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FOREIGN POLICY AUDIT: UKRAINE- LITHUANIA

DISCUSSION PAPER





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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1887, near the town of Rakhiv in Transcarpathia, the Geographic Society of Austria-Hungary erected a stone sign. Nowadays, it is known among Ukrainians as the marker for the geographical center of Europe. In 2004, in Purnuskes village, close to Vilnius, another monument marking the center of Europe was constructed. This unofficial competition for the center of the continent between Ukraine and Lithuania has its own deep symbolism. On the one hand, it highlights the desire to belong to the European civilization; on the other, it reflects a similar trajectory toward Europe. This, in turn, also means self-positioning as a part of Central Europe and serves as a reminder of the non-Russian past of both countries.

Understanding the relationship between Ukraine and Lithuania is not possible without diving into the past liberated of Russian influence, as the roots of contact between the two countries date back to the distant 14th century. Successful state-building processes within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) laid the foundation that allows building modern relations between the two nations based on a common historical heritage that unites, rather than divides the two sides. However, the 20th century had enriched the historical experience with new common context, the establishment of independent states and temporary (although for a large period of time) loss of sovereignty; struggle against the Soviet Union; surviving repressions and terror; renewed struggle for independence; transformational changes on the path towards the EU. Although Ukraine is currently only associated with the EU through the Association Agreement, while Lithuania has been a member of the EU for over 12 years, experiencing similar processes in the past still creates a chain of unity between Kyiv and Vilnius. On the other hand, while the memory of the GDL times goes on through the works of historians and surviving monuments of that epoch, the mutual assistance in regaining the sovereignty is a part of the living memory. The latter includes cooperation between Lithuanian Sąjūdis movement and Ukrainian Rukh, as well as networking between public and later political figures. Lithuanians have not forgotten Ukrainian support during the assault of Lithuanian Parliament

by Soviet tanks in January 1991¹. References to those events are the starting point of any talks on relations between the two states. In turn, Ukrainians remember the support they received from Lithuanians during the revolutions of 2004 and 2013/2014 and appreciate the help and support of Lithuania during the Russian aggression. On November 26, 2013, when the fate of the Association Agreement with the EU was still unknown, and the Euromaidan had only gathered the supporters of European integration, the Speaker of the Seimas of Lithuania Loretta Graužininienė officially supported European choice of the people of Ukraine. It was not only the first clear signal to Ukrainian authorities from the EU member states, but also a signal to Ukrainian citizens that Vilnius will always support Ukraine's course toward Europe. Despite the fact that the next day the Plenipotentiary Minister of Lithuania (now Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Lithuania to Ukraine) Marius Janukonis had been called for explanations to the MFA of Ukraine, further history of relations between the two nations shows that mutual support and defense of European values are the real basis of development of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Lithuania.

A song titled *We Will Never Be Brothers*, written by Ukrainian poet Anastasiia Dmytruk and performed by the choir of Klaipeda Musical Theater in 2014, has become a synthesis of the common experience of fighting for independence and the path of development unaffected by Russia².

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At a time when Ukrainian society recovered from murders on the Maidan and Russian occupation of Crimea, and was pulled into the war with Russian black ops forces in Donbas, such support from Lith-

1 Євген Дикий, Парламент визнаної світом європейської держави, повноцінного члена ЄС та НАТО, 14/01/2016, <https://www.facebook.com/evgen.dukyj/posts/10153778985328808>; Микола Поліщук, «Литва, будь вільною!» Спогади учасника студзагону оборони Вільнюса 1991 року, 18/01/2011, <http://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2011/01/18/15844/>

2 Литовцы записали песню на стихотворение «Никогда мы не будем братьями», посвященное аннексии Крыма, 5/04/2014, http://zn.ua/CULTURE/litovcy-zapisali-pesnyu-na-stih-nikogda-my-ne-budem-bratyami-posvyaschennyi-anneksii-kryma-142684_.html

uanians was invaluable. Further developments showed that Lithuania is not just a reliable ally of Ukraine; on top of that, Vilnius has a strong and consistent position on the situation in Ukraine. President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė has become a true fighter for territorial integrity and European future of Ukraine. According to the expert opinion poll, she was recognized as a top global lobbyist of Ukraine in 2014³. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius is considered one of the Western politicians who greatly affect the strengthening of foreign policy and security positions of Ukraine. Moreover, Ukrainians receive the same level of support from Lithuanian society. There is great sympathy and human solidarity between the two nations. In addition, recent events provided momentum for closer cooperation between NGOs and volunteers that began earlier during the Maidan. In fact, Lithuania was among the first countries to offer aid for injured protesters. Later, Lithuanian Government sup-

President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė has become a true fighter for territorial integrity and European future of Ukraine

ported numerous initiatives aimed at assisting the populations affected by war. In particular, in autumn 2014, 15 students from the families of internally displaced persons have been invited to study in Lithuania following the initiative of the

Embassy of Lithuania in cooperation with Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration. This project has lasted for three years and is still ongoing. Its specific features are the fact that it provides long-term studies (full academic year), and the fact that while studying in Russian-speaking schools of Lithuania, children do not interrupt their Ukrainian language lessons, as they are accompanied by dedicated teachers⁴.

Therefore, Ukraine is important for Lithuania in both geopolitical and emotional ways. Vilnius understands that Russia will never become an empire without Ukraine. Thus, strong pro-Western Ukraine is no less important for Lithuania than its own membership in the NATO. This understanding determines the nature of bilateral cooperation, as

³ IWP announced "Top-10 Ukraine's Promoters in the World 2014", 29/01/2015, <http://iwp.org.ua/eng/public/1386.html>

⁴ Дети переселенцев из зоны АТО поедут на учебу в Литве, 1/10/2014, <http://gordonua.com/news/society/deti-pereselencev-iz-zony-ato-poedut-na-uchebu-v-litvu-43874.html>

the fact that Lithuania is an advocate of Ukraine in the EU supporting Kyiv in all available institutions is not the only vital factor. Another equally important aspect is direct engagement of Lithuanian politicians, government officials, and experts in the reform processes in Ukraine. On the one hand, they are good specialists on Ukraine (due to their knowledge of local mentality and language); on the other, they know from their own experience how to transform a post-Soviet republic into a successful European country. Therefore, understanding that “we were in the same situation,” “we still remember the misery of the first years of independence,” and “we have not forgotten our experience of Europeanization” shapes the basis of cooperation in the area of reforms. Subsequently, Lithuanians keep trying patiently to mitigate the damage of traps Ukrainians run into during the process of implementation of the AA with the EU, contrary to popular Lithuania proverb “you can learn from the others’ mistakes, but only your own ones will teach you something.” On top of that, it should be noted that the success of Lithuanian consultants directly depends on the long-awaited emergence of institutional continuity in Ukraine, as frequent rotation of government teams and staff turnover forces Lithuanians to start their work from scratch every time. Ukrainian side should realize that the government is not a university, where officials come to learn and go on with a wealth of knowledge. Each government team should take care of the transfer of their experience; this is the only way to ensure the irreversibility of reforms.

Kyiv appreciates the support provided by Vilnius. President Petro Poroshenko, during a meeting with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, highlighted that: “Today, European integration for Ukraine is a national idea, which unites the country just like it united Lithuania 25 years ago starting from January 13. You initiated these reforms 25 years ago and your experience and consultative assistance are essential for us.”⁵ In this context, the special nature of bilateral relations is usually emphasized. On December 12, 2016, the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between

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⁵ *President: Ukraine is grateful to Lithuania for its support on the track of European integration, 2/12/2015, <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/ukrayina-vdyachna-litvi-za-pidtrimku-na-shlyahu-yevrointegra-36408>*

the two countries is celebrated in Ukrainian capital with the participation of President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and President of Lithuanian Republic Dalia Grybauskaitė.

Ukraine recognizes Lithuania as an active supporter of Kyiv's course toward the EU, possessing no mental or civilizational differences

Ukraine recognizes Lithuania as an active supporter of Kyiv's course toward the EU, possessing no mental or civilizational differences. Ukrainian side also emphasizes the importance of Ukraine in such context

of allied cooperation, positioning itself as a key state on the eastern borders of Europe or a newly established outpost of Europe. At the same time, a tribute is given to Lithuania for being the first state to cut its ties with the Soviet Union. Thus, to the large extent, Vilnius is a role model for both processes that have been just launched in Ukraine: decommunization and Europeanization. On the other hand, Ukraine is grateful for being able to rely on Lithuania as a strategic partner, a sincere friend, and a faithful ally. Ukrainians do not forget Lithuania's firm and consistent advocacy of the need for maintaining the sanctions against Russia, defending the territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as raising the issue of protection of rights of the Crimean Tatars in the international arena. Ukrainian diplomats also note their fruitful cooperation with Lithuanian counterparts in the UN Security Council in 2014-2015, when through coordinated efforts they managed to organize the meeting of the Security Council and adoption of the relevant resolutions. In addition, it is important for Ukrainian side that bilateral cooperation covers not only the traditional format of interstate communication (visits at the highest level, support for minorities, development of the legal base for bilateral relations, etc.), but also regional and multisector formats, including cultural, educational, sports, youth, and other components.

It is important that one of the major formats of such friendly and strategic relations between the two countries is such institution as the Council of Presidents of Ukraine and Lithuania. Its charter had been signed by Presidents Leonid Kuchma and Valdas Adamkus in Vilnius in 2002. Since then, 8 meetings of the Council of Presidents have been organized. Despite a small break in 2011-2013, meetings between the Presidents of Ukraine and Lithuania occur several times a year within the framework of official visits or at the international summits. The number of meetings between the Presidents has in-

creased significantly in 2014-2016. In December 2016, the 9th meeting of the Council of Presidents has been held during the visit of the President of the Lithuanian Republic Dalia Grybauskaitė to Kyiv.

Other formats of bilateral cooperation, such as the Ukrainian-Lithuanian Commission on European Integration, Ukrainian-Lithuanian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic Research and Technical Cooperation, Ukrainian-Lithuanian Business Council and others, are also actively developed. The experience of cooperation within the framework of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Sejm and Senate of Poland is unique for the region. Moreover, Lithuania also acts as the voice of other Baltic states. In particular, during the 7th session of the Assembly held on May 30, 2016, the Speaker of the Seimas of Lithuania Loretta Graužininė stated that “the delegation of the Parliament of Lithuania is always ready to cooperate in order to protect our common interests. The Heads of the Parliaments of Baltic states welcome implementation of reforms in your country. The parliamentary component is important in this process... There should be more Europe in Ukraine, and more Ukraine in Europe.”⁶

Recognizing the development of bilateral cooperation in the context of strengthening territorial integrity and the pro-European course of Ukraine, we could identify the following primary common interests of the two countries:

Interests of Ukraine toward Lithuania:

- supporting Ukraine in the international arena (EU, NATO, OSCE, UN);
- promoting the final ratification of the AA with the EU, visa-free regime with the EU, and other formats of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU;

⁶ На сьомій сесії Міжпарламентської асамблеї Верховної Ради України, Сейму Литовської Республіки, Сейму і Сенату Республіки Польща обговорили роль міжпарламентської складової в умовах військової агресії з боку Росії, 30/05/2016, <http://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/130872.html>

- expanding cooperation in defense and security areas;
- strengthening economic, energy, and infrastructure cooperation;
- introduction of Ukrainian businesses to Lithuanian and EU markets; assistance in getting loans from international and Lithuanian banks;
- expanding regional cooperation.

Interests of Lithuania toward Ukraine:

- reforming Ukraine and implementing the laws approved within the framework of implementation of the AA between Ukraine and the EU;
- improving the business climate in Ukraine;
- increasing economic cooperation;
- developing the Viking project and increasing the attractiveness of its services in the region; removing the customs barriers in order to intensify the transit of goods;
- restoring the GDL's historical heritage in Ukraine;
- increasing cooperation between the NGOs and development of student exchange;
- strengthening multilateral regional cooperation;
- developing new joint projects in energy, environment, and IT sectors.

