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## **How the West Can Help Ukraine**

Three Strategies for Achieving a Ukrainian Victory and Rebirth

**Executive Summary:** *The geopolitical salience of the Russia–Ukraine War and the remoteness of Ukraine’s accession to the European Union or NATO call for intensification and modification of and innovation in current Western approaches. While some existing instruments can be strengthened and adapted, new tools are needed, accompanied by better explanations of the rationale for long-term Western aid to Ukraine. Such support is not just about international solidarity, but Western states’ national security, as well as winning not only the war but also the peace afterward and renewing rather than merely rebuilding Ukraine. Ukraine’s defence, security, transport, communications and energy infrastructures are priority areas for support. Reconstruction should be closely linked to Ukraine’s staged accession to the EU as well as further decentralization. More direct contacts between Ukrainian and Western communities and companies could be promoted through simplified residence rules for EU and other citizens and insuring foreign investors and trading partners against political risk, among other things. Central to conditions for continuing Western help will be Kyiv’s ongoing strengthening of the rule of law and fight against corruption. Even after the current war, strong armament of Ukraine as a European frontier state will be unavoidable before the country’s full accession to NATO and beyond.*

## **Introduction**

Numerous reports and briefs – some listed under further reading below – have been published in recent months dealing with one or more aspects of Ukrainians’ resistance to Russia and the prospects for reconstruction as well as European integration. These papers outline various pathways and instruments for the West to help Ukraine with its defence and revival. The present report synthesizes some of these proposals and classifies the instruments for helping Ukraine in both military and civilian terms, according to the need to set them up for the first time, accelerate them or adapt them. These needs for modification, adaptation and innovation apply, to different degrees, to various types of Western aid to Ukraine, from military and contingency support to macro-financial, humanitarian, and technical assistance, and modernization and reconstruction, as well as European integration. Several of the proposals set out below are also applicable to Moldova and Georgia, which are involved in protracted conflicts with Russia and could, at some point in the future, suffer a similar fate to Ukraine’s.

This report focuses on just some of the challenges often discussed in previous publications. For reasons of brevity, it leaves out other relevant themes, such as Moscow’s accountability and reparations, confiscation of frozen Russian assets, China’s behaviour, the Lublin Triangle or the Quadriga Format, as well as the special roles of select nation states, to name but a few salient topics. The report’s second part briefly discusses specific challenges with implementation of various intensification, modification and innovation measures. It

concludes with six broad policy recommendations and a note on the long-term strategic dimension of arming Ukraine.

### **Three Strategies for Support: Intensification, Modification and Innovation**

#### *Strategy 1: Intensification*

The simplest approach to providing rapid support to Ukraine would be more speedy and thorough utilization of the already operational treaties, programmes and formats that are suitable in their current form for increasing the country's resilience. This means an acceleration or extension, among other things, of:

- Cooperation with NATO within the Enhanced Opportunity Programme (EOP), the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP), the Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare and the Joint Working Group on Defence Technical Cooperation;
- Deliveries of weapons within the Ukraine Defence Consultative ("Ramstein format") Group's coordination framework of 50 states supporting Kyiv;
- Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (AA), Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and Energy Community cooperation;
- Incorporation of budgetary and reconstruction support for Kyiv into EU and member states financial planning until Ukraine can become self-sufficient once again;
- Participation by Ukraine in the EU's Green Deal to achieve not only its environmental aims, but also sustainable energy efficiency and deeper European integration; and
- Input from international structures in which Ukraine is a full participant, such as the United Nations and its suborganizations, the various international financial institutions, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), among others.

Even without modification, Ukraine's AA and DCFTA are effective instruments for supporting and integrating Ukraine. The AA goes beyond the agreements with the Eastern and Central European states of the 1990s, and the Stabilization and Association Agreements that the Western Balkan countries signed in 2001–2015. While the latter treaties contained an EU membership perspective from the start, Ukraine's 2014 AA did not include such a promise until June 2022. Nonetheless, Ukraine's, Georgia's and Moldova's AAs have since 2014 been more comprehensive and effective Europeanization instruments than previous Association Agreements.

