Galushchenko held a series of bilateral meetings, including with Romanian Energy Minister V.-D. Popescu. The key topic was energy security in the region and the trade exchange of electricity between the countries as one of the mechanisms to strengthen it. G. Galushchenko held an online meeting with Romanian Energy Minister S. Burduja (August), during which he highlighted Ukraine's interest in developing cooperation in natural gas transport via the Trans-Balkan gas corridor and thanked Romania for supporting Ukraine's energy sector, spoke about the needs of the energy sector, the necessary materials and equipment, the reserve of which will help Ukraine to get through the next heating season in the face of possible Russian terrorist attacks on the energy system.

Ukrainian Prime Minister D. Shmyhal met newly-appointed Romanian Prime Minister M. Ciolacu (27.06) to discuss the expansion of the two countries' logistics capabilities, support for Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, and assistance during the full-scale war.

Ukraine's First Deputy Foreign Minister E. Dzhaparova, Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration N. Popescu, Romania's Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Aurescu, as well as the Ministers of Defence of Ukraine and Moldova, O. Reznikov and A. Nosatii respectively, and Romania's National Defence Minister A. Tilvar took part in a trilateral meeting in Bucharest (13.04). The ministerial meeting in the Ukraine–Moldova–Romania triangle format was held for the second time, focusing on regional security and military-technical cooperation. Romania and Moldova reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate to implement the Ukrainian Peace Formula.

During a working visit to Bucharest (9.12), Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration O. Stefanishyna met Romanian Foreign Minister L. Odobescu, who expressed consistent support for Ukraine both at the bilateral level and in its accession to the EU. The parties agreed to cooperate to advance bilateral relations to a strategic level.

Ukraine's Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food, M. Solskyi, held an online meeting with Romania's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, P. Daea (19.04), to discuss the export and transit of Ukrainian agricultural products to and through Romania. Two days later, they met in Bucharest to discuss the situation following the decision of some countries to block Ukrainian exports. The Romanian minister confirmed that transit through Romania would go unrestricted and that solidarity routes would be maintained.

Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine M. Solskyi held a regular online meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania F.-I. Barbu (19.09). The parties discussed agricultural cooperation between Ukraine and Romania, in particular, the conditions and mechanisms for exporting Ukrainian products to Romania.

Ukraine's Vice Prime Minister for Restoration and Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development, O. Kubrakov, said that the third meeting for the sake of increasing export capacity for Ukrainian Danube ports was held in Romania (7.12). Over the 11 months of operation, Ukrainian Danube ports have processed almost 30 million tonnes of cargo.

VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk spoke with his colleagues, the Speaker of the Parliament of Slovenia, U. K. Zupancic and the Acting Speaker of the Parliament of Romania, A. S. Gorghiu (9.05), by video link. The main topics of the conversation were the NATO Summit in Vilnius and Ukraine's membership in the Alliance. A. S. Gorghiu pointed out that Romania supported Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations and would continue to stand with Ukraine in the fight against Russian aggression. She also recalled that the Romanian Parliament was constantly working on political issues that were important for Ukraine, including the recognition of the Holodomor of 1932-33 as genocide of the Ukrainian people and condemnation of Russia's armed aggression.

Results

V. Zelenskyy and K. Iohannis, the Presidents of Ukraine and Romania, respectively, signed a joint declaration on Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration (1.06), in which they stated that Romania would continue to contribute to the Alliance's strong and effective support for Ukraine; and Ukraine would continue to improve interoperability with NATO and modernise its security sector and armed forces. The Government of Ukraine approved a decree "On the signing of the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Romania on Mutual Recognition of Education Documents" (14.02). The signing of the agreement will promote mutual understanding on the recognition of documents certifying completed education at various levels, which were issued in Ukraine and Romania, as well as documents on periods of study in Ukraine and Romania.

The CMU approved (5.04) a decision to ratify the Agreement with Romania on the implementation of the Espoo Convention, which will allow for the introduction of clear consultation mechanisms for both countries: it will set the terms for cross-border consultations, the procedure for informing the public, and the mechanisms for interaction between the parties. This will help improve bilateral cooperation in preventing, reducing and controlling harmful cross-border environmental impacts from planned activities.

The Government also approved a draft agreement between Ukraine and Romania on the opening of a new international border crossing point between Bila Tserkva and Sighetu Marmatiei (14.08), which will primarily serve freight vehicles.

During the visit of the Romanian government delegation to Kyiv (in the framework of a joint meeting of the Governments of Ukraine and Romania), Minister for Strategic Industries of Ukraine O. Kamyshin and Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism of Romania S.-R. Oprea signed a Memorandum of Understanding (18.10). The document provides for the support and expansion of mutual military and technical cooperation between Romania and Ukraine. The partnership aims to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities and develop Romania's defence industry.

Trade between the two countries reached USD 5.32 billion in 2023, indicating a threefold increase compared to pre-war 2021.

Slovakia



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

Given the military, political and humanitarian assistance provided, Ukraine considers Slovakia a key partner in Europe. In 2023, the focus was on the Slovak elections and the consequences of the Fico government's coming to power, including signals of a possible suspension of military cooperation and the risk of Slovakia joining Hungary in blocking EU and NATO cooperation with Ukraine. Stressing the need for a pragmatic approach, Ukrainian diplomats focused on crisis management in bilateral relations, trying to resolve the problem of unilateral bans on imports of Ukrainian agricultural products, etc.

Political interest/engagement

Political attention to Slovakia in 2023 was in line with the important role this country plays in Ukraine's foreign policy. Slovakia was frequently mentioned in the speeches of the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, and others as "one of the European leaders in defending our fundamental values". Slovakia was described as a partner country that provides principled support for Ukraine in its European and Euro-Atlantic integration, supports the Ukrainian President's initiative to ensure a just and lasting peace for Ukraine. The security aid package provided by Slovakia, which included MiG-29 aircraft and air defence equipment, is often mentioned, as it was provided at a crucial time for Ukraine and was the first such batch of supplies from Ukrainian allies. Slovakia's involvement in Ukraine's reconstruction, the operation of solidarity corridors, and humanitarian demining are among the important topics. Gratitude is regularly expressed to Slovakia for accepting refugees from Ukraine.

At the same time, high political interest was prompted by tensions in bilateral relations in the second half of 2023. Slovakia made the headlines in Ukraine because of the unilateral bans on Ukrainian agricultural products that it, as well as Poland and Hungary, imposed in September, which led to Ukraine's WTO disputes against these countries.

Strategic communications

Strategic communications by the Ukrainian leadership on the importance of Slovak support for Ukraine and the common interests of both countries were in line with Slovakia's role in advocating for Ukrainian interests. The importance of Slovakia's participation in the Crimea Platform, the Ramstein format, and the so-called Tallinn Declaration, a group of nine European states that pledged to provide military assistance to Ukraine, is regularly emphasised. The Joint Declaration of the Presidents of Ukraine, the Slovak Republic, and the Czech Republic (28.04) acknowledged the important assistance provided by these countries since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, including lethal and non-lethal

military assistance, preparations for the winter period, humanitarian aid, and support for refugees from Ukraine.

After the formation of the new government in Slovakia, the focus of the Ukrainian leadership was on communicating the need for a pragmatic approach to cooperation with the country, regardless of existing political differences.

When Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary unilaterally blocked Ukrainian agricultural products, it was important to emphasise the negative impact that such steps had on the common economic interests of Ukraine and these countries, as well as the need to find mutually acceptable compromises.

Ukrainian representatives took an active part in international communication events held in Slovakia, in particular, Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine O. Stefanishyna and Deputy Head of the Office of the President I. Zhovkva took part in discussions at the GLOBSEC 2023 conference (May), Head of the OPU A. Yermak delivered a video address at the opening of the Russian War Crimes exhibition (5.09), etc.

Activities

Top-level visits took place in 2023: a working visit to Ukraine by acting Slovak Prime Minister E. Heger (March), a joint visit to Ukraine by Slovak President Z. Čaputová and Czech President P. Pavel (April), an official visit to Slovakia by the President of Ukraine (July). There were also telephone conversations between the presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers, a meeting between the parliament speakers, political consultations between the deputy ministers of foreign affairs, etc.

The reconstruction of the Mukachevo-Velké Kapušany interconnector, the possibility of storing gas in Ukrainian storage facilities, and options for transporting hydrogen to European markets in the future were discussed.

The parties raised the issue of creating new border crossing points and potential joint efforts to establish a Kyiv-Kosice railway connection using European standard gauge infrastructure from Uzhhorod station via Slovakia. The possibility of cooperation on reconstruction projects was discussed, including potential Slovak support for the reconstruction of the Chernihiv Region.

Slovak diplomatic representatives were involved in meetings of the President's Peace Formula working groups.

Results

According to the State Customs Service, trade between Ukraine and Slovakia in 2023 totalled USD 2.9 billion. The balance of trade, USD 742 million, was negative for Ukraine, and Ukrainian exports decreased compared to 2022.

Cooperation between the two countries in the defence sector deepened, which included the signing of a contract to supply Ukraine with Zuzana-2 howitzers, joint development of a new type of howitzer and production of ammunition, etc. The Slovak operator Slovnaft proposed to develop cooperation in the oil sector. To address the problem of Ukrainian agricultural exports to Slovakia, Kyiv suggested an action plan to the Slovak government, including the introduction of a licensing mechanism. The two countries started considering cooperation in the nuclear sphere.

After R. Fico's government came to power, despite fears that Slovakia would completely stop military cooperation with Ukraine, it turned out that no restrictions on cooperation between commercial structures were envisaged. Slovakia pledged to continue to supply humanitarian aid to Ukraine, support the operation of solidarity corridors, and cooperate in the defence industry and the functioning of a maintenance base for Ukrainian military equipment.

A Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the preparation of joint projects for EU programmes was signed (31.05). Slovakia is the first country with which Ukraine is establishing this kind of cooperation. The memorandum provides for communication and exchange of experience between the two countries in the preparation and implementation of joint projects under EU programmes.

At the same time, Slovakia remains one of the few EU and NATO countries that did not support the Joint Declaration of the G7 leaders and Ukraine concerning security commitments for the latter, which was adopted in Vilnius (12.07).

Türkiye

B-

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	4
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	3	3
ACTIVITIES	5	4
RESULTS	3	4
TOTAL SCORE	B	B-

In 2023, Ukraine's relations with Türkiye focused primarily on developing defence cooperation, implementation of the Peace Formula – especially its food security component – preservation of Ankara's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and NATO membership, and humanitarian initiatives, including exchange of prisoners and return of deported children.

Political interest/engagement

Türkiye remains an important regional actor and partner for Ukraine, primarily in the context of maritime and food security. Ukraine's top officials repeatedly mentioned this in their speeches. The President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine noted that Ankara plays a defining role in denying Russian military vessels access to the Black Sea, implementing defence industry projects, and promoting humanitarian initiatives. However, the frequency of mentions of Türkiye in official declarations by Ukrainian top officials declined for a number of objective reasons, including the lack of prerequisites for a dialogue with Russia where Türkiye could act as an intermediary; Russia's non-constructive stance on prisoner exchange, and suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative where Türkiye is engaged. Some mentions were general, with an accent on potential cooperation in defence and post-war reconstruction.

Strategic communications

According to Ukraine's Ambassador V. Bondar, "communication at various levels of ministries and agencies is continuous both online and offline." Still, Ukraine's presence in Türkiye's public and media space remained limited. To a large extent, this is because Ankara did not have what could be described as major success stories in mediation between Russia and Ukraine, suspension of the Black Sea Grain Deal, and the shift of focus to the Gaza conflict. The distinct feature of Türkiye's media space is that state media determines its agenda based on how relevant any given topic is for domestic politics. At the same time, Ukraine did not invest sufficient efforts into expanding the presence of Ukrainian narratives in the

Turkish media space, while responses to the debunking of incorrect statements on Ukraine by Turkish experts and journalists were often insufficient or came too late. In 2023, Ukraine's President or Minister of Foreign Affairs did not have any interviews with Turkish mass media.

Activities

The Ukraine–Türkiye top-level political dialogue continued throughout 2023. President Zelenskyy travelled to Türkiye (July) for a working visit and met with Türkiye's President R. Erdogan. This was when the liberation of Azov battalion commanders from Russian captivity was announced. They stayed in Türkiye after the captivity.

Türkiye's Foreign Minister, H. Fidan, visited Kyiv (August) to meet with Ukraine's President and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

President Erdogan took part in the Crimean Platform online (August), reiterating support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, including Crimea.

Ukraine's and Türkiye's deputy ministers of foreign affairs held political consultations (December) to determine priorities in cooperation for 2024.

Bilateral contacts in the defence industry continued. Ukrainian companies participated in bids to supply engines for the Turkish KAAN fighter jet. Ukrainian-made engines were supplied for Turkish Kızılelma unmanned fighter aircraft models, Akıncı and Anka III unmanned combat aerial vehicles, and Atak II helicopter. Turkish companies participated in the International Defence Industries Forum in Kyiv (September).

The trilateral Ukraine–Türkiye–Japan forum focused on the challenges of the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine, held in Türkiye (21.09), was an important event of economic diplomacy.

Ukraine's Embassy to Türkiye supported a number of events in expert and cultural diplomacy focused on countering Russia's aggression, liberation of PoWs, return of deported children, protection of the rights of Crimean Tatars, commemoration of the Holodomor (Famine), etc.

Results

Türkiye's continued support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, both bilaterally and in international organisations, was the key accomplishment of 2023. The official Ankara clearly signalled that "Ukraine deserves membership of NATO." The Turkish Straits remain closed for Russian military ships, even though the problem of Russia transporting weapons with the nominally commercial fleet has not been solved.

As part of President Zelenskyy's working visit to Türkiye, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Strategic Industries of Ukraine and the Ministry of Industry and Technology of Türkiye. The memorandum aims to support the existing projects and launch new projects in strategic industries and technology between companies from Ukraine and Türkiye. The priority areas for cooperation include production capacity development for autonomous vehicles, including UAVs; expanding the production of various types of UAVs; and research and development in AS, space and other high-tech industries of the two countries.

The performance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative was an important accomplishment involving Türkiye in 2023. It facilitated the exports of 33 million tons of Ukrainian grain. Ukraine's efforts are currently focused on preventing Russia from taking out stolen Ukrainian grain and bypassing sanctions through Türkiye. According to reports in Western media, Türkiye substantially increased the exports of dual-purpose goods to Russia in 2023. These goods can be used for military purposes. These include microchips, communication equipment and telescopic sights. These issues remain unresolved.

2023 saw an increase in Ukraine-Türkiye bilateral trade. According to Ukraine's State Customs Service, it was worth USD 7.09bn, 12.5% up from 2022. Ukraine exported USD 2.37bn-worth of goods to Türkiye. These were mostly fats, oils, grain and agricultural products. Türkiye opened its market for Ukraine's fish products in early 2023. At the same time, Ukraine and Türkiye did not ratify the Free Trade Agreement they had signed back in February 2022.

In December, the Turkish telecommunications company Turkcell – the owner of Ukraine's mobile operator Lifecell and the biggest Turkish investor – announced withdrawal from the Ukrainian market. This happened after a Ukrainian court arrested Lifecell's assets as part of the Mikhail Fridman case.

Humanitarian cooperation developed between Ukraine and Türkiye. Important accomplishments included the liberation of Azov commanders from Russian captivity, Türkiye's efforts in prisoner exchange, support for Ukrainian orphaned children currently residing in Türkiye, and rehabilitation programs for the Ukrainian military.

Generally, Ukraine managed to maintain positive dynamics in its bilateral relations with Türkiye. However, Türkiye's interest in economic cooperation with Russia, the suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and a presidential election in Türkiye, the Israel-Hamas war and other factors of domestic and international politics prevented Ukraine from expanding Ankara's support.

Hungary



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	2	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	2	2
ACTIVITIES	2	3
RESULTS	3	2
TOTAL SCORE	D+	D+

In 2023, relations between Ukraine and Hungary faced the biggest crisis in recent history. The practice of mutual media attacks continued, with Budapest threatening to halt Ukraine’s integration into the EU in addition to blocking its movement towards NATO. Hungary imposed a ban on Ukrainian agricultural imports and has not yet approved the appointment of a Ukrainian ambassador. All of this has also affected sectoral cooperation, which the parties have kept to a minimum. Nevertheless, Hungary continued to support Ukraine with humanitarian aid. Joint participation in EU-supported programmes and the first meeting between Ukrainian officials and the Hungarian foreign minister in a long time give reason to expect a gradual revival of joint sectoral initiatives.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Ukraine's representatives in the international arena did not ignore the state and prospects of relations with Hungary. However, all references to this issue were more likely to be a situational response to Budapest's actions towards Ukraine or were made in the context of regional initiatives. The reason for this, as in the previous year, was the negative inertia in relations between the two sides created in previous years due to the peculiarities of ensuring the rights of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine and Hungary's position on supporting the Ukrainian people's struggle against the Russian invasion. At the same time, Ukrainian actors demonstrated an understanding of the need to find a basis for constructive dialogue and mutually beneficial relations with Hungary.

President V. Zelenskyy emphasised the need to build good neighbourly relations with the EU countries directly bordering Ukraine (including Hungary) in his speech on the occasion of Constitution Day (28.06) and at a meeting with the heads of Ukrainian diplomatic missions (2.08). In addition, the President invited Hungarian Prime Minister V. Orban to Kyiv in February during an informal conversation at the EU Council and repeated his invitation after speaking with him at the inauguration of the Argentine President (December).

Throughout the year, representatives of the Office of the President, the VRU, the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the MFA and other agencies mentioned the development of relations with Budapest only in the context of immediate problems (the ban on Ukrainian grain exports, the unwillingness to open negotiations on EU accession, Russia's transfer of 11 Ukrainian prisoners of war to Hungary, etc.) rather than strategic goals. However, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine I. Zhovkva stated (December) that Ukraine was interested in establishing relations with Hungary and that they should not be viewed only through the political component.

Strategic communications

In 2023, the Hungarian audience in general and Hungarian elites were not among the recipients of systemic strategic communications from the Ukrainian

authorities. In this context, we can only note the President of Ukraine's address to the participants of the Three Seas Initiative summit (including representatives of Hungary), where he spoke about the need to find a common solution to the issue of Ukrainian agricultural exports to the EU. In addition, statements on Hungarian issues were made by Ukraine's officials, in particular following meetings in Brussels. For example, D. Kuleba commented on the words of a representative of the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office that Budapest could block negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU (7.11).

It is also worth mentioning the participation of Hungarian diplomats and officials in multilateral platforms initiated by Ukraine, such as the Crimea Platform and the Bucha Summit, and the joint statements issued based on their results. Throughout the year (February and December), Ukraine mentioned repeated invitations to a meeting between V. Zelenskyy and V. Orban. In this way, Kyiv demonstrated to the Hungarian audience its desire to restart bilateral relations.

Activities

As in the previous year, the lack of understanding between Ukraine and Hungary at the highest political level had a negative impact on sectoral cooperation. The fact that Ukraine has no ambassador in Budapest is one of the indicators of this crisis. Ukraine proposed an ethnic Hungarian, a professor and soldier of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, F. Shandor (Sándor), but the Hungarian counterparts have not yet approved this candidacy (while official Kyiv has approved the candidacy of the new Hungarian ambassador, A. Heizer). The crisis in bilateral relations complicated the joint development and implementation of strategic and large-scale initiatives of the two states, reducing bilateral contacts to respond to the most pressing issues.

The Presidents of Ukraine and Hungary had an official meeting in Kyiv during the Crimea Platform summit (23.08), where they declared their readiness to cooperate in defending the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, its integration into the EU and NATO, and joint cross-border initiatives and projects. President V. Zelenskyy and Hungarian Prime Minister V. Orban had brief conversations at the European Political Community summit in Spain (6.10) and at the inauguration ceremony of the new President of Argentina (10.12).

For the first time in a long time, Ukrainian officials – Minister of Foreign Affairs D. Kuleba and Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration O. Stefanishyna – met Hungarian Foreign Minister P. Szijjártó (December). These meetings were dedicated to Ukraine's reforms on its way to the EU, especially in the area of ensuring the rights of national minorities. In its contacts with Hungarian counterparts, the MFA of Ukraine focused on resolving problematic issues, such as unblocking Ukrainian agricultural exports to Hungary, clarifying the circumstances of Russia's transfer of a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war to Budapest, and explaining the meaning of the Hungarian Prime Minister's outrageous statements about the Ukrainian people's defence against Russia's invasion. During a telephone conversation with Hungarian Foreign Minister P. Szijjártó (6.12), Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine A. Yermak discussed a possible meeting between the two leaders.

In 2023, Kyiv repeatedly sought mediation from the EU institutions to resolve misunderstandings in bilateral relations, in particular regarding agricultural exports. Since April, representatives of the CMU, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine have been in regular contact with their Hungarian counterparts regarding agricultural exports. Despite the compromises proposed by official Kyiv and the mediation of the European Commission in these negotiations, Budapest maintained its ban on imports of most Ukrainian agricultural products, although it resumed transit through Hungarian territory and did not stop consultations on a solution acceptable to all parties. In addition, the Ukrainian and Hungarian Ministries of Education held joint consultations in the spring on legislation on the rights of national minorities.

In early 2023, representatives of the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and the Hungarian diplomatic mission discussed cooperation in restoring medical facilities in the de-occupied territories of Ukraine and responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases. In particular, they discussed the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between the relevant national agencies. However, no final results were achieved during the year.

Results

Given the cool relations between Ukraine and Hungary at the highest political level and Budapest's willingness to develop cooperation with Russia, no significant practical results in Ukrainian-Hungarian relations were expected in 2023. Similarly, the Hungarian authorities remained committed to their position of not providing Ukraine with weapons. However, despite these circumstances, some positive and promising developments can be noted.

Hungary supported the 11th package of EU sanctions against Russia and voted in favour of the UNGA resolutions "On a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine" and "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol". In addition, Hungary continued to train Ukrainian military medics and accept wounded Ukrainian servicemen for treatment. Hungary provided significant humanitarian aid to Ukraine several times during the year, such as equipment to restore electricity supply in Sumy and Kherson regions, batches of buses and mechanical ventilation devices. Natural gas and petrol continued to reach Ukrainian consumers via Hungarian pipelines.

A factor that may have a constructive impact on the achievement of positive results in Ukrainian-Hungarian cooperation is Ukraine's increasing participation in EU programmes. For example, in 2023, Ukraine became a full participant in the EU's Connecting Europe Facility. This will allow for the construction of a number of checkpoints on Ukraine's borders with EU member states, including the Záhony–Chop checkpoint on the Ukrainian-Hungarian border (a project developed jointly with Hungary). In 2023, the CMU also approved an agreement on financing the EU-supported Interreg NEXT Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine cross-border and transnational cooperation programme.

According to the State Customs Service of Ukraine, in 2023, the total trade between Ukraine and Hungary decreased to USD 2.81 billion (imports – USD 1.63 billion, exports – USD 1.18 billion), compared to USD 3.56 billion in 2022.

Czech Republic



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	4	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A-	A

In 2023, Ukraine and the Czech Republic made significant progress in strengthening bilateral relations, especially in the areas of military cooperation and energy, demonstrating a strong and efficient strategic partnership. Despite this positive development, certain challenges require attention and a systematic approach, particularly in the context of economic recovery and regional security.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Ukraine's representatives regularly expressed interest in cooperation with the Czech Republic and, despite the economic and social difficulties in both countries, managed to deepen bilateral relations further.

Ukraine's interest in continuing the strategic dialogue with the Czech Republic was emphasised in President V. Zelenskyy's August speech at a meeting with heads of foreign diplomatic missions. During the meeting, the President stressed the Czech Republic's significant contribution to helping Ukraine. Another symbolic gesture was the President's awarding of the Orders of Merit, II class, to the Czech Minister of Industry and Trade, J. Sikela and the Chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, K. Řehka (October).

In an article for Foreign Affairs, Ukrainian Foreign Minister D. Kuleba also emphasised the significant support provided by the Czech Republic to Ukraine (December). Yet, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine does not mention the Czech Republic (18.04).

VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk called the Czech Republic a true friend of Ukraine and expressed gratitude for the support and assistance that Kyiv always received both at the level of political decisions and in matters of military aid, training of Ukrainian soldiers, treatment and rehabilitation of wounded soldiers (October).

Strategic communications

In 2023, Czechs were a regular target audience for strategic communications from the Ukrainian government. During a joint press conference following his visit to the Czech Republic (6.07), the President of Ukraine thanked the Czech people for their support, underlined the need for new sanctions against Russia, and mentioned the Czech Republic's ability to help engage the Global South in the implementation of the Peace Formula.