Therefore, in the light of the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states, Ukraine and Lithuania should be proud of current level of trust and cooperation. Building of the Lithuania park near Sophiiska Square in Kyiv should be a symbolic seal of this kind of cooperation. The respective decision has been adopted by the Kyiv City Council on November 10, 2016. In turn,

according to the Lithuanian Embassy in Ukraine, Ukraine Square will appear in Vilnius⁷. It should be noted that Ukrainian side asked that the square where the monument to Taras Shevchenko is located (near the All Saints Street) would receive that name. Naming places in the urban space after other states is a new practice for both Kyiv and Vilnius. The other practices of bilateral cooperation will be discussed in the main section of this discussion note, which represents an attempt at an impartial analysis of relations between the two countries and finding new potential for development of further cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania.

⁷ У Вільнюсі на честь України назвали площу, 12/10/2016, <https://day.kyiv.ua/uk/news/121016-u-vilnyusi-na-chest-ukrayiny-nazvaly-ploshchu>

2. INTERESTS OF UKRAINE TOWARD LITHUANIA AND INTERESTS OF LITHUANIA TOWARD UKRAINE

2.1. BACK TO THE PAST: THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA AS A SPACE OF COMMON HISTORICAL HERITAGE

History is often a source of contention and conflict for the establishment of international relations for countries with unstable identities—that is, for almost every country of Central and Eastern Europe. The clash of historical policies between Ukraine and Poland, for instance, has led to an unprecedented deterioration of relations between the neighbors in 2016 and threatened the long-term accomplishments of

In the context of bilateral cooperation, the past is an additional uniting factor and the reason for implementing multiple joint cultural and educational projects

apologists for Ukrainian-Polish friendship. Therefore, the fact that relations between Ukraine and Lithuania are based on a common historical foundation is even more salient. In the context of bilateral cooperation, the past is an additional uniting factor and the reason for implementing multiple joint cultural and educational

projects. Implementation of these projects involves top government officials, specialized ministries, the Lithuanian Embassy in Ukraine, and representatives of the Lithuanian community in Ukraine. This situation has its roots in the nature of past relations. It is important to note that the expansion of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania into Ukrainian (Rus') territories occurred peacefully and, moreover, was also accompanied by joint military victories. The battle of Syni Vody (1362), which joint Rus' and Lithuanian forces led by Algirdas participated in, had actually put an end to the Golden Horde era on Ukrainian lands pushing it back south.

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania has always been a special part of the historical memory of Lithuanians. This is the past that the Lithuanian nation is proud of in its attempts to restore its heritage today. "Visiting ruins" of the monuments that have survived to this day (namely forts and palaces) has created a separate type of tourism to Ukraine from Lithuania. The number of tourists is also increasing due to im-

⁸ Not to be confused with Russian.

proved transport connections: in recent years, the number of flights from Vilnius to Kyiv and Lviv has increased, and new flight routes Kyiv-Palanga and Vilnius-Odesa have been established; international bus routes are also quite convenient. All of the aforesaid contributes to the emergence of specific Lithuanian “commemoration sites” around Ukraine in general and in Kyiv (Zamkova Hora or Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra) in particular. This process resembles “visiting ruins” of Kyivan Rus’ by pilgrims, tourists, and the officials in the 19th century Russian Empire. However, unlike the Russians who turned the myth of Kyivan Rus’ into a charter myth of Russian national identity and “appropriated” Kyiv as the “mother of Russian cities,” Lithuanians only spread their culture of interest toward the past and tolerance on Ukrainian territory by restoring memory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This Lithuanian approach is also devoid of the “sentimentality” common for Polish tourists on their visits to their “commemoration sites” on the territory of Right-bank Ukraine.

Today, thanks to the Lithuanians, Ukraine is rediscovering the common heritage of the GDL era, as well as its own rich and ancient past. An important role in this context is played by publishing projects developed by the Baltia-Druk publishing house.⁹

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Their specific feature is engagement of international groups of authors in writing and publishing their books. In particular, the recently published book entitled “The Ostrogskis” was worked on by such historians as Oleg Dzyarnovych (Belarus), Raimonda Ragauskienė (Lithuania), Ihor Teslenko (Ukraine), and Boris Cherkas (Ukraine). An important consequence of such projects is returning the ancient Ukrainian elite to modern Ukrainians. For Ukraine, a country whose history was written as a narrative of Ukrainian people and dominated by peasant fights for a long time, research of the noble class, the hetmans, and the political elite cannot be overestimated.

One the most popular political figures of the common past among today's Ukrainians and Lithuanians is Konstanty Ostrojski (1460-1530), Hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. During the 8th sum-

⁹ See full list of the books dedicated to common history and published within the “History of Ukraine” section at the publisher’s website: <http://www.baltia.com.ua/uk/e-shop/books/ukraine-history>

mit of the Council of Presidents in Vilnius on December 2, 2015, both sides considered the possibility of restoring Konstanty Ostrogski's tombstone at the Assumption Cathedral of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (demolished in 1941). Projects aimed at implementation of this ambitious plan are in development. This plan also involves Ukrainian and Lithuanian experts, sculptors, and conservation specialists. This project is an example of multilateral cooperation, participated in by the Ostroh Academy, Baltia-Druk publishing house, Lithuanian Embassy in Ukraine, top government officials, and MPs and politicians of both countries. Ostrogski was also mentioned in 2014, during the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the battle of Orsha, attended by diplomats, and public and cultural figures from both countries. Celebration of the victory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania army (today we could consider it a multinational army) over Muscovite forces had its own symbolism and allusions to the present context of relations with Muscovy's successor, the Russian Federation. Back in the XVI century, this victory ensured more than a century of the region's development as a part of European civilization and European political, educational, and cultural traditions. In late May 2016, the trilateral Parliamentary Assembly initiated the naming process for the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade in honor of Prince Konstanty Ostrogski.

The common appeal to the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania shapes the new Ukrainian-Lithuanian intellectual environment. It is used for debates on concerning "imperialism of Lithuanian state" and the status of the GDL as the "cradle of three modern nations: Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Lithuanian," as well as for comparing the role of the GDL with the role of the Frankish Empire in Western Europe.¹⁰ This environment inherently develops other contacts between intellectuals, writers, and poets of both countries, which is facilitated by cooperation between the Ministries of Culture of the two states, as well as the involvement of the Lithuanian Culture Institute. In 2014, Days of Ukrainian Culture were held in the Republic of Lithuania; in 2015, the Week of Ukrainian and Lithuanian Culture was or-

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¹⁰ See: Див.: Зенонас Норкус, *Непроголошена імперія: Велике князівство Литовське з погляду порівняльно-історичної соціології імперій*. – К.: Критика, 2016

ganized in Kyiv as an example of a private initiative of Lithuanian businessmen in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania is developing the format for the Lithuanian Days: in 2008, these events were attended by President Adamkus and later were organized in Crimea in June 2013, in Odesa in 2015, and in Dnipro and Odesa in 2016. In turn, this year has become the year of implementation of the ambitious “Lithuania – Ukraine. Cultural Partnership 2016” project. On the one hand, this project has become another step in the development of cooperation between cultural institutions of both countries; on the other, it has contributed to mutual familiarization between Ukrainian and Lithuanian communities since, as Ambassador Marius Janukonis said during the presentation of the second phase of the project, “we know too little of each other.”¹¹ This is especially true when it comes to modern culture, the promotion of which has become a focus of cultural partnership.¹² Remarkably, this project has covered various Ukrainian cities, while Kyiv hosted a separate promotion campaign aimed at raising awareness of cooperation with Lithuania. The two largest literary events in Ukraine (Kyiv Book Arsenal and Lviv Publisher Forum) have become the most visible evidence of the results of cooperation, pointing out the greater presence of not only Lithuanian books in Ukraine, but also Lithuanian authors.¹³ In particular, Tomas Venclova was the guest of honor of this year’s 23rd Publisher Forum in Lviv. Donata Mitaitė, a Lithuanian researcher of Venclova’s works, has come up with probably the best summary of the meaning of his intellectual heritage for Ukrainians: “the ability remain honest in both life and poetry in order to catering to common tastes in poetry and stereotypical judgements on the history and modernity of one’s people, even if it could lead to antipathy among one’s countrymen; the ability to feel responsibility for the crimes of one’s people and try to help them be aware (absolutely righteous people do not exist; however, we are responsible primarily for our own people and its own sins, just as we are proud primarily of the

¹¹ У Києві презентували II етап проекту «Литва-Україна. Культурне партнерство - 2016», 15/09/2016, http://mincult.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=245137867&cat_id=244913751

¹² See details at: *Lietuva – Ukraina: kultūros partnerystė 2016*, <http://lithuanianculture.lt/projektai/lietuva-ukraina-kulturos-partneryste-2016/>

¹³ «Литва-Україна. Культурне партнерство 2016», другий етап, 13/09/2016, <https://ua.mfa.lt/ua/ua/news/litba-ukrana-kul-jturne-partnerstbo-2016-drugij-etap->

accomplishments and good deeds of our fellow countrymen); the ability to assess a political situation soberly, yet never incite hatred."¹⁴

Therefore, today cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania could be seen as an example of using the past to strengthen relations in the present. It is important that this positive example is unique in Central and Eastern Europe. It might be rational to consolidate these achievements through the introduction of Lithuanian language courses at the National University of Ostroh Academy, where the Ostroh Princes Heritage Research Centre is located, or the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, where research programs on history of the GDL and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth are successfully developed.

2.2. THE EU AS A LANDMARK FOR THE BILATERAL COOPERATION: REFORMS, INVESTMENTS, ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

With the renewal of the status of independent states, Ukraine and Lithuania have entered a transformation period that both countries are passing at different paces. Democratization and decommunization, transition to the market economy and the introduction of neoliberal reforms, state-building based on the rule of law and human rights, development of the culture of zero tolerance to corruption and building the civil society – this is only a general list of processes passed by societies in post-communist and post-Soviet Europe. For many of them, these processes also had the

After the Revolution of Dignity, a successful experience of transition from the Soviet model to the model of liberal democracy has become a source of soft power for Lithuania in Ukraine

same objective: European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Lithuania made stunning reform progress in the late 1990s – early 2000s, which allowed it to join NATO and the EU in 2004. Ukraine, in turn, became closer to real reforms only in 2014.

After the Revolution of Dignity, a successful experience of transition from the Soviet model to the model of liberal democracy has become a source of soft power for Lithuania in Ukraine. It is reflected in the positive perception of Lithuanians among Ukrainian politicians and society, which allowed the former to join govern-

¹⁴ Персона Форуму. Томас Венцлова, 17/08/2016, <http://bookforum.ua/persona-forumu-tomas-ventslova/>

ment cabinets and lead various international institutions in Ukraine. High expectations accompanied the appointment of Lithuanian businessman Aivaras Abromavičius as the Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine. Furthermore, Ukrainian and international businesses have welcomed news of the appointment of former Lithuanian Minister and EU Commissioner Algirdas Šemeta as the Business Ombudsman of Ukraine. **Since February 2016, the cabinet of the Chairman of the Advisory Mission of the European Union (EUAM) has been occupied by Lithuanian Kęstutis Lančinskas famous for preparing Lithuania for its accession to the EU and eventually for joining the Schengen agreement.** In 2015, former Prime Minister of Lithuania Andrius Kubilius became an advisor to the President of Ukraine and joined the International Advisory Reform Council. Signatory of the Act of Independence of Lithuania, former minister of Foreign Affairs (2006-2008), Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania in Ukraine (2010-2014) Petras Vaitiekūnas serves as advisor to the Secretary of the NSDC of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov. Strengthening the security sector is another area attended to by a Lithuanian, Ambassador Vaidotas Verba, the OSCE's Project Coordinator in Ukraine. Another component is the judicial reform, supervised by Virgilijus Valančius, Team Leader of the EU's "Support for Justice Sector Reforms in Ukraine" project and a member of the Constitutional Commission under the President of Ukraine, in 2013-2015. On April 13, 2016 Valančius became a judge at the General Court (EU) representing Lithuania. Moving from Kyiv to Luxembourg is certainly a new stage in Valančius' career as a judge; however, for Kyiv it is another illustration that top level Lithuanian experts, being at the peak of their careers, are working in Ukraine today. This should not only be noted, but also used before the window of opportunities is closed.