The new AAs and DCFTAs are capable of integrating the Association Trio deeply into the European Economic Area and preparing them for EU accession. The EU, its member states and Kyiv should therefore intensify as much as possible implementation of the AA and other existing cooperation and integration programmes between them. That said, mere intensification of existing cooperation as a relatively uncomplicated way to help Ukraine will be insufficient to face the principally new challenges and imminent threats in Eastern Europe.

#### *Strategy 2: Modification*

This strategy requires the adaptation, revision or reset of existing but dated algorithms, programmes or policies to make them appropriate for Ukraine under the radically different circumstances since 24 February 2022. It would mean, among other things, the:

- Extension and hardening of the current Western sanctions regime, and especially to hit a wider circle of private and collective systemic actors in Russia, as well as a wider range of non-Russian companies that provide Moscow with war-related and other critical technologies or services;
- Introduction of a staged EU accession procedure for the Association Trio, involving their gradual inclusion in various sub-unions, governing organs, regulatory frameworks, branch agreements and special programmes of the EU before the trio advances to full membership;
- Addition of a Security Compact to the EU's Eastern Partnership programme, which, above all, offers the Association Trio tailor-made Western assistance in addressing military and hybrid threats from Russia;
- Institutionalization of a permanent Ukraine working group within the new European Political Community (EPC), which would continuously tackle the Russia Crisis as Europe's most urgent security issue;
- Relaunch of adapted versions of older bilateral and multilateral Western programmes of support for reform and technical assistance for Ukraine in areas such as security, the economy, governance, mass media, civil society and education.

A resolute intensification and modification of Western organizations' existing Ukraine-related programmes and policies would go a long way to meet some of Kyiv's current needs. Nonetheless, Ukraine's extraordinary new circumstances and their consequences for the whole European project, as well as the institutional and doctrinal inertia of existing programmes mean that their acceleration and adaptation will also be insufficient. Entirely new tools will be essential to bring about a rapid qualitative change in Kyiv's ability to win both the current war and the subsequent peace.

### *Strategy 3: Innovation*

Within this approach, new international cooperation and integration formats would be established to meet the particular challenges of Ukraine's fight against the Russian war of aggression and the reconstruction of the country. Among other things, the following novel approaches are hot topics in the expert community and have already been discussed in various international formats:

- A collective multilateral reconstruction scheme for Ukraine, reminiscent of the post-1945 US European Recovery Programme (Marshall Plan), which should engage, in addition to the EU, a variety of relevant aid organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, national development agencies and private foundations;

- A joint reconstruction platform or coordination centre – as first proposed in a CEPR brief,<sup>1</sup> and later expounded on in a GMFUS report<sup>2</sup> – which would function under the joint auspices of the G7 and Kyiv, as an attuning, auditing and clearing mechanism for multilateral, national and non-governmental actors ready to harmonize their support for Ukraine under a common roof;
- A new type of collective Western security guarantee for Ukraine from a coalition of the willing states that goes significantly beyond the ineffective assurances previously provided within such frameworks as the UN, the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the OSCE, and so on;<sup>3</sup>
- A political risk insurance scheme for securing foreign direct investment (FDI) in, and international trade with, Ukraine that insures against war-related damage through the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Organisation for European Co-operation and Development or another existing or ad hoc institution;
- An EU tank initiative to jointly deliver Leopard-2s to Ukraine from various European countries, and to secure their repair and servicing, as proposed in a detailed brief on this matter by the European Council on Foreign Relations' Berlin office.<sup>4</sup>

This is a non-exhaustive list of possible innovations that indicates the directions in which additional initiatives could go. Initiating each of these and similarly unorthodox projects and making them happen will – even more than in the case of the intensification or modification of older programmes – demand considerable political will and political skill.