At the invitation of his Czech counterpart, J. Lipavsky, Foreign Minister Kuleba addressed the heads of Czech diplomatic missions as an honoured guest at the annual Ambassadors' Conference (August). He called for support for the Ukrainian Peace Formula and described the Czech Republic as an important partner in communication with the countries of the Global South.

Activities

In 2023, Ukraine's activities were multifaceted and focused on maintaining political ties and developing partnerships in the energy and defence sectors. Czech President P. Pavel and Slovak President Z. Čaputova visited Ukraine (28.04). Among other things, they visited Borodyanka in the Kyiv Region and saw the consequences of Russian aggression with their own eyes. President V. Zelenskyy visited Prague (6.07) to meet Czech President P. Pavel.

Czech Armed Forces Commander K. Řehka's visit to Kyiv and his meeting with Commander-in-Chief V. Zaluzhnyi marked a milestone in military cooperation (2.11). They discussed the security situation, possible Czech assistance, and the exchange of military experience, emphasising their mutual commitment to defence and security.

Interparliamentary cooperation was also notable. An important step was Ukraine's participation in the Conference of Presidents of the EU Member States at the invitation of the Czech Republic (24.04). This not only demonstrated the Czech

Republic's support for Ukraine's EU membership bid but also strengthened the spirit of cooperation at the legislative level. During a meeting with the President of the Czech Chamber of Deputies, M. Pekarová Adamová, VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk called on the Czech Parliament to support Ukraine on its path to NATO and the EU and once again stressed the importance of implementing the Peace Formula. In addition, on the initiative of R. Stefanchuk and M. Pekarová Adamová, the Second Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform was held in Prague (October) to confirm international support for Ukraine and draw the world's attention to the situation in Crimea. R. Stefanchuk's talks with Czech Foreign Minister J. Lipavsky in Prague (25.10) focused on defence issues and the interest of both sides in strengthening military and strategic ties.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister D. Kuleba met his Czech counterpart J. Lipavsky twice (23.02 and 28.08). In February, the parties stressed the need to bring Russia to justice for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. In August, the Minister also held talks with the Czech Prime Minister's National Security Advisor, T. Pojar, on further development of defence cooperation.

The focus on cooperation in the field of renewable and nuclear energy was stressed during a meeting between Ukrainian Deputy Energy Minister Y. Demchenkov and the Czech delegation (September). A meeting with the Czech Governmental Envoy for Ukraine's Reconstruction, T. Kopečný, focused on the reconstruction of Ukraine's energy sector, in particular in the Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions, with the involvement of private Czech investment.

Deputy Foreign Minister Y. Perebyinis was one of the most active figures in Ukrainian-Czech relations. In October, he paid a working visit to Prague to meet Czech Foreign Minister J. Lipavsky and Deputy Foreign Minister J. Marian. In September and March, Perebyinis held separate meetings with the Czech delegations visiting Kyiv. In June, he met the delegation of the Czech Senate to discuss joint steps in the implementation of the Peace Formula. In February, he held talks with the Director General of the Europe Section of the Czech MFA, J. Kurfürst, to share opinions on the prospects for the development of bilateral political dialogue.

Results

The Czech Republic has consistently supported Ukraine's efforts to join NATO and the EU, advocated the allocation of military aid and supported EU initiatives aimed at bringing Russia to account. A number of initiatives and statements attest to deep bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and Ukraine.

During the visit by the heads of state (28.04), the Czech Republic and Slovakia signed a declaration confirming their commitment to support Ukraine on its path to membership of NATO and the EU, as well as to bolster Ukraine's security before it joins the Alliance.

An important milestone in the development of bilateral relations was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry for Strategic Industries of Ukraine and the Czech Defence Ministry (7.07) on military and technical cooperation and defence industry projects. The establishment of a joint working group for engaging Czech companies in Ukraine's reconstruction reveals a potential for effective economic cooperation. In addition, the Czech Republic's approval of the production of the CZ BREN 2 rifles for Kyiv underscores its commitment to strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities. The Czech Defence Minister's assurances of continued military training and support, despite the depletion of Czech military stockpiles, demonstrated the deepening of the military alliance and support for Ukraine.

The Czech Republic's position on freezing Russian assets, as Minister D. Kuleba noted, underlines a collective response to regional aggression, aligning it with broader European security policy (November).

In 2023, trade between Ukraine and the Czech Republic amounted to USD 2.76 billion, nearly as much as in 2022.



BELLIGERENT COUNTRIES

RUSSIA

BELARUS

Russia

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	n/d	n/d
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	n/d	n/d
ACTIVITIES	n/d	n/d
RESULTS	n/d	n/d

In 2023, Ukraine–Russia relations continued to be as negative as possible due to the war. Ukraine’s actions and communications were aimed at countering aggression, building coalitions for security support, strengthening the sanctions, etc. Also, Ukraine initiated international discussions on the implementation of the Peace Formula as a key principle for restoring a just peace.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, the Ukrainian leadership's political interest in Russia remained high, but only because of its definition as an aggressor and in the context of transforming the state to repel an armed attack, as well as building global support for Ukraine in this war. In his speech at the working session of the summit "Towards a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous World" with the participation of the G7 countries, Ukraine and partners (21.05), President V. Zelenskyy stated that "as long as the Russian invaders remain on our land, no-one will sit down at the negotiating table with Russia. The coloniser must go. But the world has the power to force Russia to restore peace step by step".

Throughout the year, the state leadership emphasised the struggle of the Ukrainian people against the Russian aggressor and their hope for international humanitarian and military assistance. In general, Russia's military aggression was a factor in consolidating the pro-government and opposition parliamentary parties around the security agenda.

Strategic communications

The issue of countering Russia is reflected in official strategic documents. In addition, it remains the main topic of all public speeches and interviews of the state leadership both in Ukraine and abroad. Russia continues to be identified as the main long-term threat to Ukraine, and its violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity as the main external challenge to national security. Ukrainian officials' speeches on international platforms and in interviews focused on countering Russia and promoting the Ukrainian Peace Formula initiated by V. Zelenskyy in autumn 2022 as their main topics. During the year, the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, A. Yermak, had ten meetings with representatives of foreign diplomatic missions to discuss the implementation of the Peace Formula. There were also three meetings at the level of foreign policy advisers in Copenhagen (24.06), Jeddah (5-6.08), where a document entitled "Philosophy of the Ukrainian Peace Formula" was presented, and in Malta (28-29.10), where the number of participants increased to 66. The meetings focused on the key principles of restoring a sustainable and just peace for Ukraine.

Activities

In 2023, there were no direct political contacts between the governments of Ukraine and Russia due to their absolutely incompatible positions. Ukraine's activities in relation to Russia were aimed at countering aggression, promoting international sanctions against Russia, receiving allied military and political assistance, and building an international anti-Putin coalition. Ukraine also continued to actively cooperate with partners in international courts concerning the crimes committed by Russia and its leadership. The Ukraine-Russia diplomatic confrontation intensified, and attempts were made to reduce Russia's influence on international organisations (the UN, the OSCE, the CoE, etc. See the relevant sections for more information on activities within these organisations).

Negotiations on the exchange of prisoners of war and the return to Ukraine of captured civilians, including children abducted by the occupiers, were actively pursued. Thanks to Turkiye's mediation, Ombudspersons D. Lubinets and T. Moskalkova met in person (11.01) and later several times online. There were also contacts between intelligence services, usually through intermediaries. There is official information about Qatar's assistance in mediating the return of Ukrainian children. Activities were carried out to exchange the bodies of fallen soldiers.

Results

Ukraine severed diplomatic relations with Russia immediately after the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022. In 2023, the process of countering Russian aggression and limiting the capabilities of Russia and its citizens continued. The President of Ukraine signed 31 decrees imposing sanctions against Russia and its citizens and companies. In total, according to the NAPC, sanctions were imposed on 3,460 individuals and 3,952 legal entities from Russia or those associated with Russia. In particular, 118 representatives of the Russian authorities, 128 business representatives, and 330 propagandists, including 32 heads of media companies, were put on the sanctions lists.

Ukraine denounced six bilateral agreements and one treaty with Russia. Ukraine has also withdrawn from 26 agreements and other arrangements within the CIS, as well as from the Memorandum of Cooperation on the Protection of the State Borders of the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for V. Putin and M. Lvova-Belova for the forced transfer of Ukrainian children, which is a sign of genocide (17.03).

There was no direct economic cooperation, although it is known that Russian products did enter Ukraine through third countries.

In 2023, 13 PoW exchanges took place, as a result of which Ukraine brought back almost a thousand defenders and civilians. In addition, Ukraine organised one unilateral return of seriously wounded Russian prisoners.

The anti-Putin coalition continued to operate. Positive developments in this regard include the active application of economic and political sanctions against Russia by Ukraine's partners, the promotion of a proposal to provide Ukraine with reliable security guarantees, and the continued provision of military assistance at the bilateral level and through the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (Ramstein format). As a result, a large number of states have rallied around the issue of assistance to Ukraine, which is becoming systemic.

Russia's withdrawal from the Grain initiative (July) did not prevent Ukraine from resuming navigation and, thanks to the Grain from Ukraine initiative, from supplying its agricultural products to global markets.

Belarus

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	n/d	n/d
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	n/d	n/d
ACTIVITIES	n/d	n/d
RESULTS	n/d	n/d

In 2023, the negative trend in Ukrainian-Belarusian relations, which were at a low level, continued. Belarus supports Russia's aggression against Ukraine, although there were no military attacks from its territory during the year. Contacts between the two countries nearly froze, and the President of Ukraine recalled the Ukrainian Ambassador to Belarus, but diplomatic relations have not been severed after all.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, the political interest of the Ukrainian leadership was focused on seeking to prevent as much as possible Belarus's direct armed involvement in the war, concerns about the presence of Russian military personnel and mercenaries in Belarus and the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons. Belarus is perceived as an accomplice of the aggressor. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy was concerned about the security situation and commented on Belarus's possible entry into the war as a potential "great historic mistake". In speeches to the general public, the President and other Ukrainian politicians noticeably avoided the Belarusian topic. The only exception was V. Zelenskyy's remark that "freedom ... will definitely come to Belarus", which he made during his speech in Warsaw (05.04).

In addition, a group of 25 MPs from different factions registered a draft resolution in the Parliament to recognise Belarus as an aggressor country and called for the severance of diplomatic relations with it (16.06).

The activities of Belarusian volunteer units within the AFU demonstrated the Ukrainian leadership's interest in supporting the Belarusian democratic opposition. Still, no permanent communication has been established between the Ukrainian authorities and Belarusian democratic organisations, including the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus and the Coordination Council of Belarus.

Strategic communications

The utterly downsized Ukrainian Embassy in Minsk remained the main communication channel with the Lukashenka regime. In 2023, comments on the situation with Belarus were mainly made by NSDC Secretary O. Danilov, the head of the Ukrainian Defence Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate, K. Budanov, an adviser to the head of the OPU, M. Podolyak, as well as various senior officers of the Defence Forces and heads of Ukrainian border regions.

Some of the communications focused on the need to respond to Belarus's illegal actions. The MFA of Ukraine issued a statement to condemn A. Lukashenka's meeting with a representative of the Russian occupying administration, D. Pushylin, and recalled the Ukrainian Ambassador from Minsk for consultations (18.04).

Public support for Belarusian volunteers in the AFU became a kind of communication tool for projecting Ukraine's position on Belarusian democratic forces and Belarusians in Ukraine.

Activities

Ukraine's activities with regard to Belarus did not change significantly during the year due to the latter's complicity in Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In 2023, Ukraine responded to A. Lukashenka's unfriendly statements and actions, as well as threats from Belarus, with Kyiv using diplomatic and military means of defence.

From time to time, Ukraine's leadership resorted to imposing sanctions and terminating agreements with Belarus. The Defence Forces continued to reinforce the Ukrainian-Belarusian border, mining dangerous areas, erecting barriers and strengthening engineering and fortification structures, and holding regular military exercises near the border with Belarus.

Results

In 2023, Ukraine did not sever diplomatic relations with Belarus.

The main task of the Embassy of Ukraine in Belarus was to protect Ukrainian citizens staying in or transiting through Belarus. Ambassador of Ukraine to Belarus I. Kyzyma was first recalled due to the deterioration of bilateral relations (18.04) and then withdrawn (22.06). A new ambassador has not been appointed. Ukraine has not appointed a special representative for relations with the democratic forces of Belarus either, despite simultaneous calls by Ukrainian experts and representatives of the Belarusian democratic community.

During the year, bilateral cooperation continued to decline, especially in terms of trade. In 2023, the total trade between the two countries amounted to USD 23.2 million. Ukraine's exports to Belarus totalled USD 3.5 million, while imports from Belarus amounted to USD 1.5 million. Ukraine's sanctions on individual Belarusian citizens and companies, as well as the seizure of property of some Belarusian companies, indicated the curtailment of economic cooperation between the two countries.

In 2023, Ukraine denounced nine different agreements with Belarus and withdrew from the Memorandum of Cooperation on the Protection of the State Borders of the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. In addition, the termination of the free trade agreement with Belarus was initiated (but not voted) in December.



REGIONAL COOPERATION

	2022	2023
MIDDLE EAST	C+	B-
WESTERN BALKANS	C+	C
INDO-PACIFIC	B+	C+
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	C+	B+
NORTHERN EUROPE	B+	A
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	B+	B+
CENTRAL ASIA	E+	C-

Middle East

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	3	4
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	3	3
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	3	4
TOTAL SCORE	C+	B-

Russia's aggression had a negative impact on Ukraine's cooperation with the Middle East countries in 2023. However, contacts intensified on the political level and between ministries and agencies in various sectors compared to 2022. Ukraine continued investing efforts in informing Middle Eastern countries about the war and mobilising their support. The Gulf countries remained the priority for cooperation. 2023 saw more proactive interaction with them, reflected in the visits of delegations from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain to Ukraine.

Political interest/engagement

Ukraine's interest in the Middle East and individual countries in the region was expressed in two dimensions – political and practical. Ukraine demonstrated its interest at the highest political, parliamentary, and governmental levels. However, it did not become systemic, given the wartime conditions and other priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy resulting from wartime.

Ukraine's political interest was focused on expanding the list of countries that support it in its effort to resist Russia's aggression, especially in the context of engaging them in Ukraine's Peace Formula. President Zelenskyy said in his address to the Arab League summit (19.05) that Ukraine and the countries of the region could be "united in saving people from the cages of Russian prisons", even if there were people in the region "who have a different view of the war." As the President's Head of Office A. Yermak mentioned in his interview for Al-Hadath, a Saudi broadcaster (18.05), "Ukraine seeks to tell the countries of the Arab world how it sees the end of this war, how to protect the world countries from similar aggressions, and, in particular, to convey the Peace Formula proposed by President V. Zelenskyy."

As part of every contact with officials from Middle Eastern countries, including at international platforms, Ukrainian officials expressed interest in their support of the Peace Formula, interaction to ensure global food security, and their role as intermediaries in exchange of war prisoners and return of Ukrainian children from deportation.

The practical dimension of this interest was driven by the economy and manifested itself in engaging investment, intensifying economic cooperation, and engaging the Middle Eastern countries in post-war reconstruction. In this context, Deputy Foreign Minister A. Melnyk mentioned the Middle East as a new market in Ukraine's focus (meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, 11.01).

Gulf countries remained in Ukraine's focus – both politically ("despite global challenges, the Gulf countries' participation in the implementation of the Ukrainian Peace Formula is extremely important," A. Yermak, 29.10) and in the context of developing interaction in priority areas (investment, trade, energy, agriculture). When it comes to the development of economic cooperation,

Ukraine's focus was mostly on the UAE and the work on the comprehensive agreement on economic cooperation. Economy Minister Y. Svyrydenko noted (March) that this agreement would “cover all important areas of our economic cooperation – investment, services, digital technology, agriculture, etc.”.

Middle Eastern countries were featured in the agendas of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in the context of ratification and denunciation of agreements with the Middle Eastern countries. Groups for inter-parliamentary contacts with Oman and Libya were established.

Strategic communications

Ukraine's presence in the information space of the Middle East was ad hoc. Ukrainian top officials reached out to the audiences of some countries or regional organisations. However, strategic communication did not become systemic. Ukraine did not conduct massive media campaigns. Representatives of the Middle Eastern countries did not visit de-occupied territory or speak to the Ukrainian audience during their visits to Ukraine.

Ukraine's communication was focused on conveying the actual situation around the Russian aggression and engaging more support for Ukraine, including through the message about the negative security impact of this aggression for the Middle East, in addition to other regions, especially in the context of food security. The Arab League summit (19.05), attended by President Zelenskyy, was the platform for conveying these ideas to the Arab countries.

Ukraine especially focused on Saudi Arabia in its media activity. Among others, the Head of the OPU, A. Yermak, gave a detailed interview for Al-Hadath, a national broadcaster, and the Foreign Minister, D. Kuleba, spoke to Arab News, an English-language Saudi broadcaster. Both top officials communicated the idea of insecurity emanating from Russia, food security, and the implementation of the Peace Formula.

Ukraine's other vector of communication was its stance on the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ukraine formulated its official position through the statement of the MFA (17.10), where it condemned terrorism and highlighted support for a peaceful two-state solution. Among others, President Zelenskyy

articulated it in his interviews and statements, including international platforms (end-of-year press conference, 19.12; NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 9.10; Crimea Platform summit, 24.10, etc.).

Ukraine's one-sided support of Israel at the beginning of the new wave of escalation of the conflict without subsequent response to Israel's indiscriminate use of force that resulted in many civilian Palestinian victims was met negatively by Arab states. This endangered prior accomplishments in relations with the Middle Eastern countries.

Activities

Ukraine's efforts with the Middle East matched Ukraine's interests and focused on two areas: political support, economic cooperation and cooperation between ministries and agencies in various sectors. This work was conducted regionally (President Zelenskyy's attendance of the Arab League summit) and bilaterally.

The most proactive efforts focused on the Gulf countries. President Zelenskyy had a number of telephone conversations with the leaders of Saudi Arabia (09.09, 23.10), Qatar (22.10), and the UAE (27.10). Political leadership met on the side-lines of the Arab League summit (President Zelenskyy met with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait) and Ukraine's Peace Formula summit (the President's Head of the Office met with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman).

The visits of representatives of Gulf countries to Ukraine, including Saudi Arabia (26.02), Qatar (28.07), the UAE (11.06) and Bahrain (the first ever visit of the Foreign Affairs Minister in Ukraine-Bahrain bilateral relations, 05.05), were an extraordinary development. All meetings covered the implementation of the Ukrainian Peace Formula, a synergy of efforts to ensure food security, and interaction on investment, including engagement of investment for Ukraine's reconstruction, energy, and agriculture. Ukraine interacted with Qatar and the UAE on their mediation in organising the exchange of war prisoners with Russia and the return of Ukrainian children deported by Russia.

Seeking to implement the strategy of opening new horizons in the world and creating new opportunities for the Ukrainian State, business and citizens, Foreign

Minister Kuleba toured the Middle East, visiting Iraq (17.04, was the first visit of a Ukrainian minister of foreign affairs to Iraq since 2012) and Kuwait (18.04). As part of the Iraq visit, the ministers agreed to hold consultations in the near future between the respective ministries to intensify cooperation in trade, education, and digitalisation. Also, the parties agreed to hold political consultations between the ministries of foreign affairs and the fifth meeting of the inter-governmental commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation.

Interparliamentary activities stand out. These efforts helped expand the geography of Ukraine's interparliamentary cooperation by intensifying interaction with Morocco. Parliamentary friendship groups had a founding meeting (27.06) to discuss the strengthening of political dialogue, trade and economic cooperation.

Results

Ukraine's focus on foreign policy priorities driven by the resistance to Russian aggression affected its performance in the Middle East and manifested itself in declining interactions in its spheres of interest compared to the period before the full-scale invasion. However, Ukraine's efforts in the Middle East delivered more results in 2023 compared to 2022. The number of effective visits and fallouts increased.

In the political dimension, efficient interaction with Saudi Arabia resulted in a meeting on Ukraine's Peace Formula on the level of national security and foreign policy advisors in Jeddah (August). Ukraine succeeded in engaging Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the UAE, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in the discussion.

The engagement of the UAE as a mediator in the exchange of war prisoners with Russia allowed Ukraine to return 116 Ukrainians home (February). Qatar's mediation allowed Ukraine to return over 10 Ukrainian children deported to Russia.

Most Middle Eastern countries supported the UNGA resolution on the "Principles of the Charter of the United States, underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" (23.02). Only Syria, an ally of Russia, voted against it. Lebanon was absent, and Algeria abstained. Most Middle Eastern countries abstained in the vote on the UNGA resolution "Situation of human rights in the

temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol” (19.12).

Ukraine’s interaction with some Gulf countries in the economic dimension resulted in a number of agreements that are important for drawing investment, reconstruction of Ukraine, and revitalisation of economic cooperation. As a result of the visit of the Saudi Arabia delegation to Ukraine (February), the two countries signed a Joint Cooperation Program between Ukraine’s Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure and King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding on the Saudi grant for oil products between Ukraine’s Energy Ministry and Saudi Fund for Development. These documents served as the foundation for the USD 400mn humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine.

As the continuation of the implementation of the comprehensive economic partnership agreements with the UAE, dating back to 2021, the analysis of investment opportunities in Ukraine was launched. During the visit of the UAE delegation to Ukraine (June), the two countries signed the Memorandum of Cooperation between Ukraine’s State Property Fund and Contango, a company, to support transformation processes, including the establishment of the Sovereign Wealth Fund of Ukraine. Ukraine’s State Property Fund is working on it with the Ministry of Economy.

According to the Customs Service, Ukraine’s total trade with the Middle East countries – excluding Turkiye, Iran, and Israel – was USD 3.7bn in 2023. This was almost equal to 2022. Ukraine imported USD 2.5bn worth of items from these countries or 7% of its total imports. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE were key trade partners in the region.

Western Balkans



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	3	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	4	2
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	3	3
TOTAL SCORE	C+	C

Relations between Ukraine and Western Balkan countries were less productive in 2023 than in 2022. Ukraine focused its policy in the region on a number of areas, including mobilising diplomatic support in countering Russia's aggression, military and technical assistance, and seeking support for Ukraine's EU and NATO integration.

Political interest/engagement

President Zelenskyy and Foreign Minister Kuleba mentioned Western Balkan countries in the context of countering Russia's aggression, EU and NATO enlargement, and Ukraine's joining of these two organizations. Croatia, Albania, and North Macedonia remained the priority countries in the region as they support Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression and in its aspiration to join the EU and NATO. Serbia continues to express support for Ukraine but stays away from imposing sanctions on Russia despite Ukraine's efforts to persuade Serbia to join the sanction effort. Ukrainian MPs remained proactively interested in Western Balkan countries.

Strategic communications

In 2023, Ukraine's diplomats in the Western Balkans took the lead in strategic communication. Communication in the region mostly focused on the promotion of Ukrainian culture and history in Western Balkan societies.

Ukraine's Ambassador to North Macedonia, L. Dir, repeatedly addressed the country's civil society – to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor, speak about the reasons for the 1932-33 tragedy, and the lessons all nations have to learn from it (24.11), among other things. She addressed the value and the price of the Independent Ukraine (24.08). Ambassador to Serbia V. Tolkach and Ambassador to Croatia V. Kyrylych were taking the initiative, too.

Activities

Representatives of various Ukrainian government bodies proactively met with their peers in Western Balkan countries, prioritising getting help in fighting off Russia's aggression. President Zelenskyy had personal and online meetings and telephone conversations with Western Balkan top officials both bilaterally and at international events. For example, President V. Zelenskyy had a telephone conversation with Croatia's Prime Minister A. Plenković (05.01) and North

Macedonia's Prime Minister D. Kovačevski (9.01). As part of the 2nd European Political Community Summit in Chisinau (1.06), President Zelenskyy met with Serbia's President A. Vucic, Montenegro's President J. Milatović, and North Macedonia's Prime Minister D. Kovačevski. For the first time, Ukraine's President met with Kosovo's President V. Osmani. As part of the informal Ukraine-Western Balkans summit, President Zelenskyy met with North Macedonia Prime Minister Kovačevski (22.08) and Serbia President Vucic (23.08, Athens). During his visit to the 78th UNGA session in the US, President Zelenskyy spoke to Albania's Prime Minister E. Rama (20.09).

Visits of foreign leaders to Ukraine despite the state of war are especially important. North Macedonia's Foreign Minister B. Osmani (OSCE Chairperson in 2023) visited Ukraine (16.01) to meet with President Zelenskyy, VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk, and Foreign Minister D. Kuleba. Kyiv hosted the Bucha Summit on Russia's accountability for the crimes in Ukraine (31.03), which Croatia's PM Plenković and Montenegro's President Đukanović addressed online.