Top level Lithuanian experts, being at the peak of their careers, are working in Ukraine today

The experience of Lithuania has been adopted by the newly established Government Office for European Integration (created by the Government of Ukraine within the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine). Specifically, Nerijus Udrenas, the former adviser to the President of Lithuania, and Darius Žeruolis, the director of a private consulting company ESTEP and former Deputy Secretary for European Affairs of Lithuania and the senior adviser on legislation adaptation at the project UEPLAC (Ukrainian – European Policy and Legal Advice Centre), have been involved as consultants. During the 12th summit of

Ukrainian-Lithuanian Commission on European integration (June 23, 2016), Darius Žeruolis assumed the duties of adviser to the Government of Ukraine on European integration. From 2015-2016 Arūnas Kundrotas, former Environment Minister of the Republic of Lithuania (2001-2008), headed the international technical assistance project "Support to Ukraine in approximation of the EU environmental acquis." He is currently focusing his attention on helping Serbia, which has opened Chapter 27 (ecological) section of the *acquis communautaire* of the EU. Lithuanian advisers, consultants, and experts help implementing the reforms in judicial and customs services, as well as being involved in reforms initiated by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. The relevance of Lithuanian experience of European integration for Ukrainian experts has been confirmed by experts from the ESTEP private consulting company that launched a dedicated project for promoting the implementation of the AA with the EU in Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. This project is funded within the framework of the cooperation development program and the democracy promotion program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

It is believed that today the Ukrainian legislation base is one of the most advanced in the world in terms of the fight against corruption

Another area where Lithuanian experts are appreciated is the presence of major international businesses in Ukraine. Lithuanians are considered good managers, familiar with the local mentality, fluent in the local language, aware of the environment, and therefore able to work for interna-

tional corporations in Ukraine. Furthermore, Kyiv also took advantage of Lithuania's soft power – basketball. For several years, Lithuanian specialist Gediminas Navikauskas, the former Vice President of Lithuanian club Žalgiris, has been the General Manager of Kyiv's Budivelnik club.

The success of Lithuanians in implementing European reforms in Ukraine can only be evaluated in time, after reforms yield their results. It is believed that there is potential for success, as Lithuanians are working in Ukraine without direct control, and their actions are not limited by the influence of a domestic political context, which they would obviously have had to consider in Lithuania. Therefore, foreign officials and advisors find it easier to insist on adoption of necessary reforms, compared to when they were reformers in their own countries. However, there are also assumptions that this new experience could be later used in Lithuania. In case of success of the Business

Ombudsman Office and efficient practical implementation of the new anti-corruption legislation, Lithuanians might borrow this experience to improve the fight against corruption in their own country. It is believed that today the Ukrainian legislation base is one of the most advanced in the world in terms of the fight against corruption.

Another component of Lithuanian participation in reforming Ukraine is emphasizing a European/transnational identity instead of a national one. Top officials are representing the EU or other international organizations in Ukraine, not Lithuania. However, both Ukrainian media and experts often appeal to their national origin, strongly emphasizing their domestic accomplishments. On the other hand, Lithuanians' personal involvement in the fate of Ukraine could be used for a better understanding of the Lithuanian transformation experience and identification of the most effective components of reforms implemented by Lithuanians. Such an approach could help determine the priorities of bilateral cooperation and development of the future agenda for Ukrainian-Lithuanian Joint Commission for European Integration (which is currently more focused on implementation of the AA with the EU) on their basis. One of these priorities could be the adaptation of the experience in creating a strategic planning system. This system, introduced in Lithuania in the early 2000s, has not only contributed to a high-quality budget process, but also helped coordinate strategic planning between the ministries and focus their activities on results. Among the consequences of this system's launch are a higher pace of reforms and joining the first wave of European integration through accession to the EU in 2004. Owing to this, Lithuania has the reputation of a country which has some of the best experience in effective implementation of the EU *acquis* and development of government institutions' competency in terms of the European integration process. Today, it successfully shares this experience with Croatia within the framework of the EU Twinning light project "*Support for Setting Up of the Strategic Planning System at the National Level*."¹⁵ Over the course of 2004–2016, Lithuania was a participant in many Twinning-projects and provided technical assistance to Balkan countries (Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosna and Herzegovina), and also to Eastern Partnership countries (Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan).

¹⁵ *Cooperation between Lithuania and Croatia: improving strategic planning for better public governance*, 7/12/2015, https://www.cpva.lt/en/news/international-cooperation_272/cooperation-between-lithuania-ffdm.html

Indicatively, it was the Lithuanian side to call on Ukrainians to use the EU-funded Twinning and TAIEX institution building programs more effectively during the last meeting of the Joint Commission, although it would seem that Ukrainian side would have to be more proactive in this regard.¹⁶ Therefore, Lithuanian experts are ready to expand the range of cooperation and to continue participating in technical assistance projects (so far, Lithuanian experts have been involved in 10 Twinning projects in Ukraine). It is also believed that the projects implemented within the framework of bilateral cooperation could be used in the development of European projects.

It should be understood that successful implementation of reforms and the AA between Ukraine and the EU are keys to not only "building Europe in Ukraine," but also to a completely different level of bilateral cooperation between Lithuanians and Ukrainians

It should be understood that successful implementation of reforms and the AA between Ukraine and the EU are keys to not only "building Europe in Ukraine," but also to a completely different level of bilateral cooperation between Lithuanians and Ukrainians. It is no secret that the business climate in our country suppresses the development of economic cooperation. It

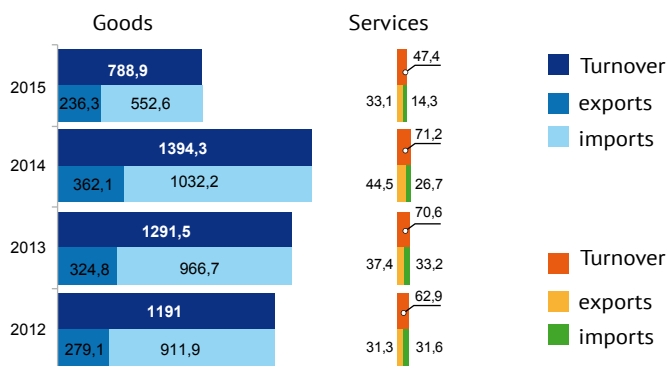
discourages, rather than attracts Lithuanian investors. As a result, the number of investors from Lithuania has not increased in recent years. Lithuanian business does not enter the Ukrainian market, although Lithuanian companies that are already present there have not closed off their activities yet. In addition, there is a category of business that has left or has been forced to leave the Ukrainian market in previous years. Those businesses continue to monitor the situation in Ukraine. Since they are well aware of the conditions of doing business in Ukrainian, an improved position in the Doing Business ranking alone will not bring them back. In order to convince them to re-invest their capital in Ukraine, an effective reform of law enforcement agencies, especially the prosecutor's offices and the courts, should be implemented.

On the other hand, there are cases when major Lithuanian businesses were trying to enter the market with new projects, but did not receive any relevant interest from Ukrainian side. For instance, one of the major furniture production companies that was going to open a fac-

¹⁶ *Protocol of the 12th meeting of Ukrainian-Lithuanian commission on European integration, 23 June 2016, Kyiv.*

tory in Chernihiv region, eventually invested in Belarus. The fact that the neighboring country is more attractive to Lithuanian investors is backed up with statistics. The number of companies with Lithuanian capital in Belarus is growing every year: 81 in 2013; 109 in 2014; 127 in 2015 (in Ukraine, 55, 58, and 54 respectively; only direct investments are taken into account). Instead, the number of (direct) Ukrainian investments in Lithuania has almost doubled, from 41 in 2013 to 88 in 2015.¹⁷ The most attractive areas for Ukrainian investors are private property (40.1%), processing industry (38.8%), and real estate trading (11.6%).¹⁸ The Roshen Corporation is obviously one of the major Ukrainian investors in Lithuania. In turn, the most famous Lithuanian investors present in Ukraine are JSC BT Invest and its two main projects: Novus supermarket chain (mainly represented in Kyiv) and StolitsaGroup company constructing real estate in Kyiv.¹⁹

Graph 1. Ukraine's trade with Lithuania in 2012-2015 (million USD)



Source: Embassy of Ukraine in Lithuania²⁰

¹⁷ Foreign direct investment, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/temines-lenteles40>

¹⁸ Стан українсько-литовського торговельно-економічного співробітництва у 2015 році, <http://lithuania.mfa.gov.ua/ukraine-it/trade/trade-and-investment>

¹⁹ BT invest: projects, <http://www.btinvest.lt/98/Projects>

²⁰ Стан українсько-литовського торговельно-економічного співробітництва у 2015 р., <http://lithuania.mfa.gov.ua/ukraine-it/trade/trade-and-investment>

In terms of foreign policy, now is too early to sum up the preliminary results on the effect of the introduction of DCFTA with the EU on bilateral trade between Ukraine and Lithuania in 2016. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the moratorium on timber logs export, adopted by the Verkhovna Rada despite the conditions of the AA with the EU, increased skepticism from the side of Lithuanian businessmen regarding true competition rules in Ukraine (according to 2015 data, wood and wooden products were the third largest export position after agricultural and engineering products). However, Ukraine is not among the first tier of countries for most successfully developing trade relations with Lithuania (the top five traditionally includes Russia, Latvia, Poland, Estonia, and Germany). On the other hand, Ukraine was recognized this year as a priority market for Lithuanian businesses, as mentioned during the meeting between President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Lithuanian diplomats regarding the national priorities of economic diplomacy in May 2016.²¹ Therefore, the Ukrainian side should consider Lithuania's, 80% of whose GDP depends on exports, bet on economic diplomacy in the further development of bilateral relations.

Another component, which should be taken into account by Ukrainian diplomats and businesses, is the high status and influence of business associations in Lithuania

However, analysis of bilateral trade cooperation should not be limited to statistics, since Ukraine could teach Lithuanian lessons in terms of economic diplomacy as well. First, economic diplomacy is a part of the activities of the Foreign Ministry of Lithuania (it serves as a coordinator). Second, its development is Vilnius' response to

the crisis of 2008, Russian aggression against Ukraine, and the consequences of the EU membership (Brussels specifically encourages this type of diplomacy and supports its development with structural funds). Third, the Economic Diplomacy Council, the purpose of which is maintaining the dialogue between state institutions and business associations and developing existing and finding new markets, has

²¹ *Economic diplomacy must contribute to building the future of Lithuania*, 16/05/2016, <https://www.lrp.lt/en/press-centre/press-releases/economic-diplomacy-must-contribute-to-building-the-future-of-lithuania/25185>

been established for its successful implementation.²² Promotion of Lithuanian economic interests abroad rests on the shoulders of either economic ambassadors, trade attachés or the representatives of Enterprise Lithuania (a state institution promoting business and exports). Moreover, another state agency attracting foreign investments, Invest Lithuania, is operating successfully. Furthermore, Lithuania uses its broad network of honorary consuls (there are 10 Honorary Consulates of Lithuania in Ukraine and only 2 Honorary Consulates of Ukraine in Lithuania). Another component, which should be taken into account by Ukrainian diplomats and businesses, is the high status and influence of business associations in Lithuania. It is believed that local business is even more powerful than civil society. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the activities of the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, Lithuanian Business Confederation, Lithuanian Business Employers' Confederation, Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, and Investors' Forum.²³

Another important step is the formation of the Ukrainian-Lithuanian Business Council. Furthermore, contacts have been established between Ukrainian League of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists that are also working on the development of a successful collaboration platform.²⁴ The level of cooperation with Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is also increasing. However, there is a lack of materials or data showing the development of clear strategies for Ukrainian business to enter Lithuanian market from the Ukrainian side. Instead, there is a widespread presentation by Alexandr Izgorodin, Director of the International Relations Department at the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists dedicated to the opportunities offered to Ukrainian

²² Ringailė Kuokštytė, Vytautas Kuokštis, *Lithuania's economic diplomacy: export promotion and FDI attraction // Economic diplomacy of the Baltic states / ed. by Andris Sprūds, Kārlis Bukovskis. – Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2014. – pp. 116-119.*

²³ Ringailė Kuokštytė, Vytautas Kuokštis... - p. 122.