## **Issues of Implementation and Prioritization**

### *Securing Sustainable Public and Private Funding*

Two of the most complex tasks in Ukrainian cooperation with foreign governments in the coming years will be: (a) to secure sufficient Western public support for sustaining and increasing large-scale military, humanitarian and development assistance to Ukraine; and (b) to involve as many private sector businesses and non-governmental organizations as possible in Ukraine's revival, despite the continuing high security risks.

To meet the first challenge, the public communication by both the Ukrainian and Western governments on Russia's war should re-emphasize the aims and importance of the aid

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<sup>1</sup> Torbjörn Becker, Barry Eichengreen, Yuriy Gorodnichenko, Sergei Guriev, Simon Johnson, Tymofiy Mylovanov, Kenneth Rogoff and Beatrice Weder di Mauro, *A Blueprint for the Reconstruction of Ukraine* (London: Center for Economic Policy Research Press, 2022), [cepr.org/publications/books-and-reports/blueprint-reconstruction-ukraine](https://cepr.org/publications/books-and-reports/blueprint-reconstruction-ukraine).

<sup>2</sup> Ronja Ganster, Jacob Kirkegaard, Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff and Bruce Stokes, *Designing Ukraine's Recovery in the Spirit of the Marshall Plan* (Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund of the United States, September 2022), <https://www.gmfus.org/news/designing-ukraines-recovery-spirit-marshall-plan>.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Fogh Rasmussen and Andrii Yermak, *The Kyiv Security Compact: International Security Guarantees for Ukraine: Recommendations* (Kyiv: Rasmussen Global, September 2022), [rasmussenglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/UKR-security-220913-ENG\\_version.pdf](https://rasmussenglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/UKR-security-220913-ENG_version.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Gustav Gressel, Rafael Loss and Jana Puglierin, *The Leopard Plan: How European Tanks can Help Ukraine Take Back its Territory* (Berlin: European Council on Foreign Relations, September 2022), <https://ecfr.eu/article/the-leopard-plan-how-european-tanks-can-help-ukraine-take-back-its-territory/>.

provided to Kyiv. Currently dominant “idealistic” arguments about the importance of European or/and general human solidarity, empathy and values such as self-determination, liberty and democracy will continue to be valid and worth highlighting, but these will need to be complemented with more “realistic” arguments about the various *non*-Ukrainian individual, national and transnational interests that are protected by continuing Western support. Among these are the positive repercussions of aid to Ukraine for worldwide trust in international law and organizations, but there are further important national security arguments for not allowing Russia to destroy the world’s political and economic order of which many people around the globe are beneficiaries.

A particularly important effect of Western help for Kyiv is its stabilizing impact on the regime for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Since 2014, Moscow has been undermining the logic of the NPT. For almost nine years now, Russia, as an official nuclear weapon state, has been attacking and terrorizing an official non-nuclear weapon state that, moreover, once possessed but gave up its nuclear arsenal in exchange for security assurances. This and the generally high opportunity costs of, and various grave alternatives to, not getting Ukraine right should be spelled out in more detail.

To meet the second principal challenge, Ukraine’s government and Western governments will need to develop a panoply of mechanisms to protect FDI and trade from the various effects and vagaries of the war. This means, among other things, a constant delivery of defensive – above all, anti-aircraft – weapons to Ukraine, continuous support for the strengthening of the Ukrainian security agencies and establishment of free-of-charge political risk insurance. In addition, other – in part Ukrainian governmental – measures could help to entice foreign investors and not-for-profit organizations to become more active in Ukraine.

The physical and legal infrastructure for entry and the functioning of foreign commercial and non-commercial structures must improve. With foreign help, in the absence of air traffic, the ground transportation system between Ukraine and the EU must be renovated and standards aligned to secure faster and easier movement of people and goods in both directions. The EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes initiative can, among other things, provide solutions to the challenges related to standardization and other obstacles to cross border trade. There is a similarly basic need for internet access and coverage throughout the country. Investors and other foreign organizations will have to be provided with – or supported to secure – a stable supply of communications, electricity, water and heating.