Representatives of the MFAs had meetings bilaterally and through international platforms. Ukraine's FM Kuleba met with North Macedonia's vis-a-vis Osmani during his visit to Ukraine (16.01) and with Montenegro's FM Abazović at the Ukraine-NATO Commission (4.04) as part of the two-day meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels.

Deputy ministers of foreign affairs worked proactively. Deputy Foreign Minister M. Tochytsky spoke with Deputy Foreign Minister of North Macedonia F. Isaki (21.07). As part of his Western Balkan tour, Deputy FM Y. Perebyinis met with Serbia's Minister for European Integration T. Mišćević and State Secretary of the MFA G. Aleksic (9.10); North Macedonia's Deputy Prime Minister for Good Governance S. Grkovska, Defence Minister S. Petrovska, and MFA State Secretary F. Tosevski (10.10); and Albania's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs I. Hasani and Minister of State for Relations with Parliament E. Spiropali (11.10).

In April, Ukraine abstained in the vote on including Kosovo in the Council of Europe, irking Serbia.

Parliament representatives had meetings throughout 2023. VRU Speaker Stefanchuk met with North Macedonia's Foreign Minister B. Osmani (16.01), Head of Sobranie (Assembly) T. Džiferi and Head of Serbia's National Assembly V. Orlić on the side-lines of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in Prague

(25.04). O. Merezhko, chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation, had an online meeting with the Head of the North Macedonia Assembly Commission for Foreign Affairs, A. Miloshoski (15.02).

Ukraine's cultural and public diplomacy saw some boost. During her visit to Kyiv, Croatia's Minister of Culture and Media N. Koržinek met with First Deputy Foreign Minister E. Dzharparova (16.03). North Macedonia First Lady E. Gjorgievska and Deputy Health Minister M. Manoleva, Albania First Lady A. Begaj and Serbia First Lady T. Vucic joined the 3rd Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen titled Mental Health: The Balance of Resilience and Fragility (7.09).

Results

Western Balkan countries expressed support for Ukraine in the most important matters, including EU and NATO integration and countering Russia's aggression, and provided assistance to comply with their commitments with Ukraine.

As a result of the first International Defence Industries Forum (3.09) – with Bulgaria, Croatia, and North Macedonia, among others – agreements were concluded on joint production, technology transfer, and supply of components for the military industry.

In 2023, Croatia was the leader in support of Ukraine, providing military, financial, and humanitarian assistance – including energy – as well as sheltering over 27,000 Ukrainians, providing treatment for the defenders of Ukraine, and recreation for children and their family members. Ukraine and Croatia agreed to use Croatian ports on the Danube and Adriatic Sea to transport Ukrainian grain.

Albania remains the leader of support in the UN – thanks to its presidency in the UN Security Council, among other things. It co-authored Ukrainian resolutions in the UNGA.

Serbia continues to provide the least support. However, it sent energy equipment for the first time (28.03) as part of the EU's humanitarian assistance for Ukraine's energy industry. This assistance is funded by Serbia, with the EU ensuring transportation under the EU's Civilian Protection Mechanism. The Serbian government organised recreation for over 40 Ukrainian children at a Serbian camp for children established specifically for this purpose. To comply

with the agreement between the First Ladies, Serbia purchased and transferred two medical vehicles for Ukraine's Health Ministry. Serbian NGOs provided humanitarian assistance and engaged in the fight against anti-Ukrainian disinformation.

Serbia abstained in the vote on the UNGA resolution on the situation with human rights in Crimea (19.12), while all other countries of the region supported it. At the same time, Belgrade supported the UNGA resolution "Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" (23.02).

Following the Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen (September), a number of memoranda on medical partnerships were signed, leading to cooperation between hospitals in North Macedonia and Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Bookshelf was a positive accomplishment. As part of the project, Ukrainian book sections were opened at the St. Kliment Ohridski National and University Library (Skopje, North Macedonia) and in the Albanian cities of Durrës, Korçë, and Elbasan, and in Serbia. As part of First Lady Zelenska's initiative, a Ukrainian-language guide was launched at the Korçë's National Museum of Medieval Art in Albania, and audio tours in the Ukrainian language were made available in North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania.

In 2023, Ukraine's trade was USD 40.7mn with Albania (up from USD 34.2mn in 2022), USD 39.5mn with Bosnia and Herzegovina (USD 46mn in 2022), USD 3.11bn with Bulgaria (USD 3.47bn in 2022), USD 93.5mn with North Macedonia (USD 96.9mn in 2022), USD 319.1mn with Serbia (USD 302.5mn in 2022), USD 306.3mn with Slovenia (USD 301.8mn in 2022), USD 169.5mn with Croatia (USD 141mn in 2022), and USD 16.4mn with Montenegro (USD 17.7mn in 2022).

Indo-Pacific

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	4	3
TOTAL SCORE	B+	C+

Ukraine continued building its relations with the Indo-Pacific in the context of deepening cooperation with the Global South. However, they were not Ukraine's priority. Despite attempts to maintain consistent contacts with the Indo-Pacific countries – primarily Australia, South Korea, and Japan – the level of government and parliamentary interaction was insufficient. At the same time, trade and economic cooperation were important aspects of interaction even with the countries with which Ukraine's political dialogue did not develop intensely.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, the importance of cooperation with the Indo-Pacific was highlighted in the context of deepening relations with the countries of the Global South. However, in contrast to 2022, the focus shifted from Asian countries to Africa and Latin America. The President of Ukraine and other top officials generally mentioned the region as Asia without references to the Indo-Pacific subregion. Also, they highlighted some countries of the region, including Australia, South Korea, and Japan, given their proactive and substantial support for Ukraine, as well as India and China (see India and China sections) as the leading countries of the Global South and important for Ukraine in terms of developing relations with them. For example, President Zelenskyy said at the press conference for Ukrainian and international media (24.02) that Ukraine was planning to engage as many countries as possible in the founding summit for Ukraine's Peace Formula, referring "not only to Ukraine's strategic partners but the countries of Latin America, Africa, China and India."

In his address to the Verkhovna Rada on Constitution Day (28.06), President Zelenskyy thanked Australia and Japan, alongside other Western partners and friends, for their support for Ukraine in its fight for freedom.

In his address to Ukraine's diplomats (22.12), President Zelenskyy marked their accomplishments in various parts of the world – not just the areas with established relations but also Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Similarly, he highlighted the "most substantial relations" with some countries, including Japan (a new powerful ally), South Korea (accomplished good relations), and Australia. Other statements and addresses of the President followed a similar trend.

Most other countries featured in the statements of Ukraine's leadership in the context of engagement in the implementation of Ukraine's Peace Formula and food security. Attention was drawn to the role of Ukraine as a guarantor of food security in the world. In the general debate of the UNGA (19.09), President Zelenskyy reminded that Russia is exploiting food prices as weapons, affecting territories from the Atlantic coast of Africa to Southeast Asia. Foreign Minister D. Kuleba made similar statements.

At the special meeting of the UN SC (20.09), President Zelenskyy expressed support for broader representation at the Security Council: "Asia deserves broader

permanent representation – it cannot be considered normal when nations like Japan, India or the Islamic world remain outside the permanent membership of the SC.” The Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation repeatedly raised the issue of the UN SC reform and wider representation for Asian countries in 2023.

The Cabinet of Ministers’ Action Plan for Implementation of Ukraine’s Foreign Policy Strategy included events focused on developing cooperation on space exploration with Japan, Australia, China, Thailand, and Malaysia and concluding memoranda on high-tech industrial cooperation with China, Japan, and South Korea.

The fact that Ukraine did not have ambassadors to Malaysia and Thailand, and the embassy to the Philippines that had been announced but not yet opened, affected the quality of Ukraine’s bilateral cooperation with these countries.

Strategic communications

Representatives of Ukrainian authorities and diplomatic missions on the ground invested efforts in maintaining consistent communication with the countries of the region. Ukrainian embassies informed audiences about the situation in Ukraine through media and social media and conducted events in support of Ukraine.

Ukrainian top officials spoke repeatedly at important international conferences in the region. Defence Minister Reznikov spoke at the 20th IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore (02-04.06), and First Lady O. Zelenska opened the Asian Leadership Conference (17.05) in Seoul, South Korea.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Digital Development A. Demiokhin opened the high-level panel discussion on the role of big tech and government in cyberspace at the Singapore International Cyber Week (18.10). This annual event is the most prestigious discussion platform on cyber-related issues in South-East Asia.

Head of the OPU A. Yermak gave an interview to NHK, Japan’s public broadcaster and the biggest broadcaster in Asia-Pacific (28.05). Foreign Minister D. Kuleba was interviewed by the Indian Times Now TV channel (31.10).

In their first-ever visit to Ukraine (15.07), South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and First Lady Kim Keon-hee visited Bucha and Irpin as a sign of support for the Ukrainian people. The visit of Japan's Prime Minister F. Kishida to Ukraine (21.03) highlighted the deep-running disparities on the Russia-Ukraine war in South-East Asia and the urge to demonstrate support for Ukraine (see more about Ukraine's relations with Japan in the section on Japan).

Communication on the prevention of cooperation and transfer of weapons from North Korea to Russia intensified in the second half of 2023.

NGOs engaged in strategic communication with Asia. The visit to Ukraine by well-known Asian journalists from Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Mongolia, Cambodia, and Indonesia, which the Public Interest Journalism Lab organised, was an important development. In the one-week trip, the Asian delegation visited Mykolaiv and Odesa, met with Ukrainian defenders, civilians, volunteers, farmers, witnesses of war crimes in Bucha, Irpin, and Kherson Oblast, and the military. The journalists had a meeting with President Zelenskyy, First Lady Zelenska, ministers and other officials. This helped conduct a quality information campaign on the Russian aggression against Ukraine in the countries of the region. Apart from that, the Ukrainian Prism organised expert visits and public events in Singapore, India, and South Korea. The Embassy of Ukraine to Thailand organized an expert visit to Bangkok that included events at universities and communication with the media.

Activities

Ukraine maintained relations with the countries of the region bilaterally and multilaterally through meetings at international platforms.

President Zelenskyy personally attended the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan (21.05), where he spoke with the leaders of Japan, Indonesia, India, South Korea, Vietnam, and Australia. President Zelenskyy joined Towards a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous World session of the summit with G7 member-states, Ukraine, and partner countries, including Australia, Brazil, the Comoros (chaired the African Union), the Cook Islands (chaired the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), India (chaired the G20), Indonesia (chaired ASEAN), South Korea, and Vietnam. At the NATO

Vilnius Summit (12.07), President Zelenskyy met with Australian PM Albanese, New Zealand PM Hipkins, Japan PM Kishida, and South Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol.

Throughout 2023, President Zelenskyy had telephone conversations with the President of the Philippines, Marcos Jr. (13.02), Pakistan President Alvi (22.02), China leader Xi Jinping (26.04), Cambodia PM Hun Sen (29.05), Indonesia President J. Widodo (09.11), and New Zealand PM Luxon (20.12).

Japan Prime Minister (21.03), the South Korean President (15.07), and Japan Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Ukraine.

Ukraine PM D. Shmyhal had a telephone conversation with Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina (19.06) and discussed stronger economic cooperation with Australia's Ambassador to Ukraine B. Edwards (23.11).

Ukraine's Foreign Minister D. Kuleba met with South Korea's Foreign Minister Park Jin (11.05), Bangladesh Foreign Minister Sh. Mahmood (13.05), and Japan Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamikawa (21.09). He visited Pakistan (20.07) and met with Prime Minister Sharif and Foreign Minister Bhutto. Ukrainian representatives visited India (see India section for more details).

Led by T. Tasheva, Permanent Representative of Ukraine's President in Crimea, a Ukrainian delegation visited India, Malaysia, and Indonesia (27.02- 05.03).

A. Demiokhin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Digital Development, had a working visit to Indonesia (24.10) and Singapore (27.10). He met with Indonesia's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pahala Nugraha Mansury and Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs, V. Balakrishnan.

Y. Svyrydenko, First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Ukraine, and Chief of Staff Advisor V. Vlasiuk held a briefing for the Global South diplomatic staff (2.06), focusing on Ukraine's priorities in terms of sanctions. Ambassadors of India, the Philippines, and Malaysia attended the briefing, among others.

A Ukrainian delegation led by Defence Minister O. Reznikov attended the 20th IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore (02-04.06). It met with China's Defence Minister Li Shangfu, Singapore's Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen, Australia's Defence Minister Marles and New Zealand's Defence Minister Little. Ukraine's Defence Minister R. Umerov discussed support for bilateral relations between Ukraine and Pakistan with Defence and Defence Production Minister Ali Hayder (06.11).

As part of their consistent dialogue, the Ukrainian President's Head of Office, A. Yermak, spoke three times with the National Security Advisor to the Prime

Minister of India, Ajit Doval (13.06, 01.08, 01.11). He had a telephone conversation with the Acting Secretary General of the National Security Council of Thailand, Chatchai Bangchaud (16.11). Deputy Head of the OPU I. Zhovkva had meetings with ambassadors of South Korea and India and a telephone conversation with Deputy Director General of the National Security Council of the Philippines, N. Herico (14.11).

A delegation from South Korea, known as One Team Korea, led by Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Won Hee-ryong, visited Ukraine (14-15.09). Representatives of the South Korean government and private businesses are preparing to participate in projects for Ukraine reconstruction as part of the Peace and Solidarity Initiative. The delegation included 18 public and private companies.

As part of the effort to deepen parliamentary cooperation, Ukraine's parliamentary delegation visited Australia (11.04), Japan (07-08.09), and South Korea (24-26.11). VRU Speaker Stefanchuk attended the 21st G7 Speakers' Meeting in Tokyo (08.09), where he delivered a speech about Russia's aggression.

Results

The scale of Ukraine's interaction with the Indo-Pacific countries varies. So, do the expectations from bilateral cooperation.

Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan continued to provide substantial financial, humanitarian and non-lethal military assistance to Ukraine. Australia and New Zealand were providing military assistance.

Japan was the fourth country after the US, UK, and Canada, with which Ukraine opened talks about a bilateral security commitment agreement as per the Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine.

The Presidents of Ukraine and South Korea announced the Peace and Solidarity Initiative (15.07), which entails an additional USD 2.3bn for Ukraine in assistance for the restoration of peace and post-war reconstruction. The agreement provides for subsidised loans for projects in Ukraine with South Korean companies. Following the visit of President Yoon Suk Yeol to Ukraine, an agreement was reached on humanitarian demining of the Ukrainian territory, restoration of infrastructure, and development of education and entrepreneurship. President Zelenskyy and Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Won Hee-ryong

attended the official signing of the A/G donor agreement (September), the first step in support of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for Ukraine.

East Timor (Timor-Leste) joined the Crimea Platform summit for the first time (23.08).

Support for the Peace Formula and the organisation of the Global Peace Summit were the key components of the diplomatic effort of Ukraine's government with the Indo-Pacific countries. So far, however, only a handful of these countries are joining the meetings on the level of advisors. Ukraine managed to get Australia, India, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand to participate.

The ratification of two international agreements – on Ukraine joining the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and on EDCF with South Korea (22.12) – was an important step in deepening interaction with the Indo-Pacific countries. The Inter-Government Agreement on loans between Ukraine and South Korea is extremely important for the financial support of Ukraine in wartime.

The State Space Agency of Ukraine and Thailand's Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in peaceful space exploration (01.11).

The results of Ukraine's interaction with the Indo-Pacific countries are uneven. This is because the region has a lot of countries that are diverse politically, economically, and religiously. Apart from that, Ukraine's diplomatic presence does not cover all countries or is insufficient for quality interaction.

In the vote on the UNGA resolution "Principles of the Charter of the UN underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" (23.02), North Korea voted against, and Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam abstained. In the vote on the resolution on the "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" (19.12), North Korea and China voted against, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam abstained.

Trade with the Indo-Pacific countries – except for China, a top trade partner for Ukraine – was at USD 2.17bn with India; USD 869.44mn with Japan; USD 634.56mn with South Korea; USD 579.97mn with Pakistan; USD 539.26mn with Vietnam; USD 374.14mn with Malaysia; USD 322.21mn with Bangladesh; USD 213.88mn with Thailand; USD 260.04mn with Indonesia; USD 92.74mn with Australia;

USD 87.72mn with Singapore; USD 65.94mn with the Philippines; USD 54.87mn with Sri Lanka; USD 22.37mn with New Zealand; USD 26.57mn with Myanmar; USD 24.53mn with Cambodia; USD 21.76mn with Nepal; USD 8.35mn with Mongolia; and USD 5.26mn with Laos.

China and India are Ukraine's top two trade partners both in exports and imports in the Indo-Pacific. Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia are among the top five importers of Ukrainian products. In addition to India and China, Japan, South Korea, Pakistan, Vietnam, and Malaysia are top exporters to Ukraine in the Indo-Pacific.

Latin America and the Caribbean

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	3	4
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	3	5
ACTIVITIES	4	5
RESULTS	3	3
TOTAL SCORE	C+	B+

Ukraine declared The Year of Latin America for the second year in a row, attesting to the importance of this vector in its foreign policy. While the first half of the year saw an increase in the dynamics and diversity of contacts, since the summer, there has been a steady downward trend. This can be explained both by the lack of a clear vision of the Latin American vector in Ukraine's foreign policy and by overestimated expectations of Ukraine's ability to rely on the regional leadership of some Latin American states. There has been a further significant drop in trade turnover, in particular, due to the reorientation of local food markets due to massive attacks on Ukrainian port infrastructure.



Political interest/engagement

While the MFA of Ukraine was developing the Strategy for the Development of Relations between Ukraine and Latin America and the Caribbean, Ukrainian officials talked about the need to intensify or “reset” relations with the region or individual states, although these statements often referred to the so-called Global South as a whole. Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, and Argentina were mentioned most often among the LACB countries.

The appeals to the countries of the region mainly concerned support for the Ukrainian Peace Formula and invitations to take part in the upcoming Global Peace Summit, as well as support for food security and demining. There were calls to organise a speech by the President of Ukraine to the public and lawmakers of the region, including through the possible convening of a regional summit of Latin American countries. There were calls on the region to condemn the deportation of children from temporarily occupied territories, to join anti-Russian sanctions and the UN reform, to abandon the position of “neutrality” that encourages the aggressor, and to join the creation of a special tribunal for the crime of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

In addition, Ukraine expressed interest in expanding trade, economic and investment relations, business and personal contacts. In their speeches, government officials said that the Ukrainian diaspora in the Latin American region should be more active. VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk spoke about the importance of interparliamentary diplomacy several times during the year, mentioning the parliaments of Brazil and Mexico in particular. At the same time, much less attention in the public discourse this year was paid to calls for the LACB countries to join the Crimea Platform.

These messages were voiced during numerous press conferences for domestic and foreign journalists. This year, the President of Ukraine and the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, A. Yermak, personally paid a lot of media attention to Brazil. At the same time, an analysis of the statements of Ukrainian officials on cooperation with the countries of the LACB region in 2023 shows that expectations from the region were sometimes exaggerated.

In the second half of 2023, Ukraine's diplomatic presence in the LACB region increased with the appointment of heads of Ukraine's embassies in Brazil and Chile. In 2023, Ukraine also appointed ambassadors to Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, and Colombia.

Strategic communications

The President of Ukraine gave video speeches to the Chilean Congress (April) and to members of the Mexico-Ukraine Friendship Group in the Mexican Congress (April). He addressed representatives of the Organisation of American States for the second time since the full-scale invasion (June). In addition, V. Zelenskyy spoke by video to professors, students, and members of the public gathered at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina (July). All of these events made headlines and were widely covered by local media in the LACB region.

During the year, the President of Ukraine had several meetings with representatives of Spanish-speaking (including Latin American) and Brazilian media. Along with him, several dozen interviews with regional and global media, which have Spanish and Portuguese language services, were given by Foreign Minister D. Kuleba, Deputy Foreign Minister and later Ambassador of Ukraine to Brazil A. Melnyk, Head of the OPU A. Yermak, his deputy I. Zhovkva, the adviser to the Head of the OPU, M. Podolyak, MFA Special Representative to LATAM R. Spirin, and Ukraine's ambassadors to the region (the heads of missions to Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil and the Ukrainian business envoy to Peru R. Yavorivskyy, deserve special mention here). Ukraine conducted an extensive media campaign in the LACB region on the eve of Foreign Minister D. Kuleba's trip to the Association of Caribbean States summit (May). His interview with Alianza Informativa Latinoamericana (AIL) was published (including in parts) as video and text in a dozen regional media outlets that are members of this information alliance, including those from Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and the Netherlands Antilles.

Activities

The President of Ukraine took part in the inauguration of Argentine President J. Milei, during which he also had brief meetings with a number of South American leaders (Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Ecuador), who attended the ceremony. On the side-lines of the 78th session of the UNGA (September), V. Zelenskyy met the Presidents of Chile and Brazil, and in March, he held video conferences with them.

A Ukrainian delegation headed by First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Y. Svyrydenko took part in the inauguration of Brazilian President L. da Silva. She also met the President of Costa Rica on the side-lines of the Davos Economic Forum (February).

Ukraine's MFA stepped up the efforts in Central America launched last year. Key events included a tour of Central America by Deputy Foreign Minister A. Melnyk, who visited Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico (March); Foreign Minister D. Kuleba's trip to Central America, and the first speech by a Ukrainian representative at the Association of Caribbean States summit (May); Guatemalan Foreign Minister Mario Búcaro's visit to Ukraine (July); the first round of political consultations with Belize (March), which were held in accordance with the agreements under the previous year's Memorandum of Cooperation. In 2023, relations with Costa Rica strengthened as the country joined the International Crimea Platform at the beginning of the year.

The MFA intensified its work with English-speaking Caribbean island states, such as Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The first-ever bilateral talks were held (March) with the leadership of the MFA of Saint Lucia.

The South American direction in Ukraine's foreign policy was developed jointly by the MFA and the Office of the President of Ukraine. Judging by the dynamics of contacts, the Office of the President was particularly focused on Brazil (see the section on Brazil). The MFA focused on expanding contacts with colleagues from South America, including Ecuador, Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Paraguay, Suriname, and Uruguay.

During the year, Ukrainian interparliamentary diplomacy with the countries of the region was observed to intensify. This took the form of videoconferences and personal meetings with lawmakers who visited Ukraine, as well as international

forums, the main one being the 2nd Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform (October) and visits to the region. In particular, VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk held a series of meetings (including by videoconference) with high-ranking officials and lawmakers from Guatemala, Mexico, Chile, and Suriname, and the head of the VRU's Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation, O. Merezhko, met a member of the Salvadoran Parliament. A parliamentary delegation headed by VRU Deputy Speaker O. Kondratiuk visited Mexico (October). During the year, members of the VRU Group for Interparliamentary Relations with Brazil held a number of events with their Brazilian counterparts and local media aimed at intensifying interparliamentary cooperation. The LACB countries were discussed at meetings of the VRU's Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation, both in the context of establishing new friendship groups with the parliaments of individual countries in the region and in the context of discussing the criteria for identifying states that support Russian aggression.

Institutional cooperation between Ukrainian and Guatemalan businesses has intensified: in 2023, Guatemalan businesses were expected to visit Kyiv, but no updates on this have been made. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ukraine held the First Ukrainian-Panamanian Business Forum (June). The director of the CCI's international cooperation department, A. Lyubyma, was on the Ukrainian delegation of civil society representatives who took part in a meeting with senators of the Brazilian Congress and federal deputies from the state of Paraná.

Results

In 2023, Costa Rica joined the International Crimea Platform, and Guatemala joined the Core Group on the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of Russian aggression against Ukraine. Some countries in the region took part in security adviser meetings in Denmark, Saudi Arabia, and Malta, as well as in the 2nd Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform in the Czech Republic.

In May, it became known that a Ukrainian delegation had been formed to take part in negotiations on accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive

Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (LACB region includes Mexico and Peru). Ukraine was invited to become an observer at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Portuguese Language Countries (October), which includes nine countries, Brazil among them.

The MFAs of Ukraine and Guatemala signed the Roadmap for the Development of Ukrainian-Guatemalan Relations for 2023-2027, which identifies priorities for cooperation in key areas, and the CCIU and the Guatemalan Chamber of Commerce signed a cooperation agreement.

In 2023, the VRU established four groups for interparliamentary relations with LACB countries: the Republic of Paraguay (March), the Republic of Ecuador (June), the Republic of Colombia (June), and the Republic of Costa Rica (November). Thus, as of now, 11 groups for interparliamentary relations with LACB countries have been established in the Parliament. However, only one of them, the Group of Friendship with Brazil, has published its 2023 Activity Report.