²⁴ Новини Посольства України в Литовській Республіці, 28/10/2016, <http://lithuania.mfa.gov.ua/ua/press-center/news/52000-posol-ukrajini-v-litovskij-respublici-volodimir-jacenivskij-proviv-zustrich-z-pershim-vice-prezidentom-uspp-sergijem-prohorovim-ta-sekretarem-ukrajinsko-litovskoj-dilovoji-radi-zhilyvinasom-abaravichyusom>

business by the Lithuanian market.²⁵ Lithuanians, whose philosophy of attracting investments could be reduced to the formula “bring one investor, and they will bring others,” consider such promising areas for attracting Ukrainian business as IT services outsourcing, commercialization of Ukrainian startups in Lithuania, export of Ukrainian biofuels to the EU, export of food products to the EU, export of engineering services to Lithuania and the EU, and investments in free economic zones of Lithuania aimed at entering European and global export markets.²⁶ Within this conception, Lithuania might become a business hub used to enter European markets (through processing raw materials into finished products within the free economic zones in Lithuania). Moreover, Lithuania has voiced all the possible assistance and support for Ukrainian business on this path. An attractive program for startups is being developed as Vilnius, unlike Kyiv, places its bets on innovations. In particular, during the recent opening of LITEXPO, which included the Smart Lithuania conference and 50 success stories from Lithuania, President Dalia Grybauskaitė stressed that Lithuania should always be fast, as it is too small to afford slow development, and therefore, “Lithuania should be inventive, as a small country it can survive in today’s geopolitical pressure and remain competitive and visible in the world only through being dynamic, creative and courageous.”²⁷

Therefore, in relations with Lithuania, Ukraine has a choice to either continue being a bull in a china shop, or synchronize new approaches to business and innovation development with Lithuania

Therefore, in relations with Lithuania, Ukraine has a choice to either continue being a bull in a china shop, or synchronize new approaches to business and innovation development with Lithuania. Obviously, not only the Ukrainian League of Industrialists

²⁵ Александр Изгородин, Перспективы сотрудничества между Литвой и Украиной, http://people2people.com.ua/uploads/LT_Ukraine.pdf ; Литва готова допомогти українському бізнесу вийти на європейські ринки, <http://kiev-chamber.org.ua/uk/17/379.html>

²⁶ Александр Изгородин, Перспективы сотрудничества между Литвой и Украиной, http://people2people.com.ua/uploads/LT_Ukraine.pdf - p. 17-23; 29-30.

²⁷ Prezidentė: Lietuva per mažą, kad vystytųsi lėtai, <http://vz.lt/ismani-lietuva/2016/11/04/prezidentelietuva-per-mazakad-vystytusi-letai#ixzz4P2lwsoY3>

2. Interests of Ukraine toward Lithuania and Interests of Lithuania toward Ukraine

and Entrepreneurs, but also the IT Ukraine Association should establish contacts with Lithuania. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that Lithuania has Estonia as a major competitor next door that has already captivated the minds of Ukrainian IT specialists.

While the cooperation in IT and innovative development projects sectors is still being defined, both sides have a chance to activate the Viking transport route project between the Black Sea ports and Klaipeda.

Figure 1. Transport route project between the Black Sea ports and Klaipeda



Source: Container Train "Viking train"²⁸

²⁸ <http://cargo.litrail.lt/en/viking-train>

This ambitious project from the railways of three countries (Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania) aimed at shipping goods between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea has been in development since 2003. For instance, the main route, Chornomorsk-Kyiv-Minsk-Vilnius-Klaipeda, is 1734 kilometers long and should take 54 hours to traverse. Thus, it should attract potential customers with time- and cost-effectiveness, compared to other shipping routes from Asia to Nordic countries. During a time of Chinese boom and increasing competition for Chinese funds and involvement in the New Silk Road project, Viking has a chance to attract investors and clients. However, Ukraine first needs to complete the Customs Service reform and ensure that the customs procedures would not slow down the cargo deliveries. The customs audit procedure on Lithuanian-Belarusian border takes 30 minutes for a single train. Therefore, the main challenges of this project are promotion and advertising of the route itself and its services in order to increase the load, as well as elimination of all obstacles at customs control in Ukrainian ports. The prospects for expanding the project in Turkey, which could be realized by using either the main route or the route via Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine to Klaipeda²⁹, should also be taken into account. Diplomats from all affiliated countries are currently working on the appropriate solutions.

In terms of transport and infrastructure cooperation with Lithuania, Ukraine needs to do its homework on Customs Service reform efficiently and promptly

Therefore, in terms of transport and infrastructure cooperation with Lithuania, Ukraine needs to do its homework on Customs Service reform efficiently and promptly. It should be noted that Lithuanian experts have been helping Ukrainians in this area within the framework of a separate project for 10 years. Today, contacts between the customs services are maintained, although without the involvement of on-site experts. Kyiv should understand that the Viking project would be attractive only if potential customers are not afraid of the number of borders and different customs procedures. Thus, promoting rapid border crossing not only on the Belarusian-Lithuanian, but also on the Ukrainian border should become a short-term objective of specialized ministries and agencies. Any delays could lead to successful development of alternative routes, such

²⁹ Container Train "Viking train"; <http://cargo.litrail.lt/en/viking-train>

as a rail route through Russia and Belarus to Lithuania and Scandinavia, or a highway through Turkey and Poland to Scandinavia. The self-imposed isolation of Ukraine, as well as its exclusion from the transit grid of the modern Silk Road from Asia to Europe is hardly in the interests of Ukrainian state, whose economy already has little incentive for further development..

As mentioned before, according to Lithuanian business, Ukrainians could increase their exports of biofuel to Lithuania and other EU markets. It should be understood that an increase in the share of biofuels in the energy sector of Lithuania is an important part of energy sector reform aimed at ensuring the full energy independence of Lithuania from Russia. Other components are the construction of an LNG terminal in Klaipeda; the project of construction of a regional gas pipeline to supply gas from the LNG terminal to Poland (and possibly Ukraine within the framework of the GIPL pipeline construction or via the Belarussian pipeline); import of electricity from Poland and Sweden; and energy conservation. Within several years, and with political consensus, Lithuanians have managed to not only deprive Gazprom of its monopoly influence on the country's energy system, but also completely reform the gas transportation system. Gas consumption has also decreased (from 3.34 billion m³ in 2011 to 2.65 billion m³ in 2015, with a potential decrease to 2 billion m³ this year).³⁰ The Klaipeda terminal can produce up to 4 billion m³ of gas at full capacity; therefore, the excess gas could be either used in creating a common energy market in the Baltic region, or exported to Ukraine. Kyiv has already expressed its interest in gas supplies from Lithuania. In addition to the aforesaid gas import routes via Poland (in the long term) and Belarus (with an equivalent network), the use of the railway to ship gas from

Within several years, and with political consensus, Lithuanians have managed to not only deprive Gazprom of its monopoly influence on the country's energy system, but also completely reform the gas transportation system

³⁰ Vija Pakalkaitė, *Lithuania's Strategic Use of EU Energy Policy Tools: A Transformation of Gas Dynamics, September 2016: the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies*, <https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Lithuanias-Strategic-Use-of-EU-Energy-Policy-Tools-A-transformation-of-Gas-Market-Dynamics-NG-111.pdf> - p. 30.

the Klaipeda port (the preliminary opening term is August 2017) is being considered.³¹

While the construction of the LNG terminal allowed not only the diversification of gas supplies, but also a break of Gazprom's stranglehold and a complete reboot of Lithuania's energy sector, the increase in the share of biofuels and other energy saving measures has already reduced the price of electricity (by 13%) and heating (by 20%).³² In this context, Ukrainians should closely examine the Lithuanian experience, which is especially true for small regional centers. For instance, Chernihiv could adopt the experience of Kaunas (the population in both cities is about 300,000). Kaunas has already written its success story of transition to bioenergy. Until 2012 this city, as well as the rest of the country, has been using Gazprom's natural gas. Over the next three years, the city has completely changed its approach; today, 80% of energy supply are covered by three bioenergy factories that were built during that period. Prices have also been affected, and now city residents pay 40% less for electricity and heating.³³ In Ukraine, where an increase in utility tariffs is the only noticeable change over the past 2 years, diversification of energy sources and increased use of renewable energy sources could not only reduce the financial burden on households, but also remove excessive social and political tensions around this issue.³⁴ In addition, it could also become an incentive for the development of local businesses, attract investments, and increase cooperation.³⁵ For large cities, it is also a method of disposal of municipal waste. For instance, Vilnius has developed a project to construct a cogeneration CHP which would use municipal waste and biomass that is not suitable for processing. This

³¹ Source: Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Lithuania.

³² Lithuanian PM introduces economic priorities for 2016, 15/10/2015, <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/analytics/?doc=111695>.

³³ Nordic Baltic Bioenergy Conference, 19-21 April 2016, <https://nordicbalticbioenergy.eu/wp-content/uploads/programme.pdf> - p.6.

³⁴ See details on the situation in Ukraine at: REMAP-2030, Перспективи розвитку відновлюваної енергетики в Україні до 2030 року, http://saee.gov.ua/sites/default/files/UKR%20IRENA%20REMAP%20_%202015.pdf

³⁵ BALTPOOL biomass exchange platform, <http://www.baltpool.lt/en/>

project is supported by the European Commission.³⁶ This Lithuanian experience could be interesting and useful for Ukraine; therefore, local authorities in both countries should be encouraged to cooperate and encourage investors.

The potential of cooperation within the framework of the Odesa-Brody-Plock-Gdansk oil pipeline still remains unrealized. The prospects of its use have been referred to in the road map of strategic partnership between Ukraine and Lithuania until 2016, signed by the presidents of the two countries in autumn 2014.³⁷ Another open

The potential of cooperation within the framework of the Odesa-Brody-Plock-Gdansk oil pipeline still remains unrealized. The prospects of its use have been referred to in the road map of strategic partnership between Ukraine and Lithuania until 2016

opportunity is the fate of electricity supplies from Ukraine to Lithuania. The project was stalled in the late 2000s due to the position of Belarus.³⁸ Economists and energy specialists from both Ukraine and Lithuania should provide calculations of potential profits for Belarus in the event of joining projects developed in the second half of the 2000s for energy supplies routes alternative to Russian ones. At that time, the initiative was proposed by Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus. Given the present difficult economic situation in Belarus and the permanent “oil wars” between Lukashenka and Putin, as well as Minsk’s interest in Ukrainian electricity, diplomats of the three sides (all being successors of the GDL) should make efforts to find a mutually beneficial cooperation format. Moreover, Belarus should not fear that Lithuania is capturing the Ukrainian fuel market. Import of petroleum products from Belarus is several times higher than Lithuanian imports of oil products to Ukraine (USD 1,733,443,000 and

³⁶ EC approves state aid for bioenergy CHP project in Lithuania, 20/09/2016, <http://biomassmagazine.com/articles/13713/ec-approves-state-aid-for-bioenergy-chp-project-in-lithuania>

³⁷ Україна-Литва все ще вірять в перспективи труби Одеса-Броди – документ, 25/11/2014, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2014/11/25/7028120/>

³⁸ Олександр Турчинов: Прямі поставки української електроенергії до Литви можливі лише при вирішенні питання транзиту з Білоруссю, 26/11/2009, http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=243179585&cat_id=244314412

413,913,000, respectively).³⁹ On the other hand, it should be noted that the local representative office of PKN ORLEN S.A., which had undertaken the obligation of ORLEN Lietuva in early 2016, is making significant efforts to increase the supply and expand the range of oil products imported from Lithuania to the Ukrainian market. At the same time, the office is also introducing gasoline, diesel fuel, and bio-fuel certified in accordance with the EU norms to Ukrainian drivers.