#### *Kyiv’s Input into Facilitating a Ukrainian Rebirth*

The legal and business environment for foreign entities ready to invest in and/or move to, Ukraine needs change so that Ukraine better conforms to OECD standards and improves its ranking in, among others, the Ease of Doing Business Index. Ukraine’s rule of law and governmental services are still deficient and prone to corruption; and proposals to tackle this problem are legion. A less publicized hindrance to foreign business activity in Ukraine are the informal regional or branch monopolies or oligopolies that zealously protect markets from external competition by various means.

The EU’s introduction of a protection mechanism for Ukrainian refugees migrating into the EU since March 2022 should be mirrored by a Ukrainian law liberalizing settlement by foreigners in Ukraine. New regulations should allow citizens of EU members states and other friendly countries to easily and quickly obtain long-term permits to reside, work, trade, buy

property and study in Ukraine. The large Ukrainian diaspora has been asking for three decades now for a Ukrainian law that allows dual citizenship.

Ukrainian measures such as these should be implemented in concert with various Western intensification, modification and innovation measures. A synergetic strategy would combine, among other things, Ukraine's accelerated implementation of its Association Agreement, a modified staged EU accession procedure for the Association Trio's European integration, a new platform for reconstruction support for Ukraine's revival, better enforcement of anti-corruption measures by Kyiv, novel insurance mechanisms to protect investors and a radical Ukrainian liberalization of settlement regulations for foreign companies, NGOs and citizens. The EU and other pro-Ukrainian actors, in collaboration with Kyiv and Ukraine's local communities, could use a blend of existing, adapted and innovative foreign, Ukrainian and mixed instruments to ensure that the Ukrainian revival results in a comprehensive Europeanization rather than restoration of the post-Soviet state. As far as possible, these and other foreign-supported initiatives should at all stages involve representatives of the Ukrainian state, its business community and civil society.

#### *Linking Aid Coordination, EU Integration and Decentralization*

In connection with the latter, a multi-agency donor coordination platform should be established as soon as possible along the lines recently recommended by the G7. Various plans for reconstruction and foreign support are being developed in a multitude of publications (see below), such as those at the Ukraine Recovery Conference on 4–5 July 2022, the International Expert Conference on the Recovery, Reconstruction and Modernization of Ukraine in Berlin on 25 October 2022, and at the forthcoming Ukraine Recovery Conference in London on 21–22 June 2023. The coordination platform could incorporate various existing or nascent Ukrainian and Western bilateral or multilateral aid initiatives, build on the current G7 consultation mechanism in Kyiv, and immediately start to promote foreign relief as well as to plan reconstruction support for Ukraine.

A donor coordination centre should have a permanent bureau in Brussels, in view of Kyiv's expressed desire to accede to the EU and NATO. The reconstruction platform should align, as far as possible, the flow of civilian financial support with Ukraine's aim of European integration. In close contact with the Ukrainian government, the platform's Kyiv bureau should promote and guide the inflow of assistance, to the extent that other potential donor countries and organizations – be they public or private – are ready to accept such help.

While neither Kyiv, the G7 nor Brussels will be able to fully control all governmental and non-governmental support initiatives, they can try to ensure that all the relevant actors are as far as possible aware of each other's programmes and experience. The coordination centre should monitor, bring together and publicize as many activities as possible. The purposes and benefits of such harmonization, observation and documentation by the donor coordination platform will be multifarious and include: (a) facilitating direct interaction between foreign and Ukrainian actors; (b) preventing corruption through interorganizational communication; (c) avoiding programme overlaps; (d) linking humanitarian relief activities to socio-economic development programmes; (e) promoting public-private partnerships; and (f) incorporating donor activities into the AA implementation and EU accession processes.