For the first time in Latin America, Christian democratic parties announced a joint position condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine. This was recorded in the final declaration of the Free America Forum (uniting 34 parties from 21 LACB countries) held in Mexico (October), in which VRU Deputy Speaker O. Kondratiuk took part. The Mexican Congress hosted an event with the participation of European ambassadors entitled “Anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine” (March), where members of the Mexico-Ukraine Friendship Group delivered speeches, and a photo exhibition showing Russian crimes against Ukrainian children was held (October). Special photo exhibitions were held in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, and Peru to mark the anniversary of Ukraine’s heroic resistance to Russian aggression (February).

Yet, despite the previous agreement, the President of Ukraine did not have a chance to speak at the ACS (May) and EU-CELAC (July) summits due to the position of some delegations of the participating countries. Political consultations with a number of LACB countries, which Deputy Foreign Minister A. Melnyk had arranged during online communication with his colleagues in the first months of 2023, did not take place.

When voting on Ukrainian resolutions at the UNGA in 2023, LACB countries shifted towards abstention this year. Whereas the UNGA Resolution “Principles of the Charter of the UN underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace

in Ukraine” (23.02) was supported by 26 states of the LACB region, with three countries abstaining or not voting, and two countries voting against it, only 14 states of the LACB region voted for the UNGA Resolution “Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol” (19.12) (13 abstained, three did not vote). For the first time, Honduras was among those who voted against the resolution.

Ukraine’s main trading partners in the region included Mexico (USD 230 million compared to USD 191.8 million in 2022), Ecuador (USD 147.1 million compared to USD 111 million in 2022), and Brazil (USD 215 million compared to USD 249.5 million in 2022), with a significant negative trade balance with all countries.

Northern Europe



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	4	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	B+	A

Active high-level visits took place in 2023. Representatives of all five countries of the region visited Ukraine, and President V. Zelenskyy paid visits to Finland, Norway, and Denmark. In the course of the year, the Nordic countries repeatedly condemned Russia's war against Ukraine, provided comprehensive military and humanitarian support, and were open to communication and cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Ukrainian officials most often mentioned the Nordic countries in the context of gratitude for their assistance, much of which was of a military nature but also included support at the diplomatic level, calls for Russia to be held accountable, etc. The Nordic countries were mentioned in the context of numerous bilateral visits (President V. Zelenskyy visited Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden and met the Prime Minister of Iceland), military aid packages provided to Ukraine, and various support initiatives, including humanitarian ones. The President mentioned all five countries of the region in his speech at the annual Conference of Ambassadors (02.08) in the context of preparing bilateral agreements on security commitments. He also mentioned Sweden, Norway, and Denmark in the context of long-term systemic support for Ukraine. In addition, the Nordic countries, especially Norway, were singled out in the President's address to Ukraine's diplomats (22.12).

Still, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) does not specifically mention the Scandinavian countries.

Given the active interparliamentary cooperation, VRU representatives also talked about the countries of Northern Europe. However, compared to 2022, regional initiatives to help individual communities in Ukraine affected by Russian armed aggression (with the exception of Mykolaiv Region) were less frequently mentioned in the media. There is also reason to believe that political interest in cooperation between Iceland and Ukraine has increased, as evidenced by the references to Iceland in Ukrainian officials' statements.

Strategic communications

Communications between Ukraine and the Nordic countries at the highest level did not slow down. President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy addressed the Folketing (Denmark's Parliament, 21.08) and the Storting (Norway's Parliament, 13.12), and Prime Minister of Denmark M. Frederiksen (06.09) and Speaker of the Eduskunta (Finland's Parliament) J. Halla-aho (25.11) addressed the VRU. VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk spoke in the Swedish Riksdag (23.05).

During the 2nd Northern Europe-Ukraine summit (Oslo, 13.12), the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden and the Presidents of Ukraine and Finland issued a statement in which the countries of the region, among other things, reaffirmed their support for Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression and Ukraine's membership of the EU and NATO.

In 2023, several representatives of the Nordic countries received Ukrainian state awards. V. Zelenskyy presented Danish Prime Minister M. Frederiksen with the Order of Princess Olga of the First Degree, Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs L. L. Rasmussen with the Order of Merit of the First Degree, Danish Minister of Defence T. L. Poulsen with the Order of Merit of the First Degree, Secretary for Security Policy and Operations at the Danish Ministry of Defence K. Høeg-Jensen with the Order of Merit of the Third Degree, and Finnish Parliament Speaker J. Halla-aho with the Order of Yaroslav the Wise of the Second Degree.

Activities

Throughout the year, Ukraine and the Nordic countries actively cooperated in all areas. Ukraine received significant financial, military, and humanitarian assistance, and the Nordic countries supported various initiatives aimed at providing broader and more diverse support for Ukraine (for example, within the framework of the so-called IT and maritime coalitions, the Nordic countries at the UN actively supported initiatives to hold Russia accountable).

The year 2023 was one of the busiest ones in the history of relations in terms of the level and number of bilateral visits. During his visit to Sweden (19.08), V. Zelenskyy met King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and Prime Minister U. Kristersson; while in Denmark (20-21.08), the President and the First Lady had an audience with Queen Margrethe II of Denmark and members of the royal family, as well as a meeting with the Prime Minister. During his visit to Norway (13.12), V. Zelenskyy met King Harald V. During his visit to Finland (3.05), the President of Ukraine met the President, the Prime Minister, and the Parliament Speaker.

V. Zelenskyy also took part in the Northern Europe-Ukraine summits in Finland (3.05) and Norway (13.12), where he met the prime ministers of the participating countries.

The top leadership of all five countries visited Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities throughout the year. President of Finland S. Niinistö visited Kyiv (24.01), while Prime Minister S. Marin (10.03) and Prime Minister P. Orpo (23.08) visited Kyiv and Irpin. Danish Prime Minister M. Frederiksen visited Kyiv and Odesa (30.01, 6.09), Prime Minister of Sweden U. Kristersson (15.02), Prime Minister of Iceland K. Jakobsdóttir (15.03), and Prime Minister of Norway J. Gahr Støre (24.08) visited Kyiv. Norwegian Defence Minister B. Arild Gram (10.03) and Swedish Defence Minister P. Jonson (25.05) visited Ukraine.

MPs met colleagues from Sweden (19.01, 29.03, 17.05), Norway (21.04), and Finland (25.11).

Deputy Speaker of the VRU O. Kondratiuk met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Th. Reykþjórd Gylfadóttir in Reykjavík (23.05) to discuss Russia's aggression, its accountability, and Ukraine's future membership of the EU and NATO.

Amid a general decrease in the number of reports on regional support and reconstruction initiatives for Ukraine, the continued support for the Mykolaiv Region and the involvement of Danish MPs in this area indicates the sustainability of Danish support. A joint offsite meeting of representatives of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, the Committee on Law Enforcement, and representatives of the Foreign Policy Committee of Denmark's Folketing (Parliament) was held in Mykolaiv (03.11).

Results

Northern European countries' position on condemning Russia and supporting Ukraine remains unwavering.

Sweden continues to support civil society initiatives in Ukraine, having allocated nearly EUR 32.5 million towards these purposes. The Swedish government has also supported the ICRC's work in providing medical services and medicines, water, etc. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, military, financial, and humanitarian assistance from Sweden has reached more than EUR 2.3 billion.

In 2023, Denmark became the first donor to the Ukraine Community Recovery Fund (UCRF), launched by the UN together with the Ministry for Communities,

Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, Denmark's support for Ukraine has amounted to approximately EUR 565 million in military aid and EUR 192 million in civilian aid, including humanitarian contributions.

Norway has initiated a support programme for Ukraine, named after Nobel Peace Prize laureate Fridtjof Nansen, which provides NOK 75 billion (almost USD 7.2 billion) over a five-year period starting in 2023. The programme will include military support, humanitarian assistance, funding to support civilian infrastructure and essential public functions, and funding to support the recovery of Ukrainian society when it becomes possible. Norway has also contributed approximately USD 22 million to the Support to Ukraine's Reconstruction and Economy Trust Fund (SURE), established by the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) to insure investments in Ukraine. The VRU and the Norwegian Storting signed a Memorandum of Understanding (16.05).

Cooperation with Iceland has intensified, and at the end of the year, it joined two coalitions in support of Ukraine: the IT coalition and the demining coalition. Iceland also announced additional funding of EUR 340,000 through NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package for the purchase of medical supplies for Ukraine. The Icelandic Parliament unanimously recognised the Holodomor as genocide of the Ukrainian people.

In 2023, trade between Ukraine and the countries of the region totalled USD 830.8 million. This included USD 830.8 million with Sweden, USD 467.7 million with Denmark, USD 375.1 million with Norway, USD 328.2 million with Finland, and USD 119.3 million with Iceland. Imports prevailed over exports in trade with all countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa

B+

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	3	3
TOTAL SCORE	B+	B+

In 2023, Ukraine continued to work consistently on its African policy. Throughout the year, Ukraine's leadership maintained a high interest in relations with the countries of the region. Stronger communication, expanded diplomatic presence, support of an active political dialogue on the highest level, and a deeper strategic vision of relations were the positive developments on this track. However, negative trends in trade and insufficient diplomatic representation of Ukraine in Africa remain problematic.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, Ukraine showed a lot of interest in strengthening its policy in Sub-Saharan Africa. In his address to Ukrainian diplomats (August), President Zelenskyy said that Ukraine was aiming to expand its presence in Africa, a continent it had overlooked in the past. According to him, the specific steps would include the opening of new diplomatic missions, preparations for the Ukraine-Africa summit, and stronger engagement with regional organisations.

In his address to the Verkhovna Rada (28.06), President Zelenskyy highlighted the importance of continuing the Grain From Ukraine humanitarian initiative that covered over 30 countries and ensuring food security in African countries. Apart from that, President Zelenskyy highlighted the importance of developing economic cooperation with Africa and pointed to the significance of Ukraine's victory for the countries of Africa.

In his address to Ukrainian ambassadors (22.12), President Zelenskyy highlighted the importance of efforts to organise platforms and conferences for dialogue, including a Ukraine-Africa platform.

Foreign Minister D. Kuleba, too, showed strong interest in developing relations with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. This interest was manifested in his multiple interviews and statements throughout 2023. For example, in his address on Africa Day (25.05), Minister Kuleba pointed to strong historical ties between Ukraine and Africa and praised the development of relations and intensification of Ukraine's Africa policy in recent years. Minister Kuleba said that Ukraine was working hard to maintain its role as the guarantor of food security for Africa and maintained direct individual communication with African countries in every way possible in order to exploit the potential of the Ukraine-African renaissance fully.

Ukraine was working on expanding its presence in Africa. More specifically, the MFA announced the first open call (March) for the postings of ambassadors in 10 countries in Africa, including Angola, Botswana, Ghana, DRC, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania, and Rwanda. Also, Ukraine's Ambassador to Kenya, A. Pravednyk, presented his credentials to the President of Tanzania (28.02), which allowed the Ukrainian Embassy in Kenya to expand its work in yet another East African country. In late 2023, Ukraine opened its embassy in Ghana. However, the fact that ambassadors are yet to be appointed for Ethiopia, Angola,

and Algeria – after a long time without Ukrainian ambassadors – remains a problem.

Ukrainian MPs showed limited, but not zero, interest in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, preparatory work was conducted before the working visit of a Ukrainian delegation to Angola (23-27.10) to attend the 147th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, and a number of events were held in parallel to the visit. These included the event titled *Life Without Borders: Honouring the Memory of Children Lost in War*, an initiative to establish an international platform to commemorate the innocent lives of children affected by armed conflicts.

Strategic communications

In 2023, Ukraine maintained a high level of strategic communication, which was accomplished in 2022. It conducted a number of media campaigns in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, including projects using the hashtag #JustPeaceForUkraine in South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya; a series of online discussions about just peace for Ukraine and South Africa, etc. The objective was to inform the public about the situation in Ukraine and to counter Russian propaganda in the region.

President Zelenskyy spoke at the Arab League summit (19.05), where 10 African countries were represented. In his three African tours, Foreign Minister Kuleba spoke to African media. Apart from that, Minister Kuleba delivered a lecture for the students and professors of the University of Pretoria (6.11). Ukraine's Ambassador to South Africa, L. Abravitova, has her op-eds published in the *Daily Maverick* newspaper on a regular basis, in addition to her multiple interviews.

African journalists visited Ukraine twice in 2023. President Zelenskyy spoke for the first time with representatives of African mass media from seven countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Benin (18.07). These journalists visited Ukraine upon the invitation of the Public Interest Journalism Lab, an NGO. The visit of 15 journalists from 10 African countries organized by the MFA and Renaissance Foundation (11-17.11) was the highlight event in Ukraine's communication. They had meetings with President Zelenskyy, Prime Minister Shmyhal, Foreign Minister Kuleba, VRU Speaker Stefanchuk, and

other representatives of the Ukrainian political establishment and civil society. As a result of the visit, nearly 100 articles were published, including 70 in African countries. Apart from that, Minister Kuleba had a telephone conference with African journalists (7.06).

M. Subh, Special Representative of Ukraine for the Middle East and Africa played an important role in developing dialogue and partnership with African countries. He maintained consistent, proactive communication with mass media. Some Ukrainian ambassadors in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa – primarily South Africa – worked with the media consistently, too.

The drafting of the very first Ukraine-African Countries Communication Strategy for 2024-2026 and its approval in late December was an important step that will help take Ukraine's foreign policy to a new level.

Activities

Ukraine was proactive on its Africa track in 2023, building on the series of successful events conducted in 2022.

President Zelenskyy had 20 telephone conversations with the leaders of African countries, including Zambia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Egypt, and Uganda. Foreign Minister Kuleba had over 35 conversations with his African peers. Some of these contacts were the first in the history of Ukraine's bilateral relations with the respective country. Examples include contacts between foreign ministers of Ukraine, Guinea and Mauritania, and top-level contacts with the prime minister of Ethiopia and presidents of the Union of the Comoros and Uganda.

On top of that, Ukraine had contacts with representatives of African countries at international platforms. More specifically, President Zelenskyy met with the presidents of South Africa and Kenya and the Head of the Sovereignty Council of Sudan at the UNGA (September).

Ukraine's Foreign Minister had two African tours – to Morocco, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Nigeria (22-29.05) and Equatorial Guinea and Liberia (23-26.07). Also, Minister Kuleba visited South Africa (6-7.11) on the first trip of a Ukrainian minister of foreign affairs to the country since 1998. Special Representative of Ukraine for the Middle East and Africa M. Subh visited

Mauritania, Egypt, and Ethiopia (19-23.11), where he met with their foreign ministers and Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission to discuss Peace Formula, food security, grain corridor, and ways to deepen cooperation between the Ukrainian MFA and the African Union Commission. Also, M. Subh met with members of the African Council in Ukraine and its President Issa Sadio Diallo (15.06) and well-known influencers of the African diaspora in Ukraine from Guinea, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, DRC, and Algeria. They spoke about ways to strengthen Ukraine-Africa relations, including trade and economic relations and cultural projects.

Throughout 2023, the MFA of Ukraine launched two groups of strategic experts, including experts on Africa. This will allow Ukraine to strengthen its communication track in the work with Africa. Also, a discussion took place (18.12) with 34 top experts from African countries, representatives of NGOs and media on the priorities in Ukraine's communication with these countries.

A group of African leaders visited Ukraine with a peace plan (16.06). The delegation included the leaders of the Union of the Comoros (President Assoumani was the Chairperson of the African Union at that moment), South Africa, Senegal, and Zambia, and special representatives of Egypt, Uganda, and the Republic of the Congo. They presented their peace plan of 10 points aimed at ending the war in Ukraine. President Zelenskyy thanked the African delegation for the plan it presented but pointed out that Ukraine would not have itself pushed to take steps that favoured Russia and called on the African leaders to ask V. Putin to free all Ukrainian political prisoners, including the political prisoners Russia jailed illegally back in 2014.

Diplomatic and security advisors to heads of state of African countries attended the top-level meetings on the Peace Formula in Denmark (25-26.06), Saudi Arabia (5-6.08), and Malta (28-29.10). For example, representatives of Zambia, Kenya, and South Africa joined the third summit in Valletta, Malta.

Ukraine continued to serve as a reliable partner in the humanitarian dimension by ensuring food security in Africa – among others, through the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports, also known as the Grain Deal. As part of the Grain from Ukraine initiative, Ukraine shipped out 90,000 tons of wheat to Ethiopia, 25,000 tons to Somalia, 25,000 tons to Kenya, and 25,000 tons to Nigeria. In Kenya, Ukraine's Ambassador Pravednyk,

diplomats from donor countries and representatives of partner organizations (UN, FAO) joined the ceremony of the receipt of Ukrainian wheat (21.03). Kenya was the first African country where the Wall project by the Ukrainian agency Port was presented – it opened the Grains of Culture mural co-created by artists from Ukraine and Kenya (17.03).

A delegation of the Ukrainian Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food led by Minister Solsky visited Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria (9-15.01). They met with the local businesses, discussed the prospects of wider trade and economic cooperation, and options for the implementation of Grain from Ukraine, a food initiative by the President of Ukraine. Among other things, the parties are working on the scenario of setting up grain hubs in a number of African countries that would be used to ship and store grain and foodstuffs. A decision was made to open the Ukraine-Africa trading house in the capitals of some African countries. A number of efforts were launched to that end.

A Ukrainian delegation led by VRU First Deputy Speaker O. Korniyenko visited Angola (23-27.10) to attend the 147th IPU meeting in Luanda. Deputy Speaker Korniyenko met with Angola's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tété António (25.10), to discuss the security situation in Ukraine, opportunities for cooperation, food security and Peace Formula.

Ukraine is working proactively to expand its diplomatic presence in Africa. It opened the Embassy of Ukraine in Ghana (27.12). Embassies are about to open in Rwanda, DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Botswana, Mauritania, and Tanzania. This will allow Ukraine to expand its representation in Africa substantially.

Ukrainian ambassadors in some countries were working proactively. For example, Ukraine's Ambassador to Kenya, A. Pravednyk, met with Kenya's Minister of Roads and Transport, K. Murkomen and Defence Minister A. Duale (05.04), Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs A. Mutua (12.04), Information, Communications and Digital Economic Cabinet Secretary E. Owalo (26.07) and National Assembly Speaker M. Wetang'ula (17.08). Ukraine's Ambassador to South Africa, L. Abravitova, was proactive, too. She met with Zimbabwe's Minister of Mines and Mining Development W. Chitando (21.05); African National Congress Secretary-General F. Mbalula (25.05), the leadership of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education of Mozambique (21.06), Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development O. dos Anjos Banze (21.07), Mozambique's

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation M. Dlhovo (26.10) and others. Apart from that, Ambassador Abravitova was accredited as Ukraine's representative at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (25.04).

Ukraine applied to become an associated observer at the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP, 12.12). It unites the countries where Portuguese is an official state language, including six African countries – Angola, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Angola has already expressed support for Ukraine's joining CPLP.

Results

2023 delivered positive dynamics in Ukraine's political cooperation with the Sub-Saharan African countries. This was enabled by the proactive work during the past two years. At the same time, the lack of focus on the region on the part of Ukraine for many years before created additional challenges – because of the substantial distribution of Russian propaganda and the need to build trust with African partners in the long-term prospect, among other reasons.

A positive accomplishment of 2023 was the support of the UNGA resolution on the “Principles of the Charter of the UN underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine” (23.02) from 29 African countries. Benin, Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Zambia, Cabo Verde, Kenya, the Union of the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Libya, Mauritius, Mauritania, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Chad voted in favour of the resolution. This was unprecedented support for Ukraine at this international platform. Only three African countries – Cabo Verde, Sierra Leone, and Seychelles – supported the updated resolution on the “Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine” (19.12). Most abstained, and six countries – including Burundi, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Mali, Niger, and Sudan – voted against it.

Ukraine's trade with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa shrank for the second year in a row. This is the result of the blocked logistics in wartime, which makes the transportation of goods more complicated – primarily affecting agricultural

produce, a major item of Ukraine's exports to African countries. According to Ukraine's Customs Service, trade with Sub-Saharan Africa was USD 757mn in 2023, or 0.58% of Ukraine's total trade. The balance of trade was positive for Ukraine, with exports worth USD 260mn, or 0.72% of its total exports, and imports at USD 315mn, or 0.50% of Ukraine's total imports. Côte d'Ivoire was Ukraine's top trade partner in the region with USD 114mn worth of trade, followed by South Africa with USD 109mn, Kenya with USD 65mn, Ethiopia with USD 43mn, Uganda with USD 35mn, and Ghana with USD 34mn.

Central Asia

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	1	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	1	2
ACTIVITIES	2	3
RESULTS	2	3
TOTAL SCORE	E+	C-

In 2023, Ukraine's foreign policy activities in Central Asia remained limited. Integration ties between the region's countries and Russia continue to undermine the effectiveness of Ukraine's efforts. Central Asian countries declare a neutral position on the Russian-Ukrainian war. At the same time, Russia's use of Central Asian jurisdiction to circumvent sanctions is a real challenge to Ukraine's foreign policy. The only dialogue at the highest political level took place with Kazakhstan, while political contacts with other countries were held at the level of diplomatic missions. Trade and economic relations are stagnant. Communications with the region are irregular.



Political interest/engagement

In the second year of the war, Ukrainian diplomacy focused on restoring cooperation with the region and stabilising economic relations. Political interest in Central Asia revived but was not high or proactive. Central Asia as a separate sub-region was mentioned in the pre-war Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (item 151), and political interest has been shaped accordingly.

The Central Asia region and its individual countries were mentioned in statements by representatives of the Office of the President of Ukraine, the NSDC Secretary, the MFA, the VRU, etc. May was an ambiguous period for Ukraine's relations with the region due to the participation of Central Asian leaders in an event on Moscow's Red Square, which prompted a backlash from the MFA of Ukraine (09.05).

In an op-ed for the Turkish Daily Sabah (24.04), the head of the OPU, A. Yermak, presented his understanding of common challenges for Ukraine and Central Asian countries and explained why they need to support Ukraine. The head of the relevant parliamentary committee, O. Merezhko, also tried to formulate a vision of the Central Asian vector in an article for LB.ua (16.05).

Strategic communications

The absence of regional context in the speeches of the President of Ukraine and Ukraine's weak media presence in the region suggests the need for systematic communication and information activities that take into account local specifics. The complex geopolitics influenced by the Russian factor may explain the lack of public diplomatic, political, economic, or humanitarian support from the governments of Central Asian countries. Communication with the region was carried out at the level of individual heads of parliamentary groups for interparliamentary relations (the head of the Ukraine-Kazakhstan friendship group, S. Nahorniak MP, was interviewed by Forbes Kazakhstan, 13.10).

The most active in communicating with local media was the Embassy of Ukraine in Kyrgyzstan (five interviews). The head of the Embassy of Ukraine in Uzbekistan also gave an interview on the anniversary of Russia's full-scale

invasion of Ukraine (23.02). There is no information on interviews with the heads of Ukraine's foreign diplomatic missions in other Central Asian countries.

Activities

Restoring the pre-war level of cooperation with Central Asian countries remains a topical task. There is an involuntary political and media lull, and a focus is on economising relations, which is justified in the short term. Contacts with Kazakhstan included a telephone conversation between the Presidents of Ukraine and Kazakhstan (17.02), a Ukrainian-Kazakh online business forum (22.02), and talks between the ministries of health during the visit of the Ukrainian delegation to Kazakhstan (27.10). With the assistance of the Embassy of Ukraine, several trucks with humanitarian aid from the people of Kazakhstan were sent to Ukraine, the last of which arrived in May. At the same time, the post of the Ambassador of Ukraine to Kazakhstan remained vacant.

As for Kyrgyzstan, there was a steady dialogue between the diplomatic mission and various local state authorities and business circles. The Ambassador of Ukraine met the Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan (21.07, 04.12). An active dialogue was maintained with the MFA at the levels of deputy ministers and department directors (11 meetings in total). A positive signal was the formation of the VRU group on interparliamentary relations with Kyrgyzstan (01.11).

There is no information about political contacts with Uzbekistan at any level. The efforts taken resulted in the intensification of the humanitarian track. The Embassy of Ukraine implemented a project under which Ukrainian children were brought to Uzbekistan for recovery. Cultural and humanitarian events became an important part of the Embassy's work.

In the case of Turkmenistan, there was one meeting between First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine E. Dzhaparova and the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Ukraine (09.08), during which the parties discussed cooperation in the economic, logistics, educational and humanitarian sectors, "as well as held consultations on the preparation of certain bilateral agreements that the parties are considering". The parties ensured the allocation of humanitarian aid to Ukrainian children by the Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov Charitable Foundation in the spring of 2023.