2.3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURITY AND DEFENSE COOPERATION

Today, Lithuania is one of the countries that provides active assistance in reforming the security and defense sectors of Ukraine.⁴⁰ This assistance is provided within the framework of both bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as well as via NATO. Lithuania participates in activities of the Joint multinational coordination committee (among the other participants of this format are the US, the UK, and Canada), which focuses on facilitation of the development of defense capabilities of Ukraine. This Committee is comprised of 13 special-

Today, Lithuania is one of the countries that provides active assistance in reforming the security and defense sectors of Ukraine

ized sub-committees developing defense reforms and establishing military cooperation between the stakeholders. Furthermore, Lithuania is the only state that provided Ukraine with lethal armaments in 2016 (about 150 tons of ammunition). Lithuania has its own ammunition production capacity, which has made that supply possible without coordination

with other NATO member states. It was facilitated by the cooperation between the Defense Ministries and Embassies (although the whole process took about two years). Ukraine was provided with ammunition that was “useless for Lithuania,” as the Soviet-type armaments were decommissioned after the Lithuanian Armed Forces’ conversion to NATO standards. Thus, Vilnius set a precedent and gave an example to other countries of the Alliance to demonstrate their level of support for Ukraine.

³⁹ Україна за 8 мес. імпортувала 4,5 млн тонн нафтопродуктів на \$1,9 млрд, 06/09/2016, <http://interfax.com.ua/news/economic/368120.html>

⁴⁰ Андрій Загороднюк: «Україна і НАТО. Як досягнути українському війську стандартів Альянсу», в ефірі радіо «Свобода», 26/06/2016, <https://defense-reforms.in.ua/news/ukraina-i-nato-yak-dosyagnuti-ukrainskomu-vijsku-standartiv-alyansu>

An important component of Lithuanian policy towards Ukraine in the context of strengthening regional security is the consistent promotion of enhanced cooperation between Ukraine and NATO. The Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Kyiv are supported by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius and Lithuanian diplomats in all international platforms. According to the Minister, Ukraine is a key partner of NATO. Kyiv could expect Lithuania to seek to enhance political dialogue and practical cooperation between the parties.⁴¹ Since January 1, 2015, the Lithuanian Embassy in Ukraine has served as the NATO Contact Point Embassy in Ukraine. Recently, it was decided that the Embassy would perform these functions until the end of 2018, which means that Kyiv can count on Lithuanian support during the major reforms implementation in the Ministry of Defense under the Strategic Defense Bulletin. In particular, one could expect that the Embassy will keep initiating various programs aimed at improving the public awareness of NATO in Ukraine (e.g. advocacy campaigns, cooperation with the media and civil society organizations, forums and programs for students, etc.; over the last two years, the Embassy participated in 78 thematic events).⁴² Accordingly, the Embassy's experience should be adopted during the finalization of the draft State Program of Public Information on the Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine for 2017-2020, developed by the Office of the Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. Furthermore, it should be noted that the NATO Contact Point Embassy in Ukraine is also engaged in logistics, monitoring, and analysis of issues related to cooperation between the Alliance and Ukraine. An important component of its activities is coordination of cooperation between the embassies of NATO member states in Kyiv. In order to achieve this objective, the Embassy organizes regular briefings and meetings of the ambassadors, where they agree the

Kyiv can count on Lithuanian support during the major reforms implementation in the Ministry of Defense

⁴¹ Lithuanian Foreign Minister: "Cooperation with NATO helps to strengthen Ukraine's security"; 2/12/2015, <https://www.urm.lt/default/en/news/lithuanian-foreign-minister-cooperation-with-nato-helps-to-strengthen-ukraines-security>

⁴² Новини Посольства Литовської Республіки в Україні, 12/10/2016, <https://ua.mfa.lt/ua/ua/news/predstavnitstvo-litbi-b-ukran-she-dba-roki-bikonubatime-funks-kontaktного-posol-jstba-nato->

joint communication strategy on the presence of NATO in Ukraine. Diplomatic synergy with other embassies in Kyiv is vital for Lithuanian diplomats. Therefore, while average Ukrainians value the information and advocacy campaigns for the Alliance initiated by the Embassy of Lithuania, other diplomatic missions and the Foreign Minister of Ukraine appreciate the coordinating role of Lithuanians in matters of joint political assessment of Ukraine-NATO cooperation and implementation of the agreed agenda.

For the Ukrainian side, the assistance provided by Lithuanian instructors in reforming the NCO personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is especially important

On top of that, Lithuanian support is based on several pillars: identifying areas of cooperation within NATO; a delegation of experts to Ukraine (about 50 trainers are providing assistance in reforming the Armed Forces of Ukraine); participation in trust funds; military education and training of Ukrainian military officers; development of trilateral LITPOLUKRBRIG; and the treatment of wounded Ukrainian soldiers in Lithuania. Overall, 14 projects are being implemented either on a standalone basis, or in cooperation with other states.⁴³ For the Ukrainian side, the assistance provided by Lithuanian instructors in reforming the NCO personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is especially important. Since Lithuanian armed forces have evolved from a Soviet foundation, Lithuanians have sufficient knowledge of the transformation stage and gradual nature of development of military units according to NATO standards. This fact has been referred to by Lithuanian military expert Marius Šulga in his comments on the launch of the reform of the AFU's procurement system in spring 2015. In particular, he pointed out Lithuanian experience in providing every serviceperson with a new outfit and unified ammunition kit based on the NATO standards instead of the Soviet Union ones.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Mans Hanssen, International support to security sector reform in Ukraine. A mapping of SSR projects. – Stockholm: Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2016. – accessed: <https://fba.se/contentassets/9f9daa3815ac4adaa88fd578469fc053/international-support-to-security-sector-reform-in-ukraine---a-mapping-o....pdf> - p. 89.*

⁴⁴ *Прес-брифінг, 23/04/2015, <http://uacrisis.org/ua/23299-ukrainian-ukrayinski-vijskovi-matimut-ekipirovku-nablizhenu-do-standativ-nato-vzhe-tsiyeyi-oseni-vijskovi-eksperti>*

Thus, the Lithuanian experience is transferred in multiple ways. First, through the training of Ukrainian inspectors, primarily at the Desna training center (but also in Yavoriv and Khmelnytskyi). Second, through invitation to study in Lithuania (officers also have the opportunity to study at the Baltic Defense College in Tartu (Estonia), the BALTDEFCOL, where the officers of Baltic states have been trained according to NATO standards since 1998). Lithuanians understand the importance of military education for professional development of the new armed forces, as Lithuanian officers, including former Soviet ones, have Western education. Therefore, training Ukrainian officers in Lithuania and Tartu is an important component of support provided by Vilnius (increase in the Ministry of Defense budget would elevate the number of Ukrainians trained within this program; another factor determining the number of Ukrainian participants of the program is the number of military personnel with sufficient knowledge of English, required for studying abroad). The educational component also includes assistance in developing programs for Ukrainian military universities, which involves changing their curricula and adaptation to the educational standards of NATO. Third, the experience of multinational cooperation between member states and non-Alliance ones gained by Lithuania before 2004 is also shared.

The emergence of the LITPOLUKRBRIG is the best example of cooperation in this format. It is based on the experience of the Lithuanian-Polish Battalion (included in the EU Rapid Reaction Force in 2000), as well as the experience of the Polish-Ukrainian Battalion (1998-2010; joint format, also involving Lithuanians, that had been used within the framework of the NATO mission (KFOR) in Kosovo). The important foundation for cooperation was laid in Afghanistan. In 2007, the Defense Ministries approved participation of Ukrainian peacekeeping personnel (medics) in the Lithuanian contingent in Afghanistan, which more evidence of the high level of cooperation between the two states. Therefore, the trilateral peacekeeping brigade LITPOLUKRBRIG is another step towards the enhanced cooperation (after long delay, the respective agreement was signed on September 19, 2014, and the implementation phase was launched in autumn 2015). The brigade was already warmly welcomed by the citizens during the parades in Warsaw and Kyiv in 2016. According to the objectives for the first year, the main

The emergence of the LITPOLUKRBRIG is the best example of cooperation in defense sector

goal is to prepare for higher operational capability certification in December. In order to achieve this goal, the command of LITPO-LUKRBRIG participated in the command exercises Maple Arch 2016 that were conducted at the International Peacekeeping and Security Centre in the first half of November 2016. The primary goal of the brigade is to prepare for crisis management and peacekeeping operations. The Ukrainian battalion, which is a part of the tripartite brigade, is assisted by international instructors from the Joint Multi-national Training Group (JMTG-U). Currently, the brigade, established for peacekeeping purposes, is not expected to perform other tasks (although there were references to the possibility of its use as a basis for another battle group of the EU). Regardless of the fate of the brigade, it is important that it has already become a model of engagement of Ukrainian military personnel in consistent cooperation with NATO member states within the framework of a joint military unit. For the officers, this means practical and thorough familiarization with staff procedures and processes of the NATO. In light of the transition of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to NATO standards, this experience is invaluable.⁴⁵

Therefore, military cooperation with Lithuania opens up the prospect of closer cooperation with NATO without membership for Ukraine. This summer, Ukrainian gunners of the 80th Airborne Assault Brigade participated in international artillery maneuvers (Flaming Thunder 2016 tactical exercises) in Lithuania for the first time. During the exercises, Ukrainian commanders noted the increasing interest of the NATO member states to experience gained by Ukrainian gunners in the ATO zone.⁴⁶ Such attention is natural and is caused by the nature of the war in eastern Ukraine.⁴⁷ The aforesaid cooperation experience

⁴⁵ *Інтерв'ю з міністром оборони Литовської Республіки Юозасом Олександром*, 2/09/2016, <http://na.mil.gov.ua/36618-lytpolukrbryg-bude-povnistyu-gotova-do-vykonannya-zavdan-za-1-2-roky>

⁴⁶ *Військовослужбовці ВДВ ЗС України братимуть участь в багатонаціональних тактичних навчаннях «Флеймінг Тандер-2016» в Литві*, 30/07/2016, <http://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2016/07/30/vijskovosluzhbovczidv-zs-ukraini-bratimut-uchast-v-bagatonaczionalnih-taktichnih-navchanniah-flejming-tander-2016%E2%80%9D-v-litvi-/>

⁴⁷ *The Scale of Russian Aggression in Ukraine*: <http://iwp.org.ua/eng/public/2106.html>

could be expanded through development of projects involving Ukrainian troops into the Nordic-Baltic security formats within the framework of the Smart Defense concept. Given the aggressive and unpredictable policy of the Kremlin toward the Baltic and Scandinavian countries and the high probability of sabotage operations not only in the air, but also on the land, the experience of Ukrainian troops gained in the ATO zone has already been acknowledged as worthy to be adopted by northern European neighbors in general and Lithuania in particular. Another noteworthy aspect is the initial stage of penetration of Russian black ops forces in Crimea and Donbas. It seems that the wave of refugees from Russia to the Nordic countries in the early 2016 was a test of their common borders with Russia. On the other hand, constant intimidation by the Kremlin regarding deployment of the Iskander missile complex in Kaliningrad region (and thus, the creation of A2/AD situation) is not only triggering political tensions, but also binds NATO member states within the agenda imposed by Russia. Ukrainian troops, particularly intelligence, are already well-versed in this type of Russian tactics and thus might be engaged as consultants by Lithuanians. It is also advisable to move toward the joint (first, in a trilateral format) defense (operational) planning and involve Ukraine in the common security and defense space of the EU. This form of cooperation could also provide opportunities to strengthen the defense capacity of Lithuania with Ukrainian assistance (in the medium term).

The aforesaid cooperation experience could be expanded through development of projects involving Ukrainian troops into the Nordic-Baltic security formats within the framework of the Smart Defense concept

First the Maidan, and then the ATO have added another component to the cooperation between the two countries in the way of assistance to injured Ukrainians. Through the coordinated efforts of diplomats from both countries, especially due to the direct involvement of the Embassy of Lithuania in Ukraine and the Honorary Consulate of Lithuania in Dnipro, cooperation between the Ministries of Defense and the Ministries of Health, as well as through the funding dedicated by the Lithuanian Government and genuine devotion of Lithuanian doctors, more than a hundred injured Ukrainians have been already transferred from the hospitals in Kharkiv and Dnipro for rehabilitation in Lithuania. In this way, Vilnius helps Ukraine overcome the lack of sufficient number of domestic rehabilitation centers, offering the

services of the Military Rehabilitation Center in Druskininkai and other medical institutions. According to the feedback provided by Ukrainian military servicepersons, they received not only proper medical care, but also warm and hospitable treatment.⁴⁸ Another touching moment is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Lithuania's presentation of medals for the defense of the people of Ukraine and the EU, a medal especially for Ukrainians.