Two particularly important mediating tasks for the coordinating platform will be to harmonize public and private sector foreign donor ambitions with Ukraine's own reconstruction plans and to maximize the synergies on the ground between initiatives from

different sources. Finding appropriate interfaces between the activities of public institutions, NGOs and the private sector will be crucial task.

A partial model for such a facilitating role by a coordination centre is Kyiv's so-called House of Decentralization, which was established by the EU-financed Ukraine-Local Empowerment, Accountability and Development (U-LEAD) Programme, managed by Germany's GIZ and Sweden's SIDA in 2016–2021. While the U-LEAD office mainly directed its own regional projects across the country, the House of Decentralization was also host to other donor organizations in the field and in close contact with the Ukrainian Ministry of Community and Territorial Development. It functioned as a nodal point for many foreign activities supporting Ukrainian local government reform.

A donor coordination platform could also play such an ecumenical role on a larger scale. It could support and link with other interested public and private initiatives by offering free office space in a single building, access to the Ukrainian government, regular inter-organizational consultations and specialized training for donor employees, as well as inclusive conferences, generic newsletters and common web resources. Ideally, it would engage with all interested aid institutions and groups.

These and other Western initiatives should build on the overall positive experience of Ukraine's decentralization reform since 2014, and the impressive results of the Ukrainian transfer of significant resources, prerogatives and responsibilities to the municipal level. Rather than facilitating Kyiv's grip on the regions through centralized distribution of financial means, Western aid to Ukraine should promote further devolution of decision making and implementation across the country. Foreign material and non-material assistance can help to promote the deconcentration of power, the institutional autonomy of local actors and direct ties between Ukrainian organizations and partners abroad. This should concern not only the institutions of municipal self-government, but also local educational, cultural, research, medical, civic, business, artistic and other organizations interested in international cooperation.

### **Why Building Back Better Is Indeed Better**

Thus far, the West's help to Ukraine has, in its strategic formulation, material substance and public perception, constituted a rescue operation. From the beginning, however, reconstruction planning has also been conceived by both Ukrainians and Western experts as a forward-looking programme. It should be even more clearly perceived and presented as an agenda not only for relief but also for renewal – out of which a more modern and successful Ukraine will emerge.

Giving Western support for Kyiv a “positive spin” has important psychological underpinnings for Ukrainians and foreigners involved in military and civilian assistance. Western help for rebuilding and integrating Ukraine should be sequenced in a way that produces a continuous succession of swiftly completable “baby steps”. The achievement of each intermediate stage, such as accession to a EU institution or initiative, completion of a physical or virtual project, the start of a new service or company, should be publicly acknowledged and occasionally celebrated to provide Ukrainians and their Western supporters with a sense of stable progress. Inevitable setbacks must be accompanied by communication strategies that allow for contextualization as well as further progress, and be handled by all parties in ways that boost rather than undermine confidence in the process.

For both psychological and practical reasons, future Western-Ukrainian exchanges should also flow more than previously in both directions. Western governments and non-governmental actors should, in their own interests, more actively and publicly utilize the peculiarly novel experiences and knowledge that have been accumulated by Ukrainian individuals and institutions, before and during the current war. This concerns above all, but not only, the conduct and repulsing of military and hybrid operations in the context of an armed conflict with a highly adversarial enemy. In the civilian sector, too, Ukraine can share valuable insights on the successful digitalization, liberalization and decentralization of its state, civil society and economy. Enabling Ukrainian help for foreign governments, including Moldova's and Georgia's, as well as other actors and making it visible will increase both Ukrainian pride in, and Western sympathy for, the achievements of its embattled people.

A doctrine of building Ukraine back better has wider security-political reverberations beyond Eastern Europe. Its implementation would demonstrate to potentially expansionist actors around the world that foreign aggression will fail to achieve its aims, and international responses to attacks on vulnerable states might even have positive effects for the assailed nations. A paradoxical repercussion of an act of aggression would be a strengthening rather than weakening of the victim state's geopolitical position. The attacked country's domestic situation might partially even improve rather than just worsen following a military assault on it.