When it comes to Tajikistan, Ukraine focused on increasing bilateral trade. The heads of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two countries met online (01.11) to discuss logistics issues, as well as the prospects for cooperation in the energy, pharmaceutical, and agricultural sectors. The Afghan vector of Ukraine's foreign policy remained frozen.

A serious problem in bilateral relations with certain countries of the region was the application of preferential tax treatment with regard to Uzbek and Turkmen goods under existing international free trade agreements. The problem was resolved through joint efforts of the relevant state authorities (11.08).

Results

In 2023, efforts were made to contain negative trends in bilateral relations. Countries of the region continued to abstain during UN votes on resolutions important for Ukraine. Despite Russia's geopolitical pressure on these countries, they do not vote flatly "against".

Turkmenistan did not participate in the voting on the UNGA resolutions "Principles of the UN Charter underpinning a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace in Ukraine" (23.02), "Cooperation between the UN and the Council of Europe" (26.04), and "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol" (19.12). Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan consistently abstained. Only Kazakhstan supported the resolution "Cooperation between the UN and the Council of Europe". Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan did not vote on resolutions on human rights violations in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Active hostilities in Ukraine and existing logistics obstacles continue to have a negative impact on economic relations. According to the State Customs Service of Ukraine, Ukraine's total trade turnover with the countries of the region over the year reached USD 1.2 billion (compared to USD 1.4 billion in 2022). In particular, USD 530.8 million (USD 805.9 million in 2022) with Kazakhstan, USD 36.2 million (USD 39.3 million in 2022) with Kyrgyzstan, USD 12.9 million (USD 12.1 million in 2022) with Tajikistan, USD 267.5 million (USD 214.4 million in 2022) with Turkmenistan, and USD 335.9 million (USD 348.6 million in 2022) with Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan remains Ukraine's main trading partner in the region, with Uzbekistan ranking second. Compared to 2022, the downward trend in total trade with the region continued. At the same time, trade with Turkmenistan continued to show positive dynamics, while trade with Tajikistan increased slightly.



INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

	2022	2023
UN	A	A
OSCE	C+	C+
COUNCIL OF EUROPE	B+	B-

United Nations



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

Throughout 2023, Ukraine exploited all possible potential of the UN for political and humanitarian response to Russia's full-scale aggression. Ukraine continued using New York and Geneva platforms proactively to promote important resolutions and minimise Russia's influence within various UN agencies, as well as the General Assembly and Security Council.

Political interest/engagement

Ukraine's proactive interest in the UN and its institutions remained high in 2023. The President, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and representatives of human rights government agencies maintained their focus on the use of UN mechanisms and their role in dealing with the consequences of Russian aggression.

President Zelenskyy focused especially on the UN and its initiatives in his address to Ukrainian ambassadors (2.08). In his speech at the UN General Assembly in New York (19.09), President Zelenskyy focused on food and energy security, nuclear non-proliferation, kidnapping of children from the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, climate policy and Peace Formula.

Foreign Minister Kuleba mentioned the UN in the context of the General Assembly resolutions and the Grain Deal in his speech at the meeting of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS, 11.05) and in the context of respect for the UN Charter and reform of the UN Security Council in his address on the Africa Day (25.05). His articles for international media mentioned the UN, too. Ukraine's MFA published a statement on United Nations Day (24.10), highlighting the role of the UN as a unified global organisation, with a comprehensive list of tasks, that is vital for people around the world, and stressed out the need to reform the UN. Apart from that, Minister Kuleba said that the MFA of Ukraine would help increase the share of Ukrainian suppliers in procurements for the UN needs (28.03).

The Action Plan for Implementation of Ukraine's Foreign Policy Strategy (18.04) lists tasks of providing legal support to lawsuits against Russia at the International Court of Justice and at arbitration tribunals, resumption of Ukraine's participation in international peacekeeping operations under the aegis of the UN after the martial law is lifted in Ukraine; and initiating the approval of the joint statement/declaration on the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine by UN member-states. In addition, the overall context of the work with international organisations to inform about the developments and consequences of the Russian armed aggression, measures to restrict Russia's engagement in international organisations, and protection of the temporarily displaced people are part of the work with the UN, too.

Strategic communications

In 2023, Ukraine continued using diplomatic and media channels, as well as social media, to promote its agenda on the UN. International media widely covered speeches by the President and Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN. Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the UN, S. Kyslytsia, spoke with the media frequently, and his X (Twitter) account was one of the most proactive among the accounts of Ukrainian diplomats.

The Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UN hosted a briefing with M. Tomak, Head of the Staff at the President of Ukraine Representation to Crimea (21.06), with over 20 missions to the UN attending. The Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UN initiated the event titled the Ninetieth Anniversary of Holodomor 1932 – 1933: The Weaponization of Food, Then and Now, and Ensuring the Right to Food for All (16.11).

The MFA and NGOs carried on with public events, exhibitions, and documentary film screenings on the side-lines of important UN meetings (e.g. 20 Days in Mariupol documentary) for representatives of other missions to the UN. “Ukraine. Crucifixion. The Tribunal”, an international exhibition about the Russia–Ukraine war, was presented near the UN building in New York (31.03).

Throughout 2023, Ukraine's Mission to the UN, MFA and President engaged proactively in promoting the Grain From Ukraine initiative, speaking about food security challenges, the role of Ukraine in guaranteeing food security, and Ukrainian grain shipments – primarily to African countries. The Mission in New York joined the campaign commemorating the Holodomor and victims of genocides.

In addition, Ukrainian top officials repeatedly mentioned the UN and the importance of international support under the UN in their speeches at international platforms. These included mentions in the address of Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs at the meeting of the Association of Caribbean States (11.05) and on Africa Day, and the 60th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (25.05).

Activities

In addition to his speech at the opening of the UN General Assembly (19.09), President Zelenskyy spoke at the UN Security Council session on Upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter through effective multilateralism (20.09) in 2023. His address covered the Peace Formula, the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and global order, and the reform of the UN – primarily the UN SC. Also, President Zelenskyy attended the Sustainable Development Goals summit in the framework of the UNGA (20.09) to speak about food exports. On the side-lines of the session, President Zelenskyy met bilaterally with the leaders of Albania, Bulgaria, Brazil, Kenya, Germany, Israel, South Africa, Romania, the US, Chile, and the European Commission to discuss the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine, the implementation of the Peace Formula, the establishment of food hubs in Africa and more. Prosecutor General A. Kostin was in the Ukrainian delegation, too.

First Lady O. Zelenska spoke at the special event “Struggle for the Future, Ukrainian Children in War”, co-organised with Estonia on the side-lines of the UNGA (20.09). Deputy Justice Minister I. Mudra spoke at the ministerial event Upholding the Principles of the UN Charter: Restoration of Justice for Ukraine (22.09).

Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs visited the UN (22.02). In his speeches at the UN General Assembly and Security Council meetings, Minister Kuleba spoke about Ukraine's Peace Formula, nuclear security and Russia's accountability for crimes. Apart from that, he addressed the high-level event on grave violations of human rights caused by the Russian aggression. First Lady O. Zelenska spoke at this event, too.

Deputy Foreign Minister E. Dzhaparova visited New York and attended the open high-level debate on the Rule of Law Among Nations (13.01) at the UN SC. She met with Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights I. Brands Kehris on the urgency of freeing all prisoners and Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs R. di Carlo on the need to send a UN mission to Ukraine to investigate the supply of Iran's drones to Russia.

Ukraine's partners, who are members of the UN Security Council, consistently kept Ukraine on the agenda and repeatedly called special sessions where Ukraine's Representative to the UN, Ukrainian experts and human rights advocates had an opportunity to speak.

Overall, Ukraine's Mission to the UN in New York worked proactively on all tracks. It delivered speeches to the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA (6.06); high-level meeting on countering Islamophobia (14.03); 56th session of the Commission on Population and Development (12.04); general debate of the UN Committee on Information (25.04); high-level debate of the UNGA on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (31.05), and the Role of Zero Waste as a Transformative Solution in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (30.03); UNGA open debate on Equal Access to Justice for All (16.06); UNGA meetings on the International Day against Nuclear Tests (29.08), Support for Women (4.10), Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children (5.10), The Rights of Indigenous Peoples (9.10) and Development of Agriculture and Food Security (11.10); UN SC meetings on support of peace and security in Ukraine (6.02, 17.03, 6.06, 21.07, 24.08, 13.10, 31.10), Threats to International Peace and Security (17.01, 15.02, 14.03, 18.05, 17.08, 17.11, 11.12); the UN SC open debate on Peace and Security in Africa (31.03), Children and Armed Conflict (05.07), Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (14.07), Peace Through Dialogue: the Contribution of Regional, Subregional and Bilateral Agreements to the Prevention and Peaceful Settlement of Disputes (20.10), and the UN SC meeting on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (6.07).

Ambassador Kyslytsia presented a special statement (15 countries and the EU) on the blowing up of the Kakhovka Dam (08.06), while representatives of Ukraine's Delegation spoke at the Arrria-formula UN Security Council meetings on cyber-attacks against critical infrastructure (25.05), Addressing the Abduction and Deportation of Children During Armed Conflict: Concrete Steps for Accountability and Prevention (28.04), and on the voting following the passing of the UNGA resolution on Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal (21.11).

A Ukrainian delegation joined the High-Level Justice and International Law Week on the side-lines of the UN in New York (October). They discussed holding Russia to account and creating a Register of Damage caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, held bilateral meetings and delivered speeches at the UN SC.

The delegation included Deputy Justice Minister I. Mudra and Foreign Ministry's Ambassador-at-large A. Korynevych.

The Ukrainian Government Delegation attended the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, including the ministerial round table titled Fostering Inclusive Innovation and Technological Change to Empower Women and Girls and create safer digital spaces and a public event on the experience of Ukraine and the UN in responding to and preventing sexual violence on the side-lines of the session (8.03). The delegation included Government Commissioner for Gender Equality K. Levchenko and Y. Kravchuk MP.

Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Y. Fedorenko and Head of the State Agency for Water Resources of Ukraine O. Kuzmenkov attended the 2023 UN Water Conference (23.03).

Throughout 2023, Ukraine held the rotational Presidency at the UN-Women Executive Board. Vice Prime Minister O. Stefanishyna spoke online at the opening of the 67th session of the Commission on Status of Women (7.03). Supported by the UN-Women, Ukraine and Trinidad and Tobago held a high-level event focused on sharing experience and best practices in countering, responding to and overcoming domestic violence (13.06).

Ombudsman D. Lubinets spoke at the UN SC (28.04) about the crimes Russia commits against the civilian population, including children.

Throughout 2023, Ukraine implemented the Grain From Ukraine initiative together with the UN World Food Program.

The MFA created new opportunities for Ukrainian companies by accessing the UN procurement system and conducted regional presentations of that mechanism. Kyiv hosted the UN Procurement and Vendor Fair, co-organised by the MFAs, the UN in Ukraine and the Kyiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry (28.03).

On its part, Ukraine's Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva covered human rights protection, arms control, environmental security, migration, etc. Representatives of Ukraine delivered speeches at the interactive dialogue with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (20.03); interactive dialogue on the situation in Ukraine (31.03); general debate at the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council (4.04); events for the 25th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (25.04); the meeting of the International Organization for Migration Standing Committee on the shelling of

Kramatorsk (30.06); Working Group on Effects (the Air Convention) of the UNECE about the ruinous impact of the Russian aggression on the environment and air (6.09); and International Dialog on Migration about the ruinous impact of the Russian aggression on the environment and population of Ukraine (9.10).

Apart from that, countries made joint statements on Ukraine in Geneva at the plenary sessions of the Conference on Disarmament (16.06), Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention (8.09), and on the situation with human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, Ukraine (4.10).

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine presented a report at the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, confirming the facts of war crimes and crimes against humanity on the territory of Ukraine committed by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (21.03). Ukraine held a parallel event on holding Russia to account for human rights violations and war crimes on the side-lines of the session (22.03), attended by representatives of Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office and human rights NGOs.

Ukraine continued working within the UN on securing accountability for the crime of aggression against Ukraine, including the establishment of an international Tribunal, an investigation by the International Criminal Court, and the creation of the Register of Damage.

Results

A substantial accomplishment was the voting for the new UNGA resolution on the "Principles of the Charter of the UN underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" (23.02) that covers the key provisions of Ukraine's Peace Formula. The resolution got an unprecedented 141 votes in favour and just seven against. In addition, Ukraine managed to prevent the inclusion of two amendments from Belarus regarding the condemnation of statements on Minsk Agreements by international leaders and the call to stop military assistance to Ukraine. The annual resolution on human rights in Crimea (19.12) received four votes fewer than in 2022 in favour (down to 78 from 82). This was because of its stronger wording, including a focus on all temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine – together with the newly occupied territory. Just 15 countries voted against it.

The UNHRC approved the updated resolution on the Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, that extended the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (4.04).

During his visit to New York, Foreign Minister Kuleba signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNDP (18.07) aimed at boosting cooperation and joint projects.

Thanks to its proactive efforts, Ukraine managed to prevent the re-election of Russia to the governing bodies of the International Maritime Organisation and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (December).

Ukraine became a member of the IAEA Board of Governors for 2023-2025 (28.09).

Throughout 2023, various institutions of the UN system were involved in dealing with the consequences of the Russian aggression and in the provision of humanitarian assistance. The UN OCHA continued to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians. Among other things, it increased support for the victims of the Kakhovka Dam blowing. Jointly with Ukraine's Ministry of Infrastructure, the UN Refugee Agency helped restore over 23,000 houses during 2023. The organisations of the UN system planned to provide assistance worth USD 5.6bn throughout 2023 to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the Russian war, and the IOM was planning to implement up to USD 1bn worth of assistance programs in Ukraine to help over 7 million Ukrainians.

Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the UN, S. Kyslytsia, was presented with the symbolic Ambassador Who Inspires Youth award.

OSCE



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	3	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	4	3
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	3	3
TOTAL SCORE	C+	C+

Ukraine's work with the OSCE has become more systematic, taking into account the intrinsic limitations and opportunities offered by this cooperation. Although the OSCE is not an absolute priority of Ukraine's foreign policy, it remains in focus as an important platform for conveying Ukraine's position to both allies and notionally "neutral" countries, as well as for standing up to hostile countries.

Political interest/engagement

There is a consensus in Ukraine on the areas of cooperation with the OSCE. The interest in cooperation with the organisation has slightly increased compared to the previous year. However, working with it has its own peculiarities, given Russia's strong ability to block its activities and the lack of consensus within the OSCE on its isolation. The President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and members of parliament showed relevant political interest throughout the year. Priorities included continuing to use the OSCE platform despite the difficulties, finding ways to circumvent Russian influence, and engaging in practical steps on implementing various projects. At the same time, the President did not directly mention the OSCE either during the Conference of Ambassadors (August) or during his address to the Ukrainian diplomatic corps (December), although he stressed the need to strengthen cooperation with international organisations.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) does not specifically mention the OSCE, even though the Strategy refers to cooperation with international organisations, in particular in the context of protecting the rights and freedoms of temporarily displaced Ukrainian citizens, covering the course and consequences of Russia's armed aggression, and taking measures to limit Russia's participation in international organisations.

Strategic communications

The Representative of Ukraine to the International Organisations in Vienna was quite active in internal communications within the OSCE. Meanwhile, the Mission's external strategic communications on foreign media platforms were almost invisible. Still, the Mission actively communicates on its social media pages and organises events aimed at strengthening Ukraine's leadership in certain areas of interest (for example, an event on women, peace and security in the OSCE region), as well as cultural diplomacy. From time to time, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba addressed the issue of the OSCE in his interviews, emphasising the need to expel Russia from the organisation. President V. Zelenskyy also publicly criticised the OSCE's inability to isolate Russia.

Activities

Ukraine is still trying to use the OSCE platform despite its obvious ineffectiveness in countering Russian aggression. The activities were mainly carried out at the level of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine in Vienna and project coordination under the auspices of the OSCE Extra-Budgetary Support Programme for Ukraine, launched in November 2022.

In 2023, OSCE Chairman-in-Office B. Osmani came to Ukraine twice, beginning and ending his term with visits to Ukraine, which underscores the country's priority for North Macedonia's chairmanship of the OSCE. B. Osmani visited Hostomel (October). President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy and VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk met B. Osmani (January and October).

On the one-year anniversary of the full-scale invasion in February, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba addressed online the 1412th Reinforced Plenary Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on Russian aggression. The Minister delivered an online speech at the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference (28.06) on the threats to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the terrorist attack on the Kakhovka HPP, and the implementation of the Peace Formula. D. Kuleba also held a joint press conference with B. Osmani on the results of his visit to Ukraine (October).

D. Kuleba was supposed to attend the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Skopje (30.11-1.12), but along with four other countries, boycotted it due to the presence of Russian Foreign Minister S. Lavrov. On the eve of the Ministerial Council meeting, 120 civil society organisations from 57 OSCE member states adopted the Skopje Declaration, in which they stressed the need to end Russia's war against Ukraine.

Ukrainian MPs in the OSCE PA were active in interparliamentary diplomacy. In particular, the Ukrainian delegation boycotted the OSCE PA session (February) due to the participation of the Russian delegation and joined the picket held by the Ukrainian community due to the participation of the Russian delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly. At the summer session of the OSCE PA in Vancouver, the Ukrainian delegation ensured the adoption of a number of proposals, including the provision that Parliamentary Assembly events be held only in countries with visa restrictions for Russian representatives. In addition, at the initiative of the Ukrainian delegation, the OSCE PA established an ad hoc committee on Ukraine.

The Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organisations in Vienna was quite active in the OSCE. For example, the Mission held an exhibition (December) dedicated to the stolen Ukrainian cultural heritage. An informal discussion (December) was held with the participation of the United Kingdom and Norway under North Macedonia's chairmanship on the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in the OSCE region. The Mission took part in a discussion held by the Group of Friends of Mediation in the OSCE (November).

Ukraine raised the issue of Russia's detention for over 500 days of three Ukrainian OSCE SMM staff members. So far, neither Ukraine nor other OSCE member states have managed to persuade Russia to release the hostages.

Results

In 2023, the OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine began to operate, allowing it to bypass Russia's blocking of all field missions related to Ukraine; about 25 projects are currently underway under the Programme.

The OSCE PA adopted a resolution (04.07) recognising the Wagner PMC as a terrorist organisation sponsored by Russia and the explosion of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant as an act of ecocide. It also welcomed the issuance of ICC arrest warrants for V. Putin and M. Lvova-Belova and condemned Russia's war crimes in Ukraine. M. Poturaiev MP was elected Vice-President of the OSCE PA, which gives Ukraine additional leverage and a platform to promote its agenda.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was often criticised at OSCE meetings in 2023. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland supported Ukraine's boycott of the December Ministerial Council meeting.

Council of Europe

B-

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	4
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	4	3
TOTAL SCORE	B+	B-

The year 2023 marked a period of significant achievements in the interaction between Ukraine and the Council of Europe. The high level of political interest and cooperation involved active political engagement, communications and efficient activities. The CoE is fully committed to supporting and assisting Ukraine. Its activities are aimed at supporting the reconstruction and economic recovery of Ukraine, boosting the capacity of Ukrainian state institutions, strengthening democratic governance and the rule of law, protecting the fundamental rights of citizens, and backing the reform programme within the framework of Ukraine's European aspirations.

Political interest/engagement

In 2023, interaction with the Council of Europe was primarily based on a structured dialogue with the Ukrainian authorities. Ukraine is interested in strengthening the role of the CoE in the processes of European integration and human rights protection.

Throughout the year, Ukraine's active political engagement was evident in the speeches and interviews of key officials, such as the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In his speech to the VRU on the occasion of Constitution Day (28.06), the President of Ukraine noted that more than 25 international documents declared support for the Peace Formula, including statements and declarations of the Council of Europe. In a speech to the CoE summit in Iceland (17.05), Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal called for support for the establishment of an international special tribunal to punish Russia for the crime of aggression and for the establishment of a compensation commission and a compensation fund to start paying damages to all victims of Russian aggression.

The strategic vision of relations between Ukraine and the CoE is determined by the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine, "Resilience, Recovery and Rebuilding" for 2023-2026 (approved in 2022). The strategic areas of cooperation between Ukraine and the CoE within the framework of the current Action Plan, both in the wartime and post-war periods, include measures developed in line with European standards. The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) does not mention the Council of Europe specifically but mentions it in the tasks of monitoring and restoring human rights, covering the course and consequences of Russia's armed aggression along with other international organisations.

MPs, members of the official delegation to the PACE, constantly commented on the course of the sessions, their agenda and their work in the relevant committees.

Strategic communications

In 2023, Ukraine increased the use of its media channels of communication, as well as social media, to promote its agenda concerning the Council of Europe. Information and communication support have significantly improved. Strategic communication with the Council of Europe was identified as a priority.

The CoE served as a platform for various events to maximise support for Ukraine in the war. There were numerous cultural exhibitions against the war to demonstrate Ukraine's unbreakable strength, which took place in the Palace of Europe with the assistance of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the CoE.

Throughout the year, Ukraine's Permanent Representative, B. Tarasyuk, made numerous speeches at the Council of Europe headquarters. The speeches of high-ranking officials from the Ukrainian delegation to the PACE were also noteworthy.

Activities

In 2023, Ukraine worked hard to fulfil its commitments to cooperation with the Council of Europe, in particular within the framework of the main working bodies of the CoE (the Council, PACE, and the CoE Committee of Ministers), as well as in the vast majority of intergovernmental expert committees and conventional monitoring mechanisms.

The Ukrainian delegation to the PACE was active, with three members represented in the governing bodies of the Parliamentary Assembly. The work was carried out in the Standing Committee, the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, and the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and the Media. Activities concerned additional legal approaches to the format of the future international tribunal for the crime of Russian aggression against Ukraine; the opening of the office of the Register of Damage and Compensation Mechanism in Kyiv in early 2024; the issue of illegally deported Ukrainian children to Russia and ways to return them; the issue of Ukrainian prisoners of war; the issue of protecting the Ukrainian information space from Russian propaganda and disinformation; and the climate consequences of Russian aggression.

Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal took part in the Council of Europe summit in Reykjavik (16-17.05), which resulted in the adoption of a declaration of support for Ukraine by 46 CoE states.

In October, PACE President T. Kox once again called on the international community to remain united and focused on establishing a just peace for Ukraine, fully restoring its territorial integrity, ensuring justice for the victims and bringing Russia to justice.

In November, the PACE Bureau approved the composition of the ad hoc committee on the situation of Ukrainian children, which was headed by a member of the Ukrainian delegation, O. Khomenko MP.

As in the previous years, the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the CoE worked productively in 2023. Ukrainian governmental organisations worked together with the CoE Office in Ukraine in various areas directly related to judicial reform, the strengthening of human rights in the criminal justice system of Ukraine, gender equality, and the promotion of housing solutions for people affected by the war in Ukraine, with war-affected people, and internally displaced persons. They also worked on support for preparations for the post-war elections, on combating discrimination, and on national minority issues.

During the year, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine continued to be a beneficiary of CoE projects. To strengthen cooperation, Minister of Justice D. Maliuska met the Head of the CoE Office in Ukraine, M. Janczak (November).

The Council of Europe continued to support the implementation of modern penitentiary reform in Ukraine, as reported during the International Penitentiary Forum in Kyiv (21.06).

Results

In 2023, Ukraine managed to ensure that its resolutions were consistently supported at the Council of Europe level and significantly influenced the agenda. The PACE adopted a number of resolutions, including “Political consequences of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine” (22.10), which supports the peace plan of the President of Ukraine and Ukraine’s accession to NATO.

During the debates at the plenary session in Strasbourg (12.10), two resolutions in support of Ukraine were adopted at once: “The role of the Council of Europe in preventing conflicts, restoring the credibility of international institutions and promoting global peace” and “Ensuring a just peace in Ukraine and lasting security in Europe”. An important achievement was that the PACE called for the speedy establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine and for the enforcement and strengthening of sanctions against Russia and those who support its aggression.

In January, MP O. Khomenko was elected Vice-President of the PACE, while M. Mezentseva MP and Y. Kravchuk MP chaired the Committee on Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination and the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, respectively.

Thanks to the efforts of Ukrainian diplomats, nine states (at the parliamentary level) and the PACE recognised the Holodomor of 1932-1933 as genocide of the Ukrainian people (12.10).

International Coalition for the Recovery of Ukraine



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	5
TOTAL SCORE	A	A

The issue of Ukraine's recovery continued to be relevant in 2023. Coalition-building efforts are becoming more sustainable and systematic, and structures are being created to help coordinate donor efforts. During the year, a number of multilateral funds were launched to accumulate resources for future reconstruction. Some partner countries appointed special representatives for Ukraine's recovery.