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Another problematic area in Ukrainian system is psychological rehabilitation, which is also reflected in Lithuanian approaches to rehabilitation and assistance proposals (mainly related to adoption of the experience of psychosocial rehabilitation). Certain steps have already been made in collabora-

tion with experts from Dnipro and Poltava regions. Furthermore, the OSCE is already providing assistance in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. According to Ambassador Vaidotas Verba, the OSCE helps develop the concept of the state target program of medical, psychological, and social rehabilitation and adaptation of the ATO veterans for the period until 2020. The program includes approaches to treatment of different categories of victims: children, civilian population that survived the traumatic experience, prisoners of war, female military personnel, etc. As of September 2016, the number of demobilized reached 160,000; at least 20% of them require psychosocial rehabilitation.⁴⁹ Taking the aforesaid into account, Lithuanian assistance is more than welcome. In addition, the launch of this type of cooperation has been discussed during the summit of the Joint Commission for European Integration in summer 2016.

⁴⁸ Рамунас Шерпетаускас: «Мы помним, как украинцы поддержали нас в 1991-м, сейчас пришло время возвращать долги», 11/05/2016, <http://gordonua.com/news/war/litovskiy-volonter-my-pomnim-kak-ukraincy-podderzhali-nas-v-1991-m-seychas-prishlo-vremya-vozvrashchat-dolgi-131234.html>

⁴⁹ Соціальна безпека в Україні: вітчизняний та зарубіжний досвід, 28/09/2016, <http://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-presentation/2090730-socialna-bezpeka-v-ukraini-vitcziznaniy-ta-zarubiznij-dosvid.html>

Overall, Lithuania have provided Ukraine with EUR 4.5 million worth of aid in 2014-2016, 1.18 million of which have been allocated to the humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid includes medical care for injured persons, assistance to war victims in the ATO zone, supply of medical equipment and medicines, and other humanitarian supplies. The visits of schoolchildren and students from the conflict zone to Lithuania have been organized with the assistance of Lithuanian NGOs and volunteers. A program aimed at helping the internally displaced people of Donbas and Crimea is being developed. Following the events in Ukraine, such Lithuanian organizations as the "Union of Lithuanian Riflemen" and the Blue-Yellow International Volunteer Center, which are focused on helping Ukrainians, are expanding their activities.⁵⁰ Such music bands as Biplan and Skylė (The Brothers) are not only weaving Ukrainian context in their repertoire, but even singing in Ukrainian language.

⁵⁰ Алла Дубровик-Рохова, Як Литва готується дати відсіч Кремлю, 11/03/2016, <https://day.kyiv.ua/uk/article/den-planety/v-ochikuvanni-vtorgnennya>

3. WHO IS WHO? INTEREST GROUPS AND GROUPS OF INFLUENCE

Lithuania is among those countries where attitudes towards Ukraine do not depend on the political parties in power. Its policies remain pro-Ukrainian

Lithuania is among those countries where attitudes towards Ukraine do not depend on the political parties in power. Its policies remain pro-Ukrainian. Moreover, Kyiv could always count on the personal support of the Presidents of the Republic of Lithuania. The ex-President Valdas Adamkus has a deep knowledge of political reality of Ukraine and the problems of the region. During his presidency (1998-2003 and 2004-2009), the format of regular meetings between the Presidents of both countries was established, and the format of trilateral cooperation at the highest level between

Lithuania, Ukraine, and Poland was tested. Furthermore, Adamkus visited Ukraine three times during the period of the Orange Revolution. His participation in the round table in December 2004 contributed to finding a consensus between the presidential candidates, especially given the trust of the then-President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma. For upholding European values and support for Ukrainians during the difficult period, President Adamkus was awarded the Person of the Year 2005 prize. Later, the Lithuanian president supported granting Ukraine and Georgia prospects for the NATO membership at the Bucharest Summit in 2008. Taking personally the division of political forces that came to power after the Maidan this Lithuanian politician drew attention to involvement of the Kremlin in Ukrainian internal conflicts, and warned Ukrainians in December 2010: "Do not expect Russia to calm down and reduce its activity on Ukrainian issue. Like it or not, the political influence of Russia in Ukraine will remain tangible in the short term. If you do not agree with this situation, you should fight it."⁵¹

President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė maintains her policy of maximum affection and personal involvement in the events in Ukraine, following her predecessors. She has already made significant efforts to support the pro-European vector of Ukraine in 2013, espe-

⁵¹ *Альона Гетьманчук, Сергій Сидоренко, «Валдас Адамкус: 'Не сподівайтесь, що Росія заспокоїться'», 3/12/2010, http://gazeta.dt.ua/POLITICS/valdas_adamkus_ne_spodivaytesya_scho_rosiya_zaspokeyitsya.html*

cially during the preparations for the Vilnius Summit. Later, President Grybauskaitė kept tabs on the second Maidan and sought every possible way to support Ukraine in the EU. Obviously, she was among the top EU politicians who joined the March of Dignity in Kyiv on the anniversary of the shootings on the Maidan (February 22, 2015). Ukrainians appreciate this support and constantly praise the activities of the President of Lithuania. For defending the interests of Ukraine at the highest international level and supporting the territorial integrity and pro-European course of Ukraine, Dalia Grybauskaitė was awarded the Person of the Year prize in 2014. Her annual greetings to Ukrainian people on Independence Day are performed in Ukrainian and are full of symbolic meaning. Another important aspect is her consistent and constant assertion of Ukraine's positions in the international arena and invective policy toward the actions of Russia in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Grybauskaitė's speeches on Russia are often more edged than the speeches of the Ukrainian President. Thus, President Dalia Grybauskaitė is today the model of the European politician who patiently reminds the EU member states about threats from Russia and stands up for the impossibility of entering any coalition with Russia to fight ISIS. In this way, she reminds Europeans that their policies towards Russia should be strong and cannot be developed under such formulae as "cooperate where we can, and stop where we have to." At the same time, Dalia Grybauskaitė is a European leader who always urges Ukrainians to overcome all the difficulties and obstacles, and maintain the pro-European course. In her address to Ukrainians on the results of the referendum in the Netherlands, she stressed once again that "no one can stand in the way of Ukraine on its path toward Europe, as Ukraine has always been and will always remain a part of Europe" and that "Lithuania and the whole Europe will be on your side."⁵²

Dalia Grybauskaitė is a European leader who always urges Ukrainians to overcome all the difficulties and obstacles, and maintain the pro-European course

This position of the President of the Republic of Lithuania is enhanced by the activities of Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius. During the years of Russian aggression, the Minister has repeatedly demonstrat-

⁵² Грібаускайте – українцям: «Не час ставити під сумнів євровибір», 7/04/2016, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/04/7/7104687/>

ed that Ukraine can always count on the support of Lithuanians both in UN Security Council (Lithuania had the status of a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2014-2015), and in raising the issue of the EU sanctions against Russia and expanding the sanction list. Despite the fact that Lithuania is one of the three countries most affected by the sanctions against Russia,⁵³ Vilnius remains an advocate of maintaining sanctions in the EU. Furthermore, following the initiative of the Lithuanians, the sanction list has been amended to include persons elected to the State Duma of Russia in Crimea. Lithuania, whose geographical contours resemble the contours of the Crimean Peninsula, was one of the countries to support the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's statement on the illegitimacy of the elections in Crimea before their conduction. Moreover, Vilnius is a consistent supporter of the introduction of a visa-free regime with Ukraine. Lithuanian support in this sensitive issue is vital in the context of continuous postponement of the adoption of necessary decisions on visa liberalization within the EU. Meanwhile, Lithuania remains one of the few countries that does not diminish, but rather increases the annual numbers of visas issued to the citizens of Ukraine. This fact is reflected in the rating of Schengen countries' consulates, conducted by Europe Without Barriers NGO: Lithuania was named one of the three friendliest states for citizens of Ukraine.⁵⁴

Close cooperation between the two countries is also a result of activities of the Embassy of Lithuania in Ukraine. It is important that the token of success is passed from rotation to rotation: whoever the ambassador is, Kyiv can surely find a true friend of Ukraine on Buslivska Street. Moreover, former Ambassadors continue supporting our country even after leaving Kyiv. Therefore, Ambassador Algirdas Kumža (2006-2009), and Ambassador Petras Vaitiekūnas (2010-2014) could be credited as consistent supporters of Ukraine who are not only thoroughly familiar with the political situation in our country and the nature of bilateral relations, but also have been working in our country during overwhelming changes. Ambassador Vaitiekūnas and Lat-

⁵³ Аналітики назвали три країни ЄС, які найбільше постраждали від санкцій проти Росії, 7/11/2016, <http://tyzhden.ua/News/177894>

⁵⁴ Рейтинг консульств Шенгену: три «позитивні» країни, Польща – серед найгірших, 10/03/2016, <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2016/03/10/7045998/>

vian Ambassador Argita Daudze visited Crimea during the Russian annexation. For the “diplomatic bravery” showed that day, Ambassador Vaitiekūnas received the title of “Person of the Year-2014” in Lithuania. His evaluation of the situation and the fact that he, as a diplomat from an EU country, spent three weeks in Crimea in an attempt to secure the safety of citizens of the peninsula, were invaluable. He then gave Ukrainian authorities excellent advice: “You cannot beat President Putin with iron, but you can beat him with an iron will.”⁵⁵ In turn, great contributions have been made to security, economic, and cultural cooperation by the current Head of the Embassy (2015-), Ambassador Marius Janukonis, who started diplomatic activities in Ukraine in 2010 as the Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Head of Mission. Transparency, sincere support, and the high level of professionalism demonstrated by the Ambassador and other Embassy staff are the reasons why Lithuania has essentially managed to become a top advocate of Ukraine in the EU.

However, Ukrainian authorities should not become self-deluded and view Vilnius’ pro-Ukrainian policy as a manifestation of “political romanticism.” Lithuania’s policies are more than pragmatic. On the other hand,

officials of Lithuanian origin presenting European and international institutions in Ukraine are well aware of the real situation and know a good deal of the achievements of Ukrainians on the path of reforms. Therefore, Kyiv should not view Vilnius as a part of “they have no choice but to help us” formula, but rather as a partner, whose European integration experience could be used for more effective implementation of the AA and DCFTA with the EU. Moreover, Ukrainian side should take into account the influence of business associations in Lithuania and an important political tradition that is not even close to emerging in Ukraine: to make vital social and economic decisions by consensus. This is the objective of the activities of the Tripartite Council, comprised of representatives of government, business, and trade unions. This institution aims to en-

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⁵⁵ Тетяна Ярмошук, Путіна можна перемогти залізною волею – посол Литви, 11/03/2014, <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/25292440.html> ; Тарас Ібрагімов, Крим перетворюють на валізу без ручки, 1/07/2015, <http://krymsos.com/news/55b4e03ed284b/>

hance social partnership and social dialogue in Lithuania. Although it does not touch issues related to foreign economic activities, its activities should be taken into account in the context of promotion of Ukrainian business in Lithuania. Another specific feature of the Lithuanian tradition is a relatively low level of impact of non-governmental organizations (even though the government has adopted a special strategy for the development of civil society organizations several years ago). Instead, the experts from academic institutions are often employed as advisors and consultants. Also, their works are widely used by government officials. Therefore, before searching for partners in Lithuania, one should first examine research centers, consulting companies, and university departments, focusing on the areas of activities of their employees. Given this, the development of Ukrainian-Lithuanian horizontal connections mostly involves various state institutions or agencies from the Lithuanian side and non-governmental organizations from the Ukrainian one.⁵⁶

The Ukrainian minority in Lithuania and Lithuanian minority in Ukraine actively promote the soft powers of their homelands