Sending such a signal will not only be beneficial for Ukrainians. It should also result in a hardening of the international order, reassurance for smaller countries and a strengthening of the non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction. Ukraine's fate should teach both future possible aggressors and their potential victims three simple lessons: (a) might is never right; (b) rules will be upheld; and (c) that more powerful states will protect weaker ones. International law and organizations would thereby be strengthened, resulting in an increase in worldwide security and trust that is in the interests of every human being.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

The following six points of advice for policy makers and communicators draw conclusions from the above:

1. Military and civilian aid to Ukraine should be presented not just as a matter of international solidarity, but of national security for the supporting countries. Spokespersons for national governments and international organizations should outline why and how their support makes not only Ukraine but Europe and the entire world a safer place. Foreign assistance should be justified as enabling Kyiv not only to prevail in the current war, but also to win the subsequent peace, and not just rebuild but renew Ukraine.
2. In accordance with Ukraine's current and future needs, Western military and non-military programmes of support should be intensified, modified or created anew. Demand- rather than donor-driven, these older intensified, newly adapted or entirely novel programmes should help Kyiv to achieve its most urgent tasks as formulated by Ukrainian national and local governments.
3. In Eastern and Western Europe, and in other regions of the world, many individuals, groups and institutions stand ready to help Ukraine in one way or another. To make delivery of such assistance possible, the functioning of Ukraine's defence, security,



transport, communications and energy infrastructure has priority, together with anti-corruption measures. Facilitation of fast and uncomplicated domestic and transborder interactions for Ukrainians among themselves and with their allies is a core task.

4. Comprehensive relief and recovery measures should start now, before and independent of the end of the war, and later become a thoroughly modernizing reconstruction. These should combine better exploitation of existing formats (intensification) and adaptation of now dated projects (modification) with the launch of completely new programmes (innovation) to address Ukraine's war effort, infrastructure stability and imminent rebuilding.
5. Humanitarian relief and reconstruction support for Ukraine should be linked to each other and to European integration with the help of a multi-agency donor coordination platform, as well as such EU instruments as a security compact, a staged accession process and growing participation by candidate countries, including Ukraine, in intra-EU affairs before full membership.
6. The policies of and assistance to Kyiv should promote decentralized and multiple engagement by Ukrainians with foreign governmental, non-governmental and commercial partners. This can happen through facilitation of direct contacts between local communities and institutions, insurance cover for direct investment in Ukraine to protect against political risks and liberalization of residency rules for foreigners from friendly countries, among other measures.

A concluding note on long-term prospects. The Ukrainian state's precarious location bordered with an irredentist state and in a partial geopolitical grey zone will not change any time soon. As long as Ukraine is not a full member of NATO and the EU, the country will have to take care of its own national security. Russia might continue its aggression now or resume it later. A comprehensive and as modern as possible arming of Ukraine therefore does not just have a short-term, tactical dimension. It is not merely essential to a successful completion of the current counteroffensive, to reconquering occupied territories and to the eventual achievement of a peace deal with Moscow that is acceptable to Kyiv.

Arming Ukraine also has a distinctly geostrategic and long-term dimension. Kyiv needs to be well-equipped not only for as long as the current fighting continues, but also during the ensuing interregnum between the end of Russia's current attack and Ukraine's eventual accession to the EU and NATO. Heavy weapons, functioning security agencies and international guarantees are needed not only to end the current war, but also to prevent the next one. Even after joining NATO and the EU, Ukraine will remain a frontier state for as long as Russia continues to harbour revanchist ambitions. For years or even decades, a well-armed, internationally embedded and socio-economically viable Ukraine will be needed to secure Europe's eastern border.

### **Some Further Reading**

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