Political interest/engagement

Although the issue of forming an international coalition for recovery has somewhat taken a backseat to the continuation of military support and assistance to cover current needs, political engagement in this area has remained consistently high. In his address to the Conference of Ambassadors (August), the President of Ukraine highlighted recovery and economic development among the five priorities for the Ukrainian diplomatic corps.

The Prime Minister, the Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Vice Prime Minister – Minister of Economy and the Minister of Foreign Affairs often addressed the topic of involving international partners in the recovery efforts. Members of parliament and VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk were also involved in the creation of an international coalition for recovery. The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) contained specific provisions for the future recovery of Ukraine, in particular when it comes to dialogue with the EU on restoring the Ukrainian education sector, attracting international technical, advisory and financial assistance to rebuild Ukraine's economy and transport infrastructure, as well as settlements and regions of Ukraine affected by Russia's armed aggression, and involving government and business circles of partner countries in projects to rebuild and restore Ukraine, etc.

Strategic communications

The President regularly addressed the topic of recovery in internal and external communications, including in his speeches at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London (June) and the Conference of Ambassadors of Ukraine (August). The President also recorded a video address ahead of the Recovery Conference in London (May).

Global recovery conferences, as well as local ones held in individual countries (e.g. in Italy in April), are also a means of strategic communications and of drawing the attention of the international community to Ukraine's recovery, reforms and post-war investments. Similarly, the concept of partner countries acting as patrons of restoration efforts in certain regions of Ukraine is an

interesting aspect of communication, maintaining attention to the war in Ukraine and post-war recovery.

Other ministers involved likewise actively communicated on the topic of recovery. They focused on both internal communications aimed at Ukrainian citizens and businesses, as well as on representatives of international partners based in Ukraine (diplomats and staff of international technical assistance projects) and external communications aimed at partners in key allied capitals.

In 2023, restrictions on MPs' travel abroad negatively impacted their ability to advocate, including for the creation of a recovery coalition. Similarly, it is difficult for city mayors to travel abroad, which creates obstacles to actively attracting investment and donor funds for reconstruction.

Activities

The first half of 2023 was devoted to preparations for the Recovery Conference in London, which brought together leaders, ministers and representatives of 59 countries, 32 international organisations, over 500 companies and 130 civil society organisations. Unlike the 2022 Recovery Conference in Lugano, the London Conference (21-22.06) focused not on a global unified recovery plan but on opportunities for business recovery. President V. Zelenskyy (online), Prime Minister D. Shmyhal, First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Y. Svyrydenko, Minister of Social Policy O. Zholnovych, and others delivered speeches at the conference.

Active work was underway to ensure the transfer of confiscated Russian assets to Ukraine for reconstruction purposes.

The EU announced the launch of the Ukraine Facility, which provides for the allocation of EUR 50 billion for the period from 2024 to 2027 to support Ukraine, including its recovery. The launch of the Facility was blocked for most of 2023 due to Hungary's position. To enable its launch, Ukraine developed the so-called Ukraine Plan, which would include priorities and measures for post-war reconstruction, with international partners, primarily from the EU, being actively involved in its development. The European Commission has set up a special department for Ukraine's reconstruction, which is part of a broader service dealing with Ukraine-related issues.

Work continued within the framework of the concept of regional patronage, with certain countries focusing on the restoration of particular regions. Separately, Ukraine continues to work with international financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, EBRD, etc.

Cooperation with European regional and local authorities is actively developing. For example, Ukraine worked with the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, which is involved in organising events in preparation for the annual recovery conferences.

During the year, diplomats managed to organise visits to Ukraine by a number of heads of state and government, including the US Special Representative for Ukraine's Economic Recovery, P. Pritzker.

Results

The most important event in building an international coalition for reconstruction was the Ukraine Recovery Conference held in London (June). At the conference, Ukraine received assurances of more than USD 60 billion in aid. At the same time, USD 50 billion of the announced USD 60 billion are the European Union's commitments under the Ukraine Facility, USD 39 billion of which are earmarked for macro-financial assistance, not for recovery as such. In November, the European Parliament supported the creation of the Ukraine Facility, which is expected to be fully operational in 2024.

A significant result of 2023 was a shift in the issue of transferring frozen Russian assets to Ukraine. The EU and the USA are actively working on this issue, and specific plans are being developed, which indicates an increased willingness to transfer frozen assets for the needs of reconstruction.

An important achievement of bilateral diplomacy was the appointment of P. Pritzker as the US Special Representative for Ukraine's Economic Recovery, P. Heilbronn as the French President's Special Envoy for Ukraine's Relief and Reconstruction, and J. Flasbarth as the German Federal Government's Special Representative for Ukraine's Reconstruction. Often, these envoys represent their governments on the G7 Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform, which

develops solutions for the coordination of short-term and emergency assistance, as well as longer-term assistance aimed at post-war reconstruction.

In order to unify commitments to different donors, the Government announced a comprehensive reform plan (October), which reflects an effort to systematise activities and improve coordination within the international recovery coalition.

The World Bank continued its active involvement in the recovery coalition by conducting a second assessment of Ukraine's reconstruction needs, which were estimated at USD 411 billion. As of November, the World Bank was able to mobilise an additional USD 38 billion, of which USD 30 billion has already been disbursed. The EBRD invested about EUR 1.5 billion in Ukraine over the year, and it also decided to increase the bank's capital for the third time in its history to double its investment in Ukraine (December).

The UN announced the creation of a recovery trust fund. As of 2023, Denmark, Luxembourg, and South Korea alone have contributed about USD 6 million to the fund. The UN expects to raise around USD 300 million over the next five years. Also, Japan announced it was ready to allocate USD 4.5 billion for the needs of Ukraine's post-war reconstruction (December).

Sanctions policy



	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	4
TOTAL SCORE	A	A-

The Global Sanctions Coalition and most actors in Ukraine were proactively engaged in ramping up the pressure of sanctions on Russia. Yet, the fact that some EU member-states reached certain red lines in their economies hampered the introduction of wide-scale and consistent sanctions to some extent. The efficiency of EU sanctions continues to decline as Russia has created extensive schemes to bypass them. So far, the EU has not synchronised its sanctions against Russia and Belarus.

Political interest/engagement

Tougher and more coordinated sanctions against Russia were among the key priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy in 2023. Ukraine's diplomacy was working proactively, on multiple tracks and levels, to restrict Russia's capacity to wage its aggressive war against Ukraine as much as possible. In addition to the President, the Head of the OPU, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs work on this issue consistently, as well as other agencies, including the National Corruption Prevention Agency, security agencies, etc. In his address to the VRU on Constitution Day (28.06), President Zelenskyy highlighted the existing sanctions coalition and the importance of sanctions in accomplishing victory.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of Ukraine's Foreign Policy Strategy (18.04) has a strong focus on increasing the pressure of sanctions. Among other things, it mentions interaction and coordination with foreign partners on strengthening and expanding the sanction pressure on Russia and other countries; enforcement of sanctions on the entities responsible for gross violations of human rights in the occupied territory of Ukraine; restrictions under the new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Mechanism, etc.

Strategic communications

Ukraine's President, Head of the OPU, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and heads of other ministries and agencies communicated consistently to advocate for stronger sanctions from Ukraine's partners. Most speeches, statements and other public instruments of communication prioritised ramping up sanctions as key leverage to push Russia to end the war.

Signals about strengthening international and European sanctions against Russia and prevention of bypassing came at all top- and high-level meetings, as well as in President Zelenskyy's addresses to the European Council (February, June, October), the European Commission's College of Commissioners (October), UN Security Council (September), NATO PA (October), and other international organisations, parliaments and institutions in partner-states. Also, they were included in joint statements and communiqués following bilateral visits of Ukrainian top officials.

The Yermak-McFaul International Working Group on Russian Sanctions presented a new action plan to ramp up sanctions against Russia (April). It designed a document on stronger sanctions against the Russian defence industry (July) and recommendations on stronger controls over foreign-made components Russia uses in its UAVs (August).

The public List of International Sponsors of War launched by the National Corruption Prevention Agency became an efficient way to influence foreign companies that stayed in the Russian market. It became an effective tool of pressure on international businesses that continued to pay taxes to the Russian budget, even if they were not violating sanctions. The MFA and other government agencies supported this work with communication on social media.

The mechanism of regular meetings by the President's Head of the Office with the leaders of diplomatic institutions of EU member-states, and the Global Sanctions Coalition served as an impactful instrument of international communication.

Activities

As part of the multitrack work on tougher and more consistent sanctions against Russia, Ukraine followed the approach of cementing the respective signals in bilateral and multilateral documents following summits and high-level meetings.

Constant synchronisation of sanctions between Ukraine and its international partners – to secure their impact on the aggressor state – and coordination of enforcement – especially in the sectors of the economy that are the most sensitive for Russia – were among the priorities of international work for Ukrainian government agencies engaged in the development and implementation of the national sanctions policy.

Examples of Ukraine's homework on this include regular imposition of sanctions – such as sanctions against 300 individuals and 150 legal entities introduced by President Zelenskyy's decrees (November).

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry constantly worked with partner states on new packages of sanctions in order to stifle Russia's capacity to fund its war machine

further and bypass sanctions. This was the priority of external communication for both the Ministry and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The leadership of the President's Office worked on this aspect, too. In their meetings with the leaders of diplomatic institutions of EU member-states and the Global Sanctions Coalition, they sent clear signals on the efficiency of international sanctions and the need to ramp up sanctions policy against Russia and its partner countries. For example, in a meeting in December, the impact of international sanctions was pointed out, but the need was highlighted to strengthen sanctions – and start working on the 13th package of sanctions in the EU context, among other things. The Yermak-McFaul Group drafted seven concept papers with specific proposals on how to strengthen sanctions against Russia. The *Impact of Sanctions on the Russian Economy* research was published (March) jointly with the experts of the Kyiv School of Economics. It confirmed the consistent increase in the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy – through export restrictions on Russian fuels, among other factors.

President Zelenskyy highlighted the importance of consistently strengthening sanctions at the meeting of EU foreign ministers (2.10). He expressed concern about the pause between the 11th and the 12th packages of sanctions and focused on the introduction of stronger sanctions against Russia's defence industry, including bans on the production of missiles and drones. Also, he spoke of the efforts to prevent bypassing of sanctions and to expand sanctions to cover Iran as a supplier of weapons to Russia.

When it comes to Ukraine's priorities in the sanction policy, it conducted proactive work with representatives of Global South. The need to introduce additional sanctions against Russia was part of the agenda at President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula meeting in Malta (October).

Ukraine's President repeatedly raised the issues about the impact of sanctions on the duration of Russia's war against Ukraine with the President of the European Commission.

The G7 meeting with Ukraine in Hiroshima (May) and the talks between the presidents of Ukraine and the USA in Washington (December) illustrated what a productive summit means for Ukraine. Joint steps on sanctions were the key highlight of both meetings. When talks were launched on the security commitments of partner states, including the US (October) and France (August),

to Ukraine, Ukraine insisted on strong sanctions and the inevitable confiscation of Russia's assets as important elements of deterring Russia's aggression.

The sanctions policy against Russia was the central theme of the Crimea Platform summit (October).

Results

In 2023, the international sanctions coalition continued its consistent steps to increase the pressure on Russia. The EU, jointly with G7 and members of the sanctions coalition, put in place important bans on the imports of Russian diamonds; extended financial restrictions; expanded the list of the entities that directly support Russia's military industry; banned exports to the EU of electronic components Ukraine found in captured Russian weapon systems, dual-use items, sensitive items and many other things. Worth a separate mention are the sanctions against Russia's civil nuclear sector imposed by the US and the UK but not yet joined by the EU – among other things, because of the stance of the countries that depend on the supply of Russian nuclear fuel.

For the first time, the EU created a mechanism to punish third-country companies and the countries that help Russia bypass sanctions. However, the respective national agencies of EU member-states remain the key enforcers, and comprehensive measures have not yet been applied.

The EU passed only three packages of sanctions (25.02, 23.06, 18.12) in 2023. This points to the fact that some EU member-states reached certain red lines about the impact of sanctions on national economies.

The joint declaration of Ukraine and Canada (June), the Joint Declaration of the President of Ukraine and the Prime Minister of Portugal (July), the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Ukraine and Romania (October) and others contained clear provisions on the need to ramp up sanctions against Russia. The commitment to further increase the pressure of sanctions on Russia was demonstrated in the Joint Declaration Ukraine signed with Belgium and the Netherlands (May), the Joint Declaration of the Presidents of Ukraine, Slovakia, and Czechia (April), and other multilateral documents.

The EU imposed sanctions separately on Iranian companies that supply weapons to Russia. However, it has not synchronised sanctions against Russia and Belarus. Russia used Belarus as the key outpost for setting up and running schemes to bypass international sanctions.

The deliveries of the Yermak-McFaul International Working Group on Russian Sanctions were used as the basis for over 70% of the sanctions implemented by the US, EU, UK and other countries. The group's work resulted in an embargo and price caps on Russian oil and oil products, as well as full blocking sanctions against the 20 biggest Russian banks. Russia was stripped of all rights at FATF. Apart from that, an unprecedented list of dual-use items was covered by trade restrictions; individual sanctions were applied to thousands of individuals from various spheres, and a coordination mechanism was set up to implement G7 sanctions.

However, all this did not have the turning-point economic effect on the aggressor state counter to expectations for 2023. For example, no revision of price caps for the Russian oil transported by sea and no sanctions on LNG and the key banks that service energy sector transactions – including GazPromBank – substantially diminish the impact of sanctions in this key sector for the Russian economy.

Worth noting is the proactive stance of G7 on sanctions. Coupled with the diplomatic efforts of Ukraine, it ensured international sanctions on some important sectors, such as the imports of diamonds, stronger export controls over dual-use items, and more. In the Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine (July), G7 signalled the intent to keep increasing the price of aggression for Russia, including through sanctions and export controls.

Military diplomacy

A-

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	5	4
TOTAL SCORE	A	A-

The supply of weapons and security guarantees were the key issues on Ukraine's foreign policy agenda on every level. Diplomatic efforts took place amid fear of escalation, the unpreparedness of the production base in partner countries for a high-intensity conflict, and the growing polarization within some key partners, which had a negative impact on the outcome of these efforts. As a result, Ukraine's diplomatic focus shifted to its own production of weapons and co-production with partners. The G7 declaration on security commitments to Ukraine was a starting point for bilateral talks with a number of countries.

Political interest/engagement

All representatives of Ukraine, from President and Minister of Foreign Affairs to Ministers of Defence, Verkhovna Rada Speaker, civil society and opposition leaders, repeatedly raised the issue of supply of weapons – especially the weapons that would help Ukraine defeat Russia, not just avoid losing the war against Russia – on every available platform. Ukraine’s President and Prime Minister thanked for the delivered weapons in their meetings with their foreign peers.

Foreign Minister Kuleba said (18.02) that “the speed and consistency of the supply of weapons” to support the counteroffensive was the top priority for Ukrainian diplomacy in 2023. Ukrainian diplomats also worked proactively to obtain long-range weapons and airplanes and train Ukrainian pilots.

During several months in the run-up to the July NATO summit, Ukrainian top officials and politicians focused on getting an invitation to join NATO for Ukraine. After the G7 declarations on security commitments to Ukraine were signed, a lot of focus – especially from the President’s Office – was on bilateral talks with the committing countries. The President’s Office – the MFA and the VRU Speaker to a lesser extent – worked proactively on communicating about and building support for Ukraine’s Peace Formula proposed by President Zelenskyy in 2022.

In the meeting with ambassadors (2-3.08), President Zelenskyy listed “the arrangement of consistent supply of weapons and conditions for co-production of defence products with other countries” and “integration of Ukraine into the EU and NATO, as well as the shaping of security guarantees” as priorities for Ukraine’s diplomats.

Verkhovna Rada Speaker R. Stefanchuk raised the issue of Ukraine’s Peace Formula, engaged proactively in promoting Ukraine’s NATO membership in the run-up to the summit, and thanked Ukraine’s partners for the military assistance they had provided.

Strategic communications

In their communication, Ukrainian officials – including ministers of foreign affairs and defence – consistently thanked Ukraine’s partners for the weapons

provided to Ukraine and called for further support. The series of missile attacks against Ukraine's critical infrastructure made the issue of air defence, and F-16 fighter jets all the more relevant. President Zelenskyy communicated proactively with international mass media. According to Slovo I Dilo, a Ukrainian digital outlet, Ukrainian and international media published an average of six interviews with President Zelenskyy per month in 2023. 97% of President Zelenskyy's communication is with foreign journalists. Other top officials, including Foreign Minister Kuleba and Commander-in-Chief of AFU V. Zaluzhnyi, published their articles explaining Ukraine's position.

Ukrainian top officials advocated for the provision of weapons and security commitments to Ukraine at major security conferences. Ukraine's three priority topics at the Munich Security Conference (February) included the provision of long-range missiles and fighter jets and Ukraine's membership in NATO. At the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's biggest defence forum (June), Defence Minister O. Reznikov met with defence ministers from Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand, among others. He thanked the partners for their support and pointed out that "the rule of law should prevail over the rule of forces. Ukraine should win this war that Russia started."

Ukrainian officials and government agencies used digital media to communicate their messages. The Defence Ministry's X (Twitter) account stood out as one of the most influential communication channels, with over 2 million followers. The videos where Ukraine thanked its partners were creative and often went viral.

Foreign Minister Kuleba highlighted the need for innovative communication. It was often public and sharp on the one hand, while also engaging social media users in putting pressure on partners in talks (an interview for Forbes 24.08).

It is worth mentioning the coordinated nature of messages and the different channels used to communicate these messages. Government representatives worked on their levels with their respective partners. Communication was both public and non-public, as the same issues were raised in closed-door meetings and negotiations, among others.

Civil society initiatives were aligned with those of the government, raising the issues of delivering sufficient quantities of weapons to Ukraine and Ukraine's membership in NATO during their trips abroad.

Activities

The President of Ukraine attended 12 summits, from the European Council meetings to the Arab League summit, and had bilateral meetings with nearly 120 leaders. In almost every meeting, he raised the issue of security and military assistance for Ukraine. Representatives of the President's Office were proactive with meetings and visits, too.

Throughout 2023, the Ukraine Defence Contact Group had ten meetings (Rammstein Format). Four of those took place online. Ukraine's Defence Ministry was engaged in organising the meetings and bilateral negotiations with member-states on assistance packages. In the meetings, Ukraine's allies joined forces in the tank defence coalition, aviation coalition, maritime coalition, land air defence coalition, ammunition supply coalition, IT coalition, demining coalition, etc. The Commander-in-Chief of AFU regularly spoke with the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General M. Milley, and Supreme Allied Commander Europe, C. Cavoli. Ukrainian ministers of defence spoke with the US Defence Secretary, National Security Advisor and other officials.

Foreign Minister Kuleba consistently raised the point of expediting the purchase of ammunition for Ukraine by the EU in meetings with his peers, continued support for Ukraine, and reinforcing its capacity, the delivery of Western fighter jets and training of pilots, and the urgency of NATO membership for Ukraine. Ukrainian MPs worked proactively to advocate the supply of weapons to Ukraine. A big delegation of Ukrainian MPs visited the US, with meetings primarily held in Washington D.C. (October). In November, a Verkhovna Rada delegation met with the US Republicans on the local level. Y. Cherniev, Deputy Head of the Parliamentary Committee for National Security, Defence and Intelligence and Head of Ukraine's parliamentary delegation to the NATO PA, interacted proactively with Western partners on the supply and production of weapons. Former President Poroshenko consistently spoke of weapon supply to Ukraine in his foreign visits and conferences. At the same time, opposition MPs stated that the Verkhovna Rada leadership was obstructing their advocacy efforts abroad.

Work was done on the implementation of Ukraine's Peace Formula. Throughout 2023, national security advisors met in Copenhagen (25.06), Jeddah (5-6.08), and

Malta (28.10). The number of attendees grew consistently, from 15 in Copenhagen – including four countries of the Global South – to 42 in Jeddah – including China, India, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia. 66 countries and international organisations were present at the Malta meeting. Ten working groups were established with Ukrainian and foreign officials, and each was tasked with implementing a specific aspect of the Peace Formula.

In late September, Kyiv hosted the First International Defence Industries Forum co-organised by the Ministry of Strategic Industries, MoD, and MFA. 252 companies from 31 countries attended it. The objective of the forum was to strengthen defence cooperation.

Throughout 2023, Western countries trained the Ukrainian military. Germany is a leader among EU countries. It trained 10,000 Ukrainian military personnel. Between June 3, 2022, and November 2023, over 30,000 Ukrainian servicemen were trained in the UK. The training effort engaged Australia, Denmark, Canada, Lithuania, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, and Finland. The US trained nearly 20,000 Ukrainian servicemen. Ukrainian F-16 pilots have been trained in Denmark and the US. A training centre was opened in Romania (November), where the training of Ukrainian pilots commences in 2024.

See the NATO section for more details on cooperation under the framework of this organisation.

Results

Early 2023 saw a turning point in the approach of Western countries to supplying weapons to Ukraine. As a result, Ukraine began to receive far more weapons than in 2022. Its allies authorised the transfer of nearly 1,250 units of equipment to Ukraine, including tanks and other heavy armoured vehicles. However, deliveries began to slow down gradually from May.

Similarly, along with the shrinking stocks in Western countries and Ukraine's unsuccessful counteroffensive, the promises of new deliveries changed – shrinking almost 90% compared to the same period of the previous year. This change occurred in August-October.

The US remained the leader in assistance for Ukraine in 2023. It provided Ukraine with USD 10.9bn of budget support and over USD 21bn worth of military

support, including Patriots, Abrams, armoured vehicles, ATACMS, DPICM, air defence, missiles, artillery shells, demining equipment and more. EU member-states and other allies, including the UK, Canada, Japan, etc., provided the rest of the assistance. The Baltic States allocated the biggest assistance in terms of the percentage of their budgets. The US, Germany, the UK, the EU, and Norway were the top providers of military assistance. The EU, the US, the UK, Japan, and Norway were the top providers of financial support.

At the same time, the US did not manage to pass the decision on further support of weapon deliveries to Ukraine by the end of its fiscal year in late September. This is the result of the domestic political struggle. The EU's financial assistance package worth EUR 50bn, which includes loans and grants to be allocated to Ukraine over the next four years, was passed in November. But Hungary blocked the final decision in December.

Ukraine, the EU and NATO agreed to establish a trilateral coordination mechanism (February) between Ukrainian producers and companies based in EU and NATO member-states to streamline the production of weapons for Ukraine's needs. 18 European countries signed an agreement on joint procurement of ammunition for Ukraine and pledged to supply a million shells over the course of the year (21.03). By early December, EU member-states only supplied 480,000 shells to Ukraine.

At the NATO Vilnius Summit (11-12.07), 11 countries signed the memorandum to train Ukrainian pilots to fly Western fighter jets. These included Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, and the UK. The G7 — including the EU — signed the declaration on security commitments to Ukraine. Shortly after, talks with the US began. By the end of 2023, Ukraine launched consultations on security commitments with seven countries, and the agreement with the UK was at the final stage of discussion.

Ukrainian companies signed 20 agreements and memoranda on drone production, armoured vehicle maintenance and production, and ammunition production with foreign partners at the International Defence Industries Forum. This cooperation will have a number of formats, including co-production, technology transfer, and supply of components. The Alliance of Defence Industries was set up with 38 companies from 19 countries.

Economic diplomacy

A

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	4	5
TOTAL SCORE	A-	A-

In 2023, economic diplomacy was on a par with military diplomacy in Ukraine's system of external priorities. Strategic communications became less effective under the pressure of negative external factors, and the main activities were focused on macro-financial assistance, reconstruction, and foreign trade, as well as on the tightening of sanctions against Russia and confiscation of its assets. The main foreign policy victory of the year was the European Council's decision to begin negotiations with Ukraine on its accession to the EU, which opened a new chapter for Ukraine's economic diplomacy.

Political interest/engagement

Ensuring international economic support for the country is a priority task for Ukrainian diplomacy, which is as important as the military component. As in the previous year, there is a national political consensus on the matter. The yearly performance results and the next economic priorities were presented at a special event on the occasion of the Day of Diplomatic Service. Consolidated efforts of the Ukrainian authorities are focused on the following key areas: accumulation of macro-financial and reconstruction assistance, stimulation of foreign investment and investment risk insurance, promotion of Ukrainian exports, and the strengthening of sanctions policy against Russia.