The Ukrainian minority in Lithuania and Lithuanian minority in Ukraine actively promote the soft powers of their homelands. Today, both communities, mainly shaped in the second half of the 20th century, depend

on activities by the representatives of the first generation, i.e. those who moved to Lithuania or Ukraine for various reasons during the Soviet period. Ukrainians who settled in Lithuania mostly got there as soldiers or employees of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant. Lithuanian community in Ukraine, on the other hand, was formed in multiple ways: Lithuanians moved to South-Eastern regions to work on mines or factories; Lithuanian women followed their husbands after finishing working in Lithuania; Lithuanians deported to Siberia tried to settle close to their homeland (as they were forbidden to return), and therefore chose Ukraine after serving their prison terms. Today, both communities are virtually not replenished and keep low numbers: there are up to 16,000 Ukrainians in Lithuania and about 7,000 Lithu-

⁵⁶ See list of 2014-2016 projects at: Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme, <https://orangeprojects.lt/en/ukraine/ukraine-projects>; Gustav Gressel, *Keeping up appearances: how Europe is supporting Ukraine's transformation*, October 2016, http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ukraine_audit_pdf.pdf, – pp. 86-87.

anians in Ukraine. Interestingly, the accession of Lithuania to the EU has not led to a wave of Ukrainian Lithuanians return to their homeland. Instead, the numbers of Ukrainian migrant workers in the Republic of Lithuania are increasing. About 5,000 Ukrainians are working in construction industry and shipyards (the latter traditionally come from the southern Ukrainian regions). The number of Ukrainian students at Lithuanian universities is also increasing (currently, there are about 400 students; most of them receive scholarships from Lithuanian Government). The level of integration of the newcomers in the life of Ukrainian community in Lithuania depends on the coordination activities of the Embassy and the hospitality of Ukrainian communities in Lithuanian cities. Similar processes are observed in the case of Lithuanians in Ukraine. Numerous citizens of Lithuania have moved to our country to obtain top managerial positions or, as a former Minister of Economic Development Aivaras Abromavičius, to become active participants of public politics. Are they interested in the life of Lithuanian community in Ukraine or are they limited to communication with the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania, is an open question. It is only known that Lithuanian business is an important sponsor of projects implemented by Lithuanian community in Ukraine in general and by Maironis Lithuanian Cultural Society in Kyiv in particular. Meanwhile, there is another process noteworthy for Ukrainian business. Kyiv is gradually becoming a transport hub for the Lithuanians who travel to Asia, the Middle East, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey via Ukrainian capital. On the other hand, Ukrainians also appreciate convenient flight routes through Vilnius to different parts of the EU.

Another success story is the fruitful cooperation between Ukrainian community in Vilnius (mostly represented by Natalija Sertvitiene) and the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Lithuania. Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity is also an important center of Ukrainian life in Vilnius. The activities of this community are funded by the Lithuanian Government and local authorities.⁵⁷ Given the small numbers of Ukrainian

The appearance of the Ukrainian flag in public spaces of Lithuanian cities at various events aimed at supporting Ukraine and special demonstrations on the occasion of national holidays has become a manifestation of solidarity between Lithuanians and Ukrainians

⁵⁷ See details at: Українці у Литві, <http://lithuania.mfa.gov.ua/ua/ukraine-it/ukrainians-in-lt>

minority, the Embassy is taking the lion's share of activities aimed at promoting Ukraine, such as organization of cultural events and establishing contacts with Lithuanian authorities, businesses, various institutions, etc. Numerous events have been held during 2014-2016, including fundraising auctions for humanitarian aid, concerts of Ruslana in Vilnius on the Independence Day of 2014 and Jamala in June 2016, photo exhibitions, etc. Celebrations on the occasion of the State Flag of Ukraine Day are attended by not only the authorities, but also by the Lithuanian public. The appearance of the Ukrainian flag in public spaces of Lithuanian cities at various events aimed at supporting Ukraine and special demonstrations on the occasion of national holidays has become a manifestation of solidarity between Lithuanians and Ukrainians.

The Lithuanian minority in Ukraine is trying to preserve their national identity and convey their knowledge of language and culture to the third generation of Ukrainian Lithuanians

The Lithuanian minority in Ukraine is trying to preserve their national identity and convey their knowledge of language and culture to the third generation of Ukrainian Lithuanians. These activities have been attended for many years by one of the co-

founders of Lithuanian Society in Ukraine Dalia Makarova, who started rallying local Lithuanians in 1990, and now is the head of the Lithuanian Community in Ukraine. The Community was comprised of 11 regional centers until recently, when war and the occupation of Crimea led to the loss of Donbas and Crimea communities (the latter had two centers, in Simferopol and Sevastopol).⁵⁸ With the assistance of the Embassy, Lithuanians from the conflict zone were able to move to Lithuania. However, it is still unknown how many citizens of Ukraine of Lithuanian origin remain in the conflict zone in Donbas. In 2015, the Embassy resumed the activities of the Lithuanian language Saturday school. In contrast to Ukrainian minority in Lithuania, the Lithuanian diaspora in Ukraine does not possess its own premises, sharing rooms at various Ukrainian institutions (mainly educational ones) instead. This difference is also a consequence of the difference between Lithuanian Government's policy on national minorities integrated in Lithuanian society and supported at the expense of the

⁵⁸ See details at: *Ukrainos lietuvių bendruomenė*, <http://www.litva.org.ua/news.html>

national budget, and the Government of Ukraine's policy of leaving the care of national minorities on the shoulders of their respective states. Moreover, the activities of Lithuanian societies in Ukraine show their level of integration in the life of Lithuania itself: consistent participation in folk festivals and various cultural events on the occasion of national holidays in Lithuania or participation in important Lithuanian events represent not only the celebration of national holidays in the format of meetings in the streets of Ukrainian cities, but also participation in the national Lithuanian spelling quizzes, which helps preserve the language and strengthen the solidarity of Lithuanians around the globe..

Another specific area for strengthening people to people contacts is basketball. In Lithuania, basketball is a second religion, being more important than politics and also a component of national identity. Basketball has been the national sport since the early 1920s. Today, Lithuania is considered one of the strongest basketball nations worldwide. In Ukraine, on the other hand, basketball is developing only through the support of individual businessmen who have past associations with this sport. In Lithuania, children begin playing basketball in early childhood. Basketball tournaments are organized even among the kindergartens; later, parents have the opportunity to choose professional career for their children. In Ukraine, on the other hand, basketball remains a part of the physical education curriculum and has limited access to the professional arena. In Lithuania, basketball is a part of business culture, and watching games is a must for businessmen, politicians, and government officials. The sports arenas constructed for EuroBasket 2011 in Lithuania have become additional places to settle arrangements, meet friends, or have a good time. In Ukraine, the word "basketball" means the canceled EuroBasket 2015 and a lack of modern sports arenas. In Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations, basketball means exchanging experience and mutual assistance. The seat of the General Manager of Kyiv's Budivelnik basketball club has been occupied by the former vice president of one of the strongest clubs in Lithuania (Zalgiris) Gediminas Navikauskas for over 8 years. Possessing comprehensive knowledge of global basketball, Navikauskas is trying to adopt the most successful managerial decisions to promote Budivelnik on the international

For Ukraine, Lithuania might be an example of the development of not only basketball, but also the approach to the development of sport and healthy lifestyle

arena. Under his leadership, the club has already participated in European tournaments. Today, Budivelnky's positions in the EuroLeague are weakened due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. After all, one of the reasons for the cancellation of EuroBasket 2015 in Ukraine was Russian aggression. The insurance companies refused to insure European teams willing to participate in the games in Ukraine, and thus Budivelnky could not host home games. This situation was resolved with the assistance of Lithuania, where the Ukrainian club has held its home games. Later, the management of Budivelnky refused to participate in the EuroLeague, expecting that rivals could exploit the situation in eastern regions and refuse to travel to Ukraine under the pretext of the "dangerous and politically unstable situation." Furthermore, Arvydas Sabonis, world basketball superstar, acts as a binding figure between Ukrainian and Lithuanian basketball⁵⁹. Through frequent visits to Ukraine, he supports the development of basketball in both Kyiv and Dnipro. For Ukraine, Lithuania might be an example of the development of not only basketball, but also the approach to the development of sport and healthy lifestyle. Moreover, the example of basketball is always an example of a particular paradigm of thinking; its logic refers not only to the game, but also to the organization of the game, it is also a comprehensive approach to the development of sport as an institution: from children's sports school, to teams, clubs, production of souvenirs and sportswear, advertising, and sponsors. The approach to funding sports clubs with state and local budgets might also be relevant. After all, basketball in Lithuania is a source of pride for the town, the city and the whole country; therefore, local governments are also involved in the promotion of sports, and the culture of sports and leisure.

Bilateral cooperation in the areas of youth policies and sport contributed to the election of Ukrainian representative and specialized Deputy Minister Mykola Movchan as the Vice President of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS). This accomplishment of Ukraine is considered an example of integration into European and international structures, as well as evidence of fruitful cooperation between the specialized government

⁵⁹ У Києві презентували славетну історію литовського баскетболу, 12/10/2015 <https://ua.mfa.lt/ua/ua/news/u-kib-prezentubali-slabetnu-storyu-litobs-jkogo-vasketvolu>

institutions of Ukraine and Lithuania. This cooperation also includes organization of youth exchanges, joint tournaments, and study visits of Ukrainians to Lithuania. The agreement on youth exchanges was signed during the visit of Prime Minister of Lithuania Algirdas Butkevičius to Ukraine on August 28, 2015.⁶⁰

One of the consequences of good knowledge of another culture is the success of Ukrainian entrepreneurs who opened the Klaipėda pub chain in Kyiv, which distributes Lithuanian beer. These pubs have become not only meeting places for Lithuanians, but

History, basketball, and the taste of Lithuanian products are not only the pride of Lithuanians, but also Lithuania's soft power, which is positively perceived in Ukraine

also popular locations among the people of Kyiv. Ukrainians praised the diverse taste of fresh Lithuanian beer and the diversity of flavors of Lithuanian bread. Therefore, history, basketball, and the taste of Lithuanian products are not only the pride of Lithuanians, but also Lithuania's soft power, which is positively perceived in Ukraine.

The only category of people that is less than enthusiastic about Ukraine are the Lithuanian citizens of Polish origin. The activities of the Polish minority (the second largest in the country, with 6.6% of the population) in Lithuania presents a challenge for Lithuanian-Polish relations and Ukraine. On the one hand, Polish minority relays the messages of Russian propaganda regarding the events in Ukraine; on the other, their criticism toward Lithuanian national policies could be destructive and often escalates tensions between Lithuania and Poland. Given the fact that Polish minority is also represented in both the national Parliament (8 mandates after the last parliamentary elections) and the European Parliament (the Akcja Wyborcza Polaków na Litwie party shared its electoral list with the Lithuanian Russian Union), neglecting the anti-Ukrainian statements by Lithuanian Poles is not advisable; however, their importance should not be overestimated.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the very fact that the Akcja Wyborcza Polaków

⁶⁰ Микола Мовчан поінформував про обрання України вперше до керівного складу Міжурядового комітету ЮНЕСКО з питань фізичного виховання та спорту, 4/04/2016, http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/publish/article?art_id=248937643

⁶¹ Marius Laurinavičius, *Is Russia winning the information war in Lithuania*, 6/07/2015, <http://cepa.org/index/?id=6fcbe90eddbbc8bc99ec9fb4960ef0b9>

na Litwie party is closely cooperating with the Lithuanian Russian Union should be taken into account. The Akcja's leader and MEP Waldemar Tomaszewski is known for his anti-Ukrainian and pro-Russian statements. At the same time, his policies are aimed at escalation of the anti-Lithuanian hysteria among the Polish minority, not at finding mutual understanding with the Government of Lithuania to resolve the most disputed topics, such as writing Polish names and titles in Polish instead of Lithuanian, official use of Polish language, or special status for Polish educational institutions. Therefore, given the fact that Russia has managed to unite Russian and Polish minorities in Lithuania against Vilnius, the risk that the Kremlin will continue using the Polish minority to destabilize the situation in the whole region is quite significant.⁶² As Poland has always been sensitive to reports of discrimination against Polish minorities (not only in Lithuania), Russia could manipulate Warsaw, increasing the level of tension in both Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Ukrainian relations. The result of such tactics is obvious: weakening regional cooperation among neighbor states.

