

**B | S | T** The Black Sea Trust  
for Regional Cooperation  
A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND



# NATO REFLECTION PROCESS 2030.

JOINT EXPERT VIEW FROM  
UKRAINE AND GEORGIA



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AND GEORGIA

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## INTRODUCTION

Ukraine and Georgia are two of the three countries that are currently aspiring to become NATO members.<sup>1</sup> They are also among the six Enhanced Opportunities Partners, demonstrating NATO's recognition of the two countries' contribution to the Alliance's mission as well as the achievement of a high level of interoperability between their armed forces and those of member states through appropriate adaptation of NATO standards.

Ukraine and Georgia are integral to the security of the Black Sea region. Both countries have proven that they can be not only consumers but also contributors to Euro-Atlantic security by taking an effective part in the Alliance's missions and operations.

The 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration states that Ukraine and Georgia will be NATO members<sup>2</sup>. The same declaration states that the Membership Action Plan (MAP) is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct path to membership. In Georgia and Ukraine, NATO integration is a major foreign (along with the EU) and security policy priority at both the political and societal levels.

As one of NATO's most important partners as well as aspiring countries, both Ukraine and

Georgia, in our view, fully deserve that their vision be taken into account during the NATO 2030 Reflection Process.

It is of fundamental importance for our countries that NATO's new strategic documents reflect both the new realities in relations with Ukraine and Georgia and the new challenges to transatlantic security, including the threat posed by the increasingly aggressive policies of the Russian government and the changing dynamics in the Black Sea region.

We strongly believe that Ukraine and Georgia will find a more prominent place in future strategic documents following the NATO 2030 Reflection Process than in the previous one adopted at the Lisbon Summit, which contained two mentions of Ukraine and Georgia but made reference to cooperation with the Russian Federation thirteen times.

We firmly believe that it is in the interests of both Ukraine and Georgia and in the interests of NATO to reaffirm the Alliance's open door policy (including the decisions of the Bucharest Summit), to recognize the absence of third-party veto on Alliance's decisions and to identify Ukraine and Georgia as indispensable components of NATO's Black Sea plans.

In order to strengthen the voice of Ukraine and Georgia during the NATO 2030 Reflection Process, the Ukrainian New Europe Center in partnership with the Georgian Institute for Strategic Studies (GISS) and with the support of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation / German Marshal

<sup>1</sup> *Enlargement, last updated May, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49212.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm)*

<sup>2</sup> *NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April, 2008, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm)*

Fund has developed joint Ukrainian-Georgian recommendations. It is our firm understanding that they will be taken into account in the preparation of new NATO strategic documents, as both in the case of Ukraine and in the case of Georgia, we are talking about doubly important recommendations – on behalf of a reliable NATO partner and on behalf of an aspiring country of the Alliance. This document also takes into account the analytical work of our colleagues both in NATO member states, and in Georgia and Ukraine (in particular, ‘*Ukrainian view. Experts approach*’ prepared by the Center of Defence Strategies, Kyiv).

## 1 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE NATO-UKRAINE AND NATO-GEORGIA PARTNERSHIP

Ukraine’s and Georgia’s cooperation with NATO virtually coincides with the duration of their independence. As early as during the first years of independence, the two countries were involved in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In 1994, Ukraine and Georgia joined the Partnership for