The high priority of economic diplomacy is demonstrated by the President of Ukraine, the VRU Speaker, the Prime Minister and members of the Government (the First Vice Prime Minister, the Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Infrastructure). The issues of expanding economic pressure, investment protection, economic aspects of integration into the EU, economic cooperation with the USA, the UK, and Poland, as well as within GUAM, BSEC and the Three Seas Initiative, industrial cooperation with the USA, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Canada are reflected in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04). A separate section of the Action Plan was devoted to “Economic Diplomacy and Sectoral Cooperation” (investment protection, economic recovery, tourism, food security, transport, intergovernmental commissions, UNIDO, OECD, Nazovni, etc.)

The President of Ukraine named the economy and recovery among the top priorities in his speech at a meeting with the heads of Ukraine’s foreign diplomatic missions (2.08).

Strategic communications

Economic diplomacy is a constant topic in communications with the target audiences on the part of the President, the VRU Speaker, the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Minister. The key messages of economic diplomacy are broadcast

through various channels: The President's speeches to domestic and foreign audiences, the Ukraine Recovery Conference (June, London), and a number of other recovery forums and conferences, such initiatives and platforms as Advantage Ukraine, United24, Nazovni, etc. Economic diplomacy is also reflected in the MFA's new initiative, "Honorary Ambassador of Ukraine".

Compared to the previous year, strategic communications in 2023 were somewhat less effective under the pressure of a number of negative factors in partner states, such as erosion of public attention to the full-scale Russian armed aggression amid new armed conflicts, internal political processes (the change of governments in Slovakia and Poland, Hungary's obstruction of Ukraine's integration into the EU, political confrontation in the United States), counteraction to Ukrainian foreign economic activity (the blocking of checkpoints at Ukraine's western border with the EU by carriers).

Ukrainians who have found refuge abroad due to Russia's full-scale armed aggression and continue to integrate into the economic environment of their host countries actively were left out of the focus of strategic communications this year (according to a study by Gradus Research (22.09-05.10.2023), more than two-thirds of Ukrainians abroad are employed in various sectors).

Activities

Foreign economic tasks are coordinated and implemented by the Main Department of Foreign Policy and European Integration of the Office of the President of Ukraine, the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation, the Department of Economic Diplomacy of the MFA, the Department of Foreign Economic Activity and Trade Protection of the Ministry of Economy, the Investment Promotion Office, the Office for Entrepreneurship and Export Development, the Export Credit Agency, and the foreign diplomatic corps.

The issue of international support for Ukraine's recovery, broached in Lugano (4-5.07.2022), gained traction with the Ukraine Recovery Conference held in London (21.06) and the announcement of the next such conference in Germany in 2024.

The EU-Ukraine Summit in Kyiv (3.06) adopted a priority action plan for Ukraine's integration into the EU internal market for 2023-2024. Traditional formats concerning the implementation of the Association Agreement were also used throughout the year.

The institutional framework for trade was developed jointly with partners. The Free Trade Agreement with Canada was updated, and negotiations with Türkiye are expected to finish in early 2024 with the ratification of a Free Trade Agreement by the parliaments of both countries. Ukrainian businesses entering foreign markets received practical support through the Nazovni platform, including exhibition participation, retail promotion, search for contractors, etc. More than 400 Ukrainian companies took part in 80 foreign exhibitions on preferential terms.

The work done to strengthen the presence of Ukrainian diplomacy on the African continent (meetings and conversations between the President and the Foreign Minister of Ukraine with African leaders, the Foreign Minister's tour of eight countries of the continent, the launch of new embassies and agreements on their opening, interparliamentary contacts, and an information tour for African media) creates the preconditions for expanding economic cooperation with the region next year.

Significant efforts were made during the year to resume exports through seaports after Russia's withdrawal from the Grain Deal. The Black Sea Grain Initiative and Grain from Ukraine initiative became the basis for cooperation with donor partners and recipient countries from Africa and the Middle East (seven grain bulkers were sent to Yemen, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Somalia).

At the end of the year, a crisis response was required after Polish carriers demanded the cancellation of the "transport visa-free regime" for Ukraine and blocked the border, with similar protests later spreading to the Slovak and Hungarian borders with Ukraine. Despite the efforts of Ukrainian diplomacy and the unblocking of the border, the conflict cannot be considered resolved.

Results

The total amount of external financing received by Ukraine in 2023 is USD 38.4 billion. This year, its largest sources are EU macro-financial assistance

(USD 17.9 billion), US grants (USD 10.9 billion), IMF funds under the Extended Fund Facility (USD 4.5 billion), and concessional financing from Canada (USD 1.8 billion) and Japan (USD 1.5 billion).

The EU summit (December) was marked by a historic decision to open negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU, which, along with the political component, has a major economic dimension. An agreement was also reached on the creation of a EUR 50 billion Ukraine Facility for 2024-2027, but the decision was postponed due to Hungary's position. The EU extended its duty-free trade regulations for a year and cancelled anti-dumping duties against Ukrainian producers. The USA also extended its duty-free regulations for Ukrainian steel for another year.

In 2023, Ukraine managed to consolidate the previous year's success in restoring agricultural exports. Over the year, Ukraine exported 67.5 million tonnes of agricultural products. Despite Russia's blocking of grain exports, withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, attacks on ships and grain infrastructure, and restrictions on grain transit through Eastern European countries, Ukraine exported 12 million tonnes of grain via the Black Sea corridor. The humanitarian initiative Grain from Ukraine was extended, accumulating over USD 100 million.

Eight additional markets were opened for Ukrainian goods (Albania, Canada, Kuwait, Lebanon, Indonesia, South Africa, and Turkiye) in 2023.

In general, foreign trade deteriorated in 2023 as Ukraine's imports reached USD 63.5 billion (compared to USD 59.51 billion in 2022) and exports USD 36.2 billion (compared to USD 44.17 billion in 2022). The top five trading partners (in goods) were China (USD 12.8 billion), Poland (USD 11.3 billion), Turkiye (USD 7.1 billion), Germany (USD 6.9 billion), and Romania (USD 5.4 billion). The main importers to Ukraine were China (USD 10.4 billion), Poland (USD 6.6 billion), Germany (USD 4.9 billion), and Turkiye (USD 4.7 billion). The largest exports went to Poland (USD 4.7 billion), Romania (USD 3.8 billion), China and Turkiye (USD 2.4 billion each). Three product groups accounted for two-thirds of the imports: machinery, equipment and transport, chemicals, and fuel and energy products. The bulk of Ukraine's exports was made up of food products and, to a much lesser extent, metals and metal products, machinery, equipment and transport.

Energy diplomacy

B

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	4
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	4
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	4	4
TOTAL SCORE	B+	B

Ukraine showed one of the best results in the energy sector as far as the assessment of progress in implementing European legislation in 2023 is concerned. Thanks to the joint efforts of politicians, government officials, and energy specialists, Ukraine managed to carry out an unprecedented campaign of repairs and preparations for the next heating season in the midst of war. Yet, Ukraine's energy diplomacy failed to convey to the world the scale of the destruction of the Kakhovka HPP by Russian troops and their control over the Zaporizhzhia NPP.



Political interest/engagement

In 2023, military threats significantly reduced the political involvement of Ukraine's top political officials in energy diplomacy. The main role shifted to the VPM for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine and the Ministry of Energy, which focused on issues related to European integration (legislation, regulatory policy) and coordination of international assistance to restore the energy infrastructure damaged by Russian missile and drone attacks.

In negotiations with foreign partners, the President of Ukraine focused on obtaining security assistance, in particular, on strengthening air and missile defence to protect energy infrastructure. The MoD was also actively involved in the security component of energy diplomacy in the framework of meetings in the Ramstein format.

The MFA, in cooperation with the Yermak-McFaul Expert Group on Russian Sanctions, consolidated international efforts to implement sanctions policy against the Russian energy sector (reducing opportunities to circumvent sanctions, secondary sanctions, and initiating restrictions on nuclear cooperation). Indirectly, the energy sector was mentioned in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04), in particular, with regard to attracting international assistance for the restoration of energy infrastructure, developing international legal mechanisms to bring Rosatom to justice, as well as holding consultations with the EU, Germany and the USA on Ukraine's energy security, deepening cooperation within the Ukraine-UK-Poland alliance, including on energy security, implementation of the European Green Deal policy, participation in nuclear energy research, etc.

Strategic communications

In 2023, Ukraine's energy diplomacy was focused on several key areas in order to convey to partners the needs of the domestic energy sector, given the damage to almost 40% of the energy infrastructure, the options for assistance that Ukraine can provide to the EU at this stage (natural gas storage), and the prospects for development plans within the European energy market.

The key efforts of the President of Ukraine, heads of security agencies and the MFA were aimed at conveying to the leadership of NATO, the USA, the EU and other partners the need to supply defence equipment against Russian missile and drone attacks, in particular for preserving energy infrastructure.

The President of Ukraine used the information about the destruction of Ukraine's energy infrastructure during his numerous meetings with foreign leaders who visited Ukraine (the leaders of the European Commission, Germany, and France), as well as in his speeches on international platforms, in particular as an argument for receiving military assistance from the United States, the United Kingdom, and others.

The Ukrainian government's active communications with foreign partners during the visits of top politicians and officials to Ukraine and participation in foreign events were aimed at facilitating the implementation of numerous assistance projects to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure and meet commitments in preparation for the decision to open negotiations on EU accession.

The Ministry of Energy maintained an active dialogue with the EU as part of the development of a long-term green energy transition policy (EU Energy Council) and coordination of international assistance through the Energy Community and USAID. As part of their visits to Ukraine, EU and US officials were taken to see the energy infrastructure facilities that were damaged by Russian attacks and restored with the help of partners.

Activities

Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine O. Stefanishyna was a key figure who held numerous talks, visits and meetings with European partners as part of Ukraine's European integration efforts, including energy diplomacy. The main topics of energy diplomacy were the synchronisation of Ukrainian legislation and its compliance with the European *acquis communautaire*, protection of Ukraine's interests, and agreement on further European integration steps and cooperation.

The Ministry of Energy held numerous meetings with government officials of partner countries, representatives of international energy institutions,

professional organisations and business associations to form partnerships and attract assistance for the future green energy reconstruction of Ukraine.

The MFA was engaged in a dialogue with partner countries to mount sanctions pressure on Russia, including the enforcement of restrictions on energy trade and the extension of sanctions on nuclear energy and liquefied natural gas trade.

At the same time, the dialogue on future reconstruction was rather abstract, with Ukraine not committing to a timeframe for preparing the relevant legislative framework and addressing problems with justice and investment protection.

State authorities are distancing themselves from interacting with representatives of NGOs, think tanks and the media. Energy policy is developed behind closed doors, without public hearings and without taking into account the interests of communities and business associations. This negatively affects joint efforts to promote Ukraine's interests in energy diplomacy.

Results

Thanks to the efforts of Ukraine's leadership, the air and missile defence of energy infrastructure has been significantly improved with modern air defence systems. Their effective use during the Russian attacks in autumn and December confirmed that the priorities of Ukraine's cooperation with partner countries were correct.

The work done in 2022 to attract technical assistance facilitated the supply of significant amounts of new equipment (825 shipments of humanitarian aid for the energy sector), which allowed Ukraine to conduct a large-scale repair campaign of conventional energy facilities, prepare for the threat of new massive Russian strikes, and significantly reduce the risks of large-scale destruction and disruption of the energy system.

Ukraine adopted a number of important legislative and regulatory acts (REMIT, support for green reconstruction and energy decentralisation), which allowed it to achieve a high assessment of compliance with European requirements and contributed to the decision to open negotiations on EU accession.

State-owned energy companies became important ambassadors of Ukraine. In particular, Ukrenergo became a full member of ENTSO-E, while the Gas

Transmission System Operator of Ukraine and the gas storage operator Ukrtransgaz became partners of European gas companies thanks to the transport and storage of gas reserves (about 3 billion m³ of gas for European traders), thus improving the EU's energy security. The use of nuclear fuel for VVER-440 reactors, which Energoatom and Westinghouse jointly developed, has begun, which will end the Russian monopoly in many EU countries.

Ukraine became a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, joining such leading countries as Canada, the United States, France, and Germany.

Despite considerable efforts, Ukraine failed to convince its partners of the need to impose sanctions on the Russian nuclear industry and Rosatom as the only centre for developing technologies for nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons. Sanctions against the export of Russian oil and oil products were tightened with considerable difficulty, but they will only have an effect in 2024-2025.

The government's practice of developing the Energy Strategy until 2050 and the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan until 2030, which were conducted behind closed doors without public discussion, was a major disappointment.

Public diplomacy

A

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	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	5	5
ACTIVITIES	5	5
RESULTS	4	4
TOTAL SCORE	A-	A-

In 2023, despite all the challenges posed by the war, Ukraine's public diplomacy continued to gain momentum and develop as a full-fledged area important for strengthening support, maintaining focus on Ukraine, and countering Russian disinformation. The Ukrainian Institute is increasing its potential. There is a growing demand for cooperation with the Ukrainian expert community, and active work is being done in various fields to increase Ukraine's visibility in the world through positive narratives.

Political interest/engagement

Although public diplomacy is not a cornerstone of senior officials' speeches, some of its tasks, directions and tools are constantly mentioned in the context of strengthening allied support for Ukraine, maintaining focus on Ukraine, countering (pro-)Russian narratives, and increasing Ukraine's visibility in the world. As the President noted in his speech at a meeting with the heads of foreign diplomatic missions (2.08), "the world helps those whom it understands", and this understanding can be ensured, among other things, through public diplomacy. In particular, V. Zelenskyy spoke about the importance of information, cultural, educational, and sports projects and mentioned the role of experts, journalists, and the business community in promoting the Ukrainian agenda in the world. Some aspects of cultural diplomacy were discussed in the President's speech to the VRU on the occasion of Constitution Day of Ukraine (28.06), in which he noted that "Ukrainian culture is an export industry (...) that generates constant and significant global attention to Ukraine". The contribution made by expert diplomacy was emphasised by the Deputy Head of the Presidential Office, I. Zhovkva, who thanked NGOs for advocacy tours to the EU (interview with The Kyiv Post, 3.01.2024).

Foreign Minister D. Kuleba and First Deputy Minister E. Dzhaparova traditionally showed a high interest in public diplomacy. First Lady O. Zelenska was actively involved in these efforts, too.

Public diplomacy as a separate direction is present in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04). Its main tasks (including in cooperation with civil society institutions) include systemic counteraction to Russian disinformation and neutralisation of Russian propaganda, as well as strengthening international support for Ukraine in countering Russia's armed aggression.

Strategic communications

The communication component was ensured at a high level, given the specifics/content of the public diplomacy area, when interviews and speeches by the President, heads of ministries, foreign diplomatic missions, and specialised

institutions to convey important messages to foreign audiences were all elements of public diplomacy. The practice of press tours organised by the MFA for leading African and Latin American media has been successful. Experts, scholars, and cultural figures were also active in comments to the media, tweets, podcasts, expert blogs, and speeches at conferences, roundtables, festivals, etc.

Activities

Despite the challenges posed by the war and often working in crisis conditions, Ukraine's public diplomacy continued to gain momentum. The Ukrainian Institute (UI), as the central institution responsible for the implementation of cultural diplomacy, is increasing its potential. During the year, the UI opened its foreign offices in Berlin (March) and Paris (November). The fourth International Forum of Cultural Diplomacy was held (4.12, London). A group of experts was formed to expand the geography of the UI's activities to include Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. The English-language platform Insight UA was launched to introduce Ukrainian culture to foreigners. A decolonisation guide for foreign museums was developed to more effectively facilitate the reclaiming by Ukraine of artists' names, which is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing reattribution process.

As it was not possible to hold the Eurovision Song Contest in Ukraine due to the Russian armed aggression, it was hosted by Liverpool, UK (May). The Eurovision Song Contest was accompanied by numerous cultural events organised to present Ukraine and Ukrainian culture (exhibitions, installations, etc.). A total of 24 cultural projects were organised, 19 of which were collaborations between British and Ukrainian artists.

The Ukrainian diaspora, representatives of the artistic, expert, and scientific community were also active in foreign diplomacy, initiating and participating in a huge number of public events that told the world about Ukraine, Ukrainian culture, history, and the war waged against it by Russia.

Over the year, a huge number of Ukrainian cultural projects were implemented abroad, reaching a total audience of millions both online and offline. The Ukrainian cultural product was presented at various exhibitions (including on

the side-lines of international events), film, music and literature festivals, as part of artistic collaborations, etc. Ukrainian audio guides continued to appear in leading museums (already in as many as 42 countries). Ukrainian publishers presented Ukrainian books at international book fairs (Warsaw, London, Prague, Frankfurt, etc.), and Ukrainian bookshelves expanded their geography to 10 more countries (in total, they are now open in more than 40 countries and at UNESCO headquarters). Ukrainian writers continue to speak at important international venues, where they convey to the widest possible foreign audience the scale of Russia's crimes in Ukraine. A significant number of cultural events also included a charitable component to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen (6.09) was held, during which 25 memoranda were signed. The MFA held the first-ever Honorary Ambassadors Award Ceremony to recognise those Ukrainians and foreigners who contribute to the promotion of Ukraine in the international arena in nominations covering, among other things, all areas of public diplomacy (22.12).

Information campaigns were conducted (e.g. Grain from Ukraine, Boycott Russian Sport, Light Up Ukraine, Free the Leopards, Taurus for Ukraine; Real Peace, Not Appeasement). In order to strengthen information, analytical and communication support for foreign policy activities, the practice of expert cooperation continues in many areas (in particular, the Crimea Platform expert network, the expert group to support the tenth point of the Peace Formula, etc.) Representatives of the expert community organised advocacy tours to countries strategically important for Ukraine's foreign policy interests (e.g. India, South Korea, Brazil, South Africa, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Turkiye, etc.)

Results

The opening of two UI offices in countries strategically important for Ukraine strengthens the institutional capacity of public diplomacy and will contribute to the growth of Ukraine's visibility through effective programme activities. The issues of reattribution raised in the context of decolonisation are gradually yielding results in the world's leading museums. Ukrainian cinema continues to be popularised through numerous presentations abroad, nominations for prestigious

film awards, and appearances on Netflix. Despite the war, Ukrainian brands continue to enter global markets.

The Holodomor of 1932-1933 was recognised as genocide by nine more countries at the parliamentary level and by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Interest in Ukrainian studies is growing, and the demand for Ukrainian experts is still high. The emergence of more Ukrainian scholars and experts at international events helps to refute pro-Russian narratives. However, these narratives are still often present and sometimes deep-rooted in Western academic circles. At the same time, the issue of expert and academic diplomacy is quite acute in Ukraine due to the problem of funding and restrictions on crossing the state border for men. There is not always a unified position on the participation of Ukrainians in international events when Russians are present. The existence of grant programmes and scholarships provided by some foreign institutions jointly for Ukrainians, Russians and Belarusians is still problematic.

Despite efforts to make Ukrainian higher education more attractive, foreigners cannot be actively involved in educational programmes due to security risks associated with Russian aggression. Similarly, the capacity to hold various on-site events in Ukraine during the war remains limited (although possible).

Based on the results of 2023, Ukraine ranked 44th out of 193 countries in the Global Soft Power Index 2024 (37th place a year ago), losing some ground in the overall standings, including in terms of influence and recognition. The only increase in the ranking was in the media and communications sector.

Nuclear Non-proliferation

B-

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	4	3
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	4	4
ACTIVITIES	4	4
RESULTS	3	4
TOTAL SCORE	B-	B-

Despite the fact that political interest in non-proliferation and nuclear energy issues decreased compared to the previous year, attention to these topics remained high. Consolidated consistent positions and activities in this area have led to positive achievements within the IAEA and in international nuclear cooperation, including positive (though not revolutionary) developments on the issue of sanctions against Rosatom.



Political interest/engagement

Political interest in non-proliferation and nuclear energy decreased compared to the previous year, although involuntarily, these issues continued to be of importance to Ukraine due to the violation of the Budapest Memorandum and the continued occupation of nuclear facilities due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The President did not pay much attention to these issues in his speeches to the Ukrainian audience. At the same time, both President V. Zelenskyy and Foreign Minister D. Kuleba mentioned this topic within the framework of the Peace Formula, in which nuclear and radiation safety is listed. The President briefly mentioned nuclear generation in his speech to the VRU on Constitution Day of Ukraine (28.06) as an important area in the decentralisation of energy sources.

Strategic communications

In general, the positions of state authorities and institutions were coordinated and reflected a correct assessment of the situation: Russia must be held accountable for violating international norms, in particular, the UN Charter and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Statute; it must leave the Zaporizhzhia NPP; and solidarity on the issue of nuclear sanctions will be essential.

At UN meetings and other international platforms, President V. Zelenskyy stated that it was inadmissible for terrorists (referring to Russia) to possess nuclear weapons, condemned the weaponizing of nuclear energy, emphasised responsibility for the Zaporizhzhia NPP, and the inadmissibility of blackmailing other countries with radiation threats. According to him, the global security architecture does not provide protection against or accountability for such actions, which casts doubt on the feasibility of nuclear weapons reduction. Nuclear issues were also communicated through the promotion of the Peace Formula, which focused not only on the members of the G7 and the G20 but also on a wider audience represented by countries from all continents.

In 2023, Ukraine was active at international non-proliferation forums. Diplomats, in their speeches, drew attention to insufficiently effective security

guarantees without legal obligations, stressing that Russia's actions create opportunities for supporters of nuclear deterrence and create pretexts for nuclear proliferation. It is a positive development that the statements create preconditions for limiting Russia's privileges in the IAEA, pointing out what exactly it has violated and appealing to Article 2 of the Statute (the organisation's objectives) to increase the role of nuclear energy in global prosperity, without furthering any military purposes.

Activities

Ukrainian top officials, including the President and the Minister of Energy, met IAEA Director General R. Grossi during his three visits to Ukraine. R. Grossi visited the South Ukrainian, Rivne, and Chornobyl NPPs to set up missions (16.01) and came for talks on the development of a plan for the safety zone around the Zaporizhzhia NPP (27.03). As a result of the talks, the concept of the zone evolved into five principles that would help ensure nuclear safety and security at ZNPP, focusing more on the plant itself and the principle that a nuclear power plant should not be attacked or used for attack, rather than on territorial aspects that had been causing problems. During his third visit (13.06), the IAEA Director General was invited to Kyiv and ZNPP to discuss the consequences and risks that arose after the Russians had blown up the Kakhovka dam. V. Zelenskyy stressed that the only way to ensure the safety of ZNPP is its demilitarisation, de-occupation and restoration of Ukrainian control.

The President took part in a meeting of the UNGA (19.09) and a special meeting of the UN Security Council on Russia's war against Ukraine and peacekeeping (20.09), where he drew attention to Russia's aggression against ZNPP and blackmail with radiation threats against other countries, accountability for these actions, and questioned Russia's right to possess nuclear weapons.

In 2023, Ukraine was active at international non-proliferation forums, such as the IAEA General Conference (at the level of the Minister of Energy) and the Preparatory Committee for the 11th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (at the level of the Permanent Representative). The delegation also included Energoatom President P. Kotin,

the acting chairman of the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine, O. Korikov, and the first deputy chairman of the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management, A. Tymchuk.

Results

Since January, Ukraine has ensured the presence of permanent teams of IAEA nuclear safety and security experts at all Ukrainian NPPs to provide technical support and assistance, check plant equipment and other needs, and report impartially on the situation.

The President of Ukraine enacted the NSDC decision on sanctions against Russia's nuclear industry (5.02). Yet, Ukraine has not yet managed to persuade its partners to introduce similar sanctions. In a resolution, the European Parliament called on EU leaders to expand the sanctions imposed because of the war with Ukraine to include the nuclear industry (3.02). The blocking of sanctions initiatives is due to the critical dependence on Rosatom's nuclear technology. Nevertheless, Ukraine, together with Westinghouse, has proposed a solution that would ruin Russia's monopoly on fuel supplies to nuclear power plants in the EU. The European Union selected the Westinghouse-led consortium to develop and supply "fully European" nuclear fuel for Russian-designed VVER pressurised water reactors.

The Energy Ministers of Ukraine and Bulgaria signed a Memorandum of Understanding on "deepening cooperation" in energy, including in the nuclear sector, while Urenco and Cameco are joining Westinghouse in the supply chain for one of Bulgaria's Kozloduy NPP units to diversify nuclear fuel supplies. The Czech Republic and Hungary have also adopted relevant governmental and parliamentary decisions to abandon Russian nuclear fuel.

A group of MEPs proposed a resolution on the effectiveness of EU sanctions (6.11), in which they noted that Rosatom had committed clear violations of nuclear safety at ZNPP and, through its subsidiaries, shared technologies and materials which are critical to the Russian defence industry. Taking into account the significant progress in reducing dependence on the Russian nuclear industry, they stressed that the EU is now in a much better position and called on its member

states to impose sanctions on Rosatom, its management and subsidiaries, and thus limit the possibility of cooperation to what is strictly necessary for the Union's energy security.