⁶² *Наталія Семерова, Інформаційні війни проти України: хто і як у Литві повірив російській пропаганді, 4/03/2015, http://24tv.ua/informatsiyni_viyini_proti_ukrayini_hto_i_yak_u_litvi_poviriv_rosiyskiy_propagandi_n550665*

4. EXISTING RISKS AND POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

4.1. CLOSING OF OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY CLOSE COOPERATION WITH LITHUANIA ON THE PATH TOWARD EUROPEANIZATION DUE TO THE LACK OF REAL IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS IN UKRAINE.

Lithuanians are one of the most ardent supporters of the pro-European course of Ukraine and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations among the EU and the NATO member states. Lithuanian experts have been working as advisors and consultants in various Ukrainian government agencies, commissions, and institutions for years. However, the lack of political will or sabotaging of reforms by Ukrainian authorities may lead to Lithuanians' activities closing up in our country.

Probability. *Low to medium.* Experienced Lithuanian politicians and government officials, who reformed their own state in complex and far from comfortable conditions, now help reform Ukraine. Constant delays in implementing reforms or half-hearted reforms, plus wealth accumulation demonstrated by Ukrainian officials instead of efforts aimed at public prosperity are the special aspects of Ukrainian politics that Lithuanians do not understand, but also do not tolerate. As a result, in the medium term, Lithuanian specialists could switch to other countries where their assistance is more in demand. Moreover, facade reforms and the lack of effective results of reforms neutralize Lithuania's arguments in favor of support for Ukraine in the EU. Eventually, it could lead to the total domination of Ukraine-skeptic voices in European and international institutions.

How to avoid. Reforms should be implemented continuously and in real life, not on paper. Ukrainian authorities should take into account that the success of reforms depends largely on the smooth cooperation with foreign consultants in general, and especially with Lithuanian ones, as reforms mean two-way, not one-way traffic. Lithuanians have a good understanding of Ukrainian realities, and thus consider working in our country fully

aware of all potential risks. Therefore, their patience is strong; however, it could still dry out. It is important that Ukrainians regard Lithuanians with trust and the understanding that they have come to Ukraine not to teach, but to share the best experiences of their own country. Synergy is exactly what reforms need, and both Ukrainian and Lithuanian societies will benefit from it.⁶³

4.2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE ASTRAVETS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN BELARUS BY ROSATOM AS A THREAT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY IN THE REGION AND AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR OF POLITICAL TENSIONS ESCALATION BETWEEN THE NEIGHBORING STATES.

The Astravets Nuclear Power Plant is currently being constructed near the border with Lithuania, in 50 kilometers from Vilnius. The Lithuanian government considers this construction a direct threat, pointing to numerous violations of technical regulations due to the elevated pace (the launch of the first power unit is scheduled for 2018) of construction and reactor placement. The accusations are quite substantiated, as “abnormal situations” have repeatedly occurred during this year. In particular, the fall of a 330-ton reactor housing from 4-2 meters’ height was reported in July. The information leaked to the media and was confirmed later; however, Belarusian authorities did not provide information on the safety of the reactor launch after this accident. Minsk ignores Vilnius’ demands for admission of Lithuanian specialists to the building site for familiarization with the construction status. While the exchange of notes continues, the NPP construction does not stop.

Probability. *High.* The Chernobyl accident has shown how catastrophic for human lives and health and the environmental

⁶³ *A police officer’s client should be the public, not criminals. The former Head of Vilnius police and Head of the EU Advisory Mission speaks about the Ukrainian police and reforms, 27/09/2016, http://www.euam-ukraine.eu/en/public_information/news/1169/?year=2016&month=12*

situation in general a nuclear power plant failure is. Therefore, it is hard to explain Kyiv's lack of position regarding the construction of an NPP in neighboring Belarus. The neglect of Lithuania's concerns in both Kyiv and Brussels is also unexplainable, especially in the context of the nuclear power plant construction, which is primarily within Russia's interests. According to the preliminary calculations, Belarus will not benefit from the NPP, but will rather gain an additional problem of disposal of excess electricity.⁶⁴ Lithuania, which was regarded as the main market, has already denied any plans of procuring Belarusian electricity. Furthermore, Vilnius launched a campaign aimed at ensuring that electricity from the dangerous NPP is not supplied to EU markets.

How to avoid. Ukraine could become an intermediary between Lithuania and Belarus, and help establish a constructive dialogue between the two parties. Ukrainian and Belarusian nuclear energy specialists and environmentalists have long experience of cooperation in the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident. Kyiv should use it in order to initiate the establishment of a trilateral monitoring group composed of Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Belarusian specialists supervising the construction of the nuclear power plant. However, Kyiv should also strengthen the political position of Lithuania in the international arena. Together and with the support of other countries in the region, Ukraine and Lithuania could raise the question of the use of "peaceful atom" as another instrument of Russian asymmetric warfare in Brussels. After all, Russia is pursuing further "energy expansion" in different countries, changing not only the balance of electricity supply, but also the political climate around the "peaceful atom" issue.

⁶⁴ DW: Білоруська АЕС – економічна бомба уповільненої дії, 14/03/2016, <http://economics.unian.ua/energetics/1289104-dw-biloruska-aes-ekonomichna-bomba-upovilненоji-diji.html>

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given the maximum assistance and support received by Ukraine from the Republic of Lithuania, Kyiv should carefully examine the Lithuanian experience of transformation and European integration in order to identify priority areas for further cooperation between the two countries. In particular, attention should be paid to transparency of the judicial system in Lithuania, which is considered one of the best in the EU. Furthermore, the experience of strategic planning and reforming the tax system, as well as reforming the management of public companies should be taken into consideration. The experience of the National Audit Office of Lithuania should be looked at in order to enhance efficiency and transparency of state budget revenue use. For better implementation of the AA with the EU it is worth considering Lithuania's experience with the *acquis communautaire* and the negotiation process on the path towards joining the EU.
2. The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine should pay attention to the Lithuanian experience in implementing economic diplomacy, especially to the role of the Foreign Ministry of Lithuania as a coordinator of foreign economic activities, as well as to the principles of Enterprise Lithuania (promotion of domestic businesses in global markets) and Invest Lithuania (attracting investments).
3. Together with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine along with specialized committees of the Verkhovna Rada, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine should develop a coordinated position on the construction of the Astravets NPP in Belarus. Based on this position, the President of Ukraine should initiate a trilateral meeting with the Presidents of the Republic of Lithuania and the Belarusian Republic to find a constructive solution regarding the construction of the NPP. It is important that in light of the Chornobyl accident, Ukraine responded to numerous violations in the launch of a new nuclear power plant in the region with a strong position, not silence.
4. Environmental reform is considered one of the most effective in Lithuania and demonstrates the positive role of the EU in its implementation. Since the environment package is one of

the most sensitive in the framework of implementation of the AA with the EU, the specialized Ukrainian ministry, as well as Ukrainian environmentalists, should actively adopt the Lithuanian experience and invite Lithuanians as consultants. In particular, Lithuania is considered the best state in terms of forest protection. Taking into account the development of the furniture industry in this country, Ukrainian politicians should also look into the Lithuanian experience and learn to develop industries, preserve forests, and not violate international agreements by introducing protectionist moratoria.

5. The energy reform implemented by Lithuania within the past several years lead not only to diversification of supply, but also to diversification of energy sources. A growing share of bioenergy in the structure of the energy market is one of Lithuanian trade secrets, which should be adopted by Ukrainian cities and towns. The example of Lithuania should convince Kyiv that giving the green light to renewable energy leads to complete energy independence.
6. The positive experience of military cooperation within the framework of the LITPOLUKRBRIG and participation in joint exercises could be used in expanding regional cooperation in order to strengthen the security situation in Central and Eastern Europe. In particular, Ukraine's involvement in the formats of Nordic-Baltic cooperation with the assistance of Lithuania is also advisable. In turn, the experience of Ukrainian troops gained during the ATO could be adopted by Lithuania and taken into account for operational planning in the region.
7. If Ukraine counts upon Lithuania's assistance in entering European markets, Lithuanian business culture should be thoroughly studied. It is based on competition and does not tolerate protectionism. At the same time, Kyiv should understand that half-hearted reforms decrease the attractiveness of the Ukrainian market (currently defined as potentially attractive), as well as reduce the development potential of the Viking project. Therefore, Lithuania, whose exports make up a significant share of its GDP, can hardly afford a long waiting period for Ukraine to finally assess the potential of bilateral economic cooperation before it reorients to other markets.

8. In order to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, priority areas of cooperation should be addressed. Currently, the most promising are cutting-edge technology related projects. Lithuania is famous for laser technologies and is making important steps in nanotechnology, which is a result of collaboration between business and research centers. Involvement of Ukraine in these projects could be mutually beneficial. Cooperation in the IT sector is also noteworthy. Although Estonia is a leader in engaging Ukrainian experts in IT projects, with proper positioning, Lithuania could also attract Ukrainian developers, in particular, with a program of support for startups.
9. A common past is the uniting factor that bonds together Ukrainian and Lithuanian societies. The development of educational and cultural projects should be maintained. Preferably, Ukraine should participate in their implementation financially and remove any technical obstacles impeding student exchange between the two countries. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine should make efforts to inform Ukrainian universities of opportunities for establishing Lithuanian language departments and thus contribute to the long -pending project of introducing Lithuanian studies in Ukraine.
10. In order to enhance the coordination of cooperation between the societies of both countries and adopt the experience of Lithuania in the field of European integration more effectively, Ukrainian and Lithuanian experts should establish a joint project involving audit of Lithuanian aid, monitoring of ongoing projects, and identification of potentially important areas for cooperation. Voices of independent experts would contribute to better implementation of bilateral cooperation and control of the fulfilment of Ukraine's obligations.
11. The Declaration of Central and Eastern Europe States, adopted at the end of August, 2016 in Dubrovnik, established a new format of cooperation between countries of the region between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Adriatic Sea. Despite the fact that the President of Ukraine was not among the signatories of this document, there are reasons to expect his participation in the next meeting of the leaders of these countries in Wroclaw in 2017. Since this type of cooperation involves different formats of

multilateral collaboration, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Poland should work on the trilateral initiatives in such areas as countering “hybrid warfare,” strengthening energy independence, and the development of common regional cultural subjectivity.

12. Ukraine should maintain multilateral contacts at the level of Foreign Ministries participated in by Lithuanian officials. In particular, joint visits of the Foreign Ministers to Ukraine should be encouraged (e.g., resumption of the format of visits by the Foreign Ministers of Lithuania, Poland, the Netherlands, and Denmark launched in April 2013). Moreover, there is a potential for development of Lithuanian-Swedish initiatives in Ukraine, as evidenced by the joint visit of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania and Sweden to Kyiv in November 2015. Such formats involving Lithuania as a supporter of Ukraine, as well as representatives of Ukraine-skeptical countries such as the Netherlands, could promote the development of constructive dialogue and introduce an additional platform for strengthening the position of our country in the EU.
13. Ukrainian politicians should learn the lessons of consolidation from Lithuanian political forces able to consistently find consensus on the most important issues for the country despite different attitudes toward certain issues of domestic policy: reforms and accession to the NATO and the EU and the pro-Ukrainian policy of Lithuanian government are always among their top priorities. Furthermore, Ukrainian politicians should also adopt the best practices of establishing personal contacts with Lithuanian statespersons, which will facilitate not only socialization, but also a better understanding of the mechanisms of political system in Lithuania (and the EU in general). It is inappropriate to continue limiting the contacts with the Lithuanian side to meetings and visits organized by Vilnius.
14. In order to enhance the counter-strategy against “hybrid warfare” and Russian propaganda in the region, Ukraine should initiate the establishment of a Russian-speaking TV channel which would broadcast in Central and Eastern Europe together with Lithuania and Poland. This project has already been discussed between Kyiv and Vilnius; however, the idea is still not implemented. Successful development of the project would require participation of other countries from the region.

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