Thanks to the diplomatic efforts of the Permanent Mission to the International Organisations in Vienna, Ukraine was elected to the IAEA Board of Governors (one of the two governing bodies) for the next two-year term (2023-2025). In addition, the IAEA General Conference made significant progress compared to the previous year and adopted a separate resolution on nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine (28. 09), which called for the urgent withdrawal of all military and other unauthorised personnel from ZNPP, the immediate return of the plant under the full control of the competent authorities of Ukraine and the inclusion of the item "Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards in Ukraine" in the agenda of the 68th regular session of the General Conference scheduled for 2024.

Ukrainians abroad

B+

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	5	5
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	4	4
ACTIVITIES	4	5
RESULTS	4	4
TOTAL SCORE	B+	B+

Compared to the previous year, the Ukrainian leadership and representatives of the Ukrainian community abroad were interacting more actively in 2023. However, no significant breakthrough in terms of results was achieved. Ukrainian diaspora organisations were actively involved in helping displaced persons and the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Political interest/engagement

Political interest in Ukrainians abroad remains high as efforts to support Ukraine and counter Russian aggression and its influence in different countries are consolidated. The government understands the importance of Ukrainians abroad in lobbying for Ukraine's interests in their respective countries of residence. Throughout the year, government officials emphasised the role of the diaspora in strengthening Ukraine's international position, increasing economic and humanitarian aid, and countering Russian narratives in the information space. The need to engage the diaspora's potential for information and media campaigns was also highlighted by the leaders of parliamentary factions, including the Servant of the People, European Solidarity, and Holos.

The President identified the protection of the rights and interests of Ukrainians abroad as one of the priority tasks for Ukrainian diplomats at the Conference of Heads of Foreign Diplomatic Missions of Ukraine (2.08): "We need a new policy on diasporas and work with representatives of all generations of Ukrainian emigration. Embassies can become the authors and drivers of this new policy".

A separate section, "Protection of the rights and interests of citizens and legal entities of Ukraine abroad, relations with Ukrainians abroad", in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) covered a wide range of issues: the opening of new consulates, the introduction of visa-free regulations, the approval of the Concept and development of the State Target Programme for Cooperation with Ukrainians Abroad, thematic events on the recognition of the Holodomor as genocide, and the development of a mechanism for interagency cooperation on issues related to the return of stolen cultural property to Ukraine.

V. Zelenskyy, D. Kuleba, D. Shmyhal, and R. Stefanchuk addressed the topic of Ukrainians abroad in their speeches and comments during the year. The main issues included the implementation of the idea of multiple citizenship, the return of refugees to Ukraine, and the intensification of efforts by Ukrainian diaspora organisations to advocate for Ukraine's interests abroad.

Strategic communications

Strategic communication with Ukrainians abroad is carried out by using Ukraine's communication capabilities, such as meetings of state leaders with representatives of Ukrainian communities abroad, interviews with diaspora media, and sharing of information through the social media of foreign diplomatic missions of Ukraine. The main messages seek to engage Ukrainians abroad in more active lobbying for Ukraine's interests in their countries of residence, debunk Russian propaganda, and provide embassies with the necessary assistance.

Meetings with Ukrainian communities in their respective countries form an important part of the President's foreign visits. In particular, at an event with diaspora organisations in Argentina (11.12), V. Zelenskyy called on the Ukrainian community in Latin America to unite and establish economic and business ties among each other and Ukraine. In Canada (23.09), the President thanked Ukrainians for preserving their identity over the decades.

A large group of Ukrainian government officials, military and religious leaders joined the XII Ukrainian World Congress (19-22.10) online to greet the delegates. Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmyhal stressed the unity of the global Ukrainian community as a guarantee of Ukraine's victory and global security and thanked it for accumulating military, humanitarian, and financial support and countering propaganda.

Activities

Cooperation with Ukrainians abroad is the responsibility of the MFA and foreign diplomatic missions of Ukraine. The Ukrainian government maintains relations with Ukrainians abroad mainly through the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC), as well as other representative bodies, such as the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), the Ukrainian Central Representation of Argentina, and others. During his visits to Canada (23.09) and Argentina (11.12), President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy met representatives of Ukrainian communities. During his visit to Canada, the Prime Minister of Ukraine met representatives of the UCC (11.04), who were briefed on

Ukraine's immediate priorities and the course of the war. Ukraine's Ambassador to the United States, O. Markarova, met UCCA Vice President M. Sawkiw (01.11).

UWC delegations paid important visits to Ukraine (July, September, October, and November). In the summer, UWC delegates met high-ranking Ukrainian officials: Minister of Energy G. Galushchenko and Minister of Defence O. Reznikov (18.07). During an official visit (21.09), UWC President P. Grod met the Chief of the Main Intelligence Directorate, K. Budanov and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, D. Kuleba. The key issues discussed during the meetings included continued support for Ukraine's defenders and Ukrainian education, in particular, ensuring better opportunities for quality Ukrainian education for temporary Ukrainian migrants abroad. During the visit to Ukraine (11-13.10), UWC First Vice President S. Romaniw and Vice President V. Sorotiuk held a series of meetings with Ukraine's high-ranking officials, including Deputy Heads of the Office of the President A. Sybiha and O. Dniprov, and Acting Minister of Culture and Information Policy R. Karandiev. It was agreed that the Office of the President of Ukraine, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, the National Museum of the Holodomor Genocide and the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance would cooperate in developing a joint information campaign to commemorate the Holodomor victims worldwide. During the meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the VRU, O. Kondratiuk, the sides discussed closer cooperation between diaspora organisations and parliamentary friendship groups, the return of Ukrainian children forcibly deported to Russia, and educational and humanitarian assistance projects.

A series of meetings were held between the UWC delegation led by P. Grod and high-ranking Ukrainian legislative and executive officials, including VRU Speaker R. Stefanchuk, Prime Minister D. Shmyhal, Foreign Minister D. Kuleba and others (23-25.11). They discussed the supply of weapons to the Ukrainian army, financial support, post-war reconstruction, demining, and the education of Ukrainian children abroad.

On the anniversary of the full-scale invasion, Ukrainian communities and organisations in more than 65 countries held peaceful demonstrations, cultural and prayer events (24-26.02). A number of commemorative events were organised jointly by the Ukrainian leadership, diplomatic corps, and Ukrainians abroad to mark the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor. Ukrainian communities in

the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, the United States, Brazil, Argentina and other countries were active in collecting humanitarian aid and delivering it to Ukrainians. In many cases, these efforts were initiated by the Ukrainian communities abroad, not the Ukrainian government.

Representatives of the MFA leadership held a series of online meetings. Under the leadership of First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs E. Dzhaparova, a videoconference was held with the UWC President and heads of community organisations of Ukrainians abroad in Europe (28.09). Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Melnyk met the UWC President and representatives of Ukrainian communities in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa (06.07), and leaders of Ukrainian communities in Latin America (05.07). The parties discussed the organisation of joint events aimed at countering Russian propaganda in the Latin American region, promoting the recognition of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 as genocide of the Ukrainian people, supporting Ukrainian Saturday schools and preserving the Ukrainian language, as well as interaction between Ukrainians abroad, including temporarily displaced persons.

During meetings between Ukrainian high-ranking officials and the UWC leadership, special attention was paid to multiple citizenship. In his speech at the XII Ukrainian World Congress (19-22.10), Minister of Foreign Affairs D. Kuleba stressed that “multiple citizenship should become one of the elements of state policy aimed at preserving and developing the Ukrainian community”.

The leaders of Ukraine’s leading political parties used diaspora media to ask the local communities to lobby for Ukrainian interests abroad. In particular, the leader of the Voice party, K. Rudyk, called for engagement in countering Russian information, and the leader of the European Solidarity party, P. Poroshenko, called for support for the recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in the world.

In 2023, the National Commission on Ukrainians Abroad held meetings (22.06, 23.11) to consider the issue of granting the status of a foreign Ukrainian.

Results

In 2023, Ukrainian officials regularly communicated with representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora on issues ranging from political to cultural and humanitarian cooperation. Compared to 2022, there was a more dynamic interaction between the parties but no significant breakthrough in terms of results. The key issues included providing assistance to the Ukrainian army and drawing/preserving attention to the Russian-Ukrainian war abroad.

A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Energy and the UWC (18.07). The parties agreed to cooperate in the search for energy equipment needed to replace the one damaged as a result of the hostilities. In addition, it was agreed to coordinate actions to assess the damage to energy infrastructure caused by the hostilities and develop a roadmap for the restoration of Ukraine's energy sector. At the end of the year, the UWC and the Canadian Robotics Centre delivered two powerful Canadian-made Teledyne FLIR SkyRanger R70 unmanned aerial systems to the State Border Service of Ukraine. The project was implemented jointly with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine and the Embassy of Ukraine in Canada.

At the end of the year, UWC Vice President V. Sorotiuk was awarded the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, V degree, for advocating and promoting the interests of Ukraine in Brazil, particularly for his ongoing work with the Federal Senate and Chamber of Deputies of Brazil on the recognition of the Holodomor as genocide.

At the initiative of the CMU, the Draft Law "On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine 'On Foreign Ukrainians'" was registered in the VRU (01.11), which expanded the list of grounds for refusal to grant the status of a foreign Ukrainian.

Following the 56th meeting of the National Commission on Ukrainians Abroad (23.11), more than 120 foreign nationals were granted the status of a foreign Ukrainian in nine countries, including Austria, Brazil, Israel, Kazakhstan, Canada, Moldova, Germany, Poland, and Turkiye.

Human rights

B

	2022	2023
POLITICAL INTEREST	-	4
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS	-	4
ACTIVITIES	-	4
RESULTS	-	4
TOTAL SCORE	-	B

In 2023, foreign policy in the field of human rights gained even more momentum. Ukraine was engaged in fruitful cooperation with international organisations, such as the UN, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the EU, the Committee on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, to implement joint initiatives and monitor the human rights situation in Ukraine. In 2023, a global agreement was reached that occupation is a crime against international law. Work was underway to establish an international tribunal.

Political interest/engagement

The issue of human rights in the occupied territories of Ukraine primarily shaped Ukraine's foreign policy activities. This topic was constantly raised in official speeches by the President of Ukraine, the Secretary of the NSDC, ministers, the Prosecutor-General, heads of parliamentary committees and MPs of various factions. Parliament adopted multiple joint statements and resolutions on human rights in the occupied territories. In matters related to human rights violations in the temporarily occupied territories (TOT) of Ukraine, political consensus in the country was manifested through condemnation of the occupation, demands for human rights protection, humanitarian aid, and the creation of a single information policy that reflects the state of affairs in the occupied territories and emphasises human rights violations.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine (18.04) pays considerable attention to human rights issues. In particular, it contains tasks to ensure constant monitoring and inform the international community about the situation with human rights, the rights of indigenous peoples of Ukraine and the provisions of international humanitarian law in Crimea, strengthen international sanctions for human rights violations in the TOT, provide legal support in the International Court of Justice for cases against Russia and in the European Court of Human Rights for interstate cases of Ukraine against Russia, conclude intergovernmental agreements with foreign states and memoranda with international organisations in the field of protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children, assistance to temporarily displaced persons, and search for missing persons in Ukraine who suffered as a result of Russian armed aggression. The Plan also contains a separate section on "Protection of the rights and interests of citizens and legal entities of Ukraine abroad, contacts with Ukrainians abroad".

Strategic communications

In 2023, strategic communications with partners were aimed at forming international coalitions to counter Russian aggression. President V. Zelenskyy's regular speeches and addresses are important in terms of attracting attention on international platforms.

In strategic communications on the issue of establishing a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine, a significant role was played by the Prime Minister of Ukraine, the Head of the Office of the President, members of the High Council of Justice, the Prosecutor-General, and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, who spoke, in particular, at the international conference "Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine" (August), at side events during the UNGA (September), and other events under the UN auspices.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister D. Kuleba delivered a strong speech on the need to punish Russia and establish a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine during the conference "Justice and Responsibility for Russia's War against Ukraine. Recommendations and the Way Forward", hosted by the European Parliament (29.11).

It is also worth noting the speeches of the Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, T. Tasheva, on the implementation of state policy under the Strategy for the Development of the Crimean Tatar Language and the restoration of public authority in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, as well as public events within the framework of the Crimea Platform, which were aimed at bringing the issue of violations of the rights of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar people in Crimea to the international audience.

Numerous appeals by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, D. Lubinets, to the Red Cross and the UN Monitoring Mission regarding the killing of Ukrainian soldiers created important, effective information content, as did his comments to international media.

A large number of comments for the international media were provided by Ukrainian scholars and experts covering human rights violations.

Activities

Ukraine conducted its activities in accordance with the National Human Rights Strategy for 2021-2023, which, in particular, provides for cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental sectors with the support of the UN, the CoE, the OSCE, the EU and other international organisations.

Ukraine attaches priority to cooperation with the UN Human Rights Council in the field of human rights protection, considering this activity as an important contribution to strengthening international stability and security and spreading democratic standards in the world (for more details, see the section on the UN).

Ukraine continued to cooperate with the UN, OSCE, EU and CoE institutions, and the relevant monitoring missions continued their activities in Ukraine without hindrance. Further activities in the field of human rights and freedoms included the involvement of the Council of Europe's expert potential for the establishment of the International Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine and the Compensation Mechanism for the damages caused by Russian aggression.

The PACE sessions regularly raised issues concerning the violation of human rights in the occupied territories of Ukraine, including the adoption of a resolution on human rights violations against the Crimean Tatar people. The issue of the occupied territories remained on the EU's agenda.

The CMU approved amendments to the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for De-occupation and Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (April), taking into account the conditions of martial law and additional measures.

In 2023, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights cooperated with international organisations, such as the International Ombudsman Institute, the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. In addition to the traditional areas, the focus was on the rights of Ukrainians in the TOT, the return of abducted children, prisoners of war and civilians who disappeared in the TOT, etc. In February, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights D. Lubinets announced

his withdrawal from the European Ombudsman Institute because a human rights defender from the European Ombudsman Institute had taken two Ukrainian kids, who were in Austria due to Russian armed aggression, to Russia.

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine documented (20.10) further evidence that the Russian authorities had committed indiscriminate attacks and war crimes of torture, rape and other sexual violence, as well as deportation of children to Russia, as outlined in the Commission's report to the UN General Assembly.

In October, the Head of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine presented a new human rights report.

During its 17th monitoring visit, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), led by the Committee's 2nd Vice-President T. Rytter, noted positive trends in the implementation of the CPT's recommendations and pledged further support for Ukraine (October).

During the 3rd Crimea Platform summit (August), the President made a statement that Russia had caused the isolation of Crimea and presented a new strategy for the de-occupation of the peninsula, which includes diplomatic, political, and military solutions. The issue of creating a new fund for the restoration of the temporarily occupied territories was considered. In October 2023, Prague hosted the 2nd Parliamentary Summit of the Crimea Platform.

Throughout the year, Ukraine took steps to ensure respect for the rights of prisoners of war and the application of international humanitarian law. Deputy Minister of Justice of Ukraine O. Vysotska noted that monitoring organisations had not recorded any cases of torture or ill-treatment of prisoners of war held in Ukraine (December).

In May, Ukraine joined the Group of Friends of the Nelson Mandela Rules at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, which seeks to make the Mandela Rules a reality for prisoners around the world and supports member states in putting the rules into practice.

The Department for Supervision of criminal proceedings regarding crimes committed in the context of the armed conflict at the Office of the Prosecutor-General continued to be busy throughout the year. The Prosecutor-General of Ukraine approved the Concept of the implementation of the mechanism for

supporting victims and witnesses of war and other international crimes (April). In addition, during the year, senior officials of the Prosecutor-General's Office held numerous meetings with foreign delegations visiting Ukraine and spoke at international forums.

Ukrainian MPs were involved in the topic through a number of bilateral meetings with their colleagues, as well as through the activities of permanent delegations to international organisations, primarily the PACE (see the relevant section).

Results

The UN Human Rights Council adopted an updated resolution, "Situation of human rights in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression" (4.04), which provides for "the investigation of all reported human rights violations and abuses, violations of international humanitarian law and related crimes in the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, as well as the establishment of facts, circumstances and root causes of such violations and abuses". The resolution urges the Russian Federation to cease unlawful forced transfer and deportation of civilians and other protected persons within Ukraine or to the Russian Federation, respectively, in particular of children. It demands that the Russian Federation grant representatives of international human rights and humanitarian mechanisms unhindered, immediate access to all prisoners of war, forcibly detained and deported persons.

The UNGA adopted the updated resolution "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol", with 78 votes in favour (19.12). Unlike previous similar resolutions, this year's document covers the human rights situation in all TOTs, which will ensure increased attention of the UN and the international community to all crimes and gross violations committed by the Russian occupying authorities against the local population in these territories.

The establishment of the coalition of states for the creation of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine (Core Group), which, as of December, had 40 member states, was an undeniable success. More than 30

states participating in the OSCE Ministerial Council (30.11) condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine. They called on the Kremlin to release prisoners of war and political prisoners, as well as people illegally detained in the occupied territories of Ukraine, including three OSCE staff members.

A significant achievement was Russia's non-election to the UN Human Rights Council for 2024-2026 (October).

The VRU adopted the Law of Ukraine "On amendments to the Law of Ukraine 'On national minorities (communities) of Ukraine' on certain issues of exercising rights and freedoms of persons belonging to national minorities (communities) of Ukraine" (21.09) having thus updated the legislation on national minorities, which is one of the seven criteria for EU accession.

Next level of wartime diplomacy



1

Switch from crisis communication to strategic planning and mid-term prospects in relations with partner states.

2

Go beyond the framework of external conditions (Russia's aggression) as the key factor that shapes bilateral dialogue and initiate consistent and sustainable high-level political and economic dialogue. This includes the resumed practice of inter-governmental commissions and ministerial visits.

3

Resume proactive parliamentary diplomacy and intensify contacts between parliamentary groups of friendship and their visits.

4

Create networks of Ukrainian universities' alumni in the Global South countries to shape groups that could help support and advocate Ukrainian narratives and agendas in their countries.

5

Increase control over the enforcement of sanctions. Switch from the fast passing of new packages to an improved system of control over the actors that are in charge of enforcing economic, financial, and sectoral sanctions. Develop in-depth targeted sanctions, including secondary sanctions.

6

Move the focus from reconstruction to development in the context of Ukraine's recovery. Building on available cooperation, focus on creating a more sustainable infrastructure and use innovative approaches and long-standing partnerships in addition to rebuilding what has been lost.

7

Resume proactive coordination of efforts between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ukrainian think tanks for wide-scale advocacy campaigns on the issues covered by wartime diplomacy. Co-plan such initiatives on the level of ministry leadership and respective think tanks in order to improve them and seek the right synergies of approaches in media and advocacy campaigns and expert diplomacy.

8

Focus on work within announced and existing small alliances and thematic coalitions, as well as working groups that work on the Peace Formula implementation. Launch a strategic dialogue on maritime, cyber, nuclear and food security involving a wide range of the Global South countries.

9

Ensure Ukraine's engagement in joint programs and projects with the EU, including the EU's New Defence Industrial Strategy. Launch co-production and joint R&D groups, especially in defence, monitoring of election fraud mechanisms in third countries, disinformation, agriculture, energy, etc.

Table of the 2023 Scores for the Foreign Policy of Ukraine

№	Foreign Policy Directions			Political interest	Strategic communications	Activities	Results	Score
		2022	2023					
G7 COUNTRIES								
1	United Kingdom	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
2	Italy	B+	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
3	Canada	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
4	Germany	A	A-	5	5	5	4	4.8
5	USA	A	A-	5	4	5	5	4.8
6	France	A-	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
7	Japan	A-	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION								
8	EUROPEAN INTEGRATION	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
9	European Union	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
10	EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION	B+	B+	5	4	5	4	4.5
BILATERAL RELATIONS								
11	Australia	A	B+	4	5	4	4	4.3
12	Azerbaijan	C-	C-	3	2	3	3	2.8
13	Brazil	-	B	5	4	4	3	4.0
14	Georgia	C	D+	3	2	2	2	2.3
15	Estonia	A	A-	5	4	5	5	4.8
16	Israel	C-	C	3	3	4	2	3.0
17	India	C-	C	3	2	4	3	3.0
18	Iran	D+	C	5	3	3	1	3.0
19	China	D+	D+	3	1	3	3	2.5
20	Latvia	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
21	Lithuania	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
22	Moldova	B-	B+	5	3	5	4	4.3
23	Poland	A	B+	5	4	5	4	4.5
24	Romania	A	A-	5	4	5	5	4.8
25	Slovakia	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0

No	Foreign Policy Directions			Political interest	Strategic communications	Activities	Results	Score
26	Türkiye	B	B-	4	3	4	4	3.8
27	Hungary	D+	D+	3	2	3	2	2.5
28	Czech Republic	A-	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
BELLIGERENT COUNTRIES								
29	Belarus	Н/Д	Н/Д					Н/Д
30	Russia	Н/Д	Н/Д					Н/Д
REGIONAL COOPERATION								
31	Middle East	C+	B-	4	3	4	4	3.8
32	Western Balkans	C+	C	3	2	4	3	3.0
33	Indo-Pacific Region	B+	C+	3	4	4	3	3.5
34	Latin America and the Caribbean	C+	B+	4	5	5	3	4.3
35	Northern Europe	B+	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
36	Sub-Saharan Africa	B+	B+	5	5	4	3	4.3
37	Central Asia	E+	C-	3	2	3	3	2.8
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS								
38	OSCE	C+	C+	3	3	4	3	3.3
39	United Nations	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
40	Council of Europe	B+	B-	4	4	4	3	3.8
41	Building an International Coalition for the Recovery of Ukraine	A	A	5	5	5	5	5.0
42	Sanctions Policy	A	A-	5	5	5	4	4.8
43	Military Diplomacy	A	A-	5	5	5	4	4.8
44	Economic Diplomacy	A-	A-	5	4	5	5	4.8
45	Energy Diplomacy	B+	B	4	4	4	4	4.0
46	Public Diplomacy	A-	A-	5	5	5	4	4.8
47	Nuclear Non-proliferation	B-	B-	3	4	4	4	3.8
48	Ukrainians Abroad	B+	B+	5	4	5	4	4.5
49	Human Rights	-	B	4	4	4	4	4.0
	TOTAL	B+	B+	4.26	4	4.43	3.96	4.19

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
AFU	Armed Forces of Ukraine
ANP	Annual National Program
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CMU	Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
CoE	Council of Europe
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
ECFR	European Council on Foreign Relations
ENTSO-E	European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity
G7	Group of Seven
GUAM	Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development “Georgia–Ukraine–Azerbaijan–Moldova”
HPP	Hydroelectric power plant
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICPA	International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LACB	Latin America and the Caribbean
MAP	Membership Action Plan

List of Abbreviations

MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MPs	Members of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NATO PA	NATO Parliamentary Assembly
n/d	not defined
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
NSDC	National Security and Defence Council
OPU	Office of the President of Ukraine
OSCE PA	Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSCE SMM	Special Monitoring Mission of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PM	Prime Minister
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UN SC	United Nations Security Council
VRU	Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine
UN HRC	UN Human Rights Council
UWC	the Ukrainian World Congress
ZNPP	Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

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Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”



The Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” is a network-based nongovernmental analytical centre, the goal of which is to participate in providing democratic ground for the developing and implementation of foreign and security policies by government authorities of Ukraine, implementation of international and nationwide projects and programs, directed at improvement of foreign policy analysis and expertise, enhancement of expert community participation in a decision-making process in the spheres of foreign policy, international relations, public diplomacy.

The activities of the “Ukrainian Prism” are:

- provision of sustainable collaboration between the expert community and the bodies of the executive and legislative power of Ukraine, which are involved in the development and implementation of the foreign policy of Ukraine;
- research on foreign policy, diplomatic service, international relations and security, development and publication of respective recommendations;
- assistance to the state authorities of Ukraine in spreading reliable information about Ukraine abroad and creation of public diplomacy channels.
- facilitating improvement of legislation, which regulates foreign and security policy of Ukraine, the basics of diplomatic service and public diplomacy.
- informational, organisational and consulting support of public authorities, civil society organisations, educational establishments and other subjects of foreign policy and security issues.

The Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” is officially registered as a nongovernmental organisation in 2015, while analytical work and research have been carried out within the network of foreign policy experts “Ukrainian Prism” since 2012.

At present, the organisation united more than 20 experts in the sphere of foreign policy, international relations, and international security, as well as associated experts from different analytical and academic institutions in Ukraine and abroad. “Ukrainian Prism” operates from two offices – in Kyiv and Brussels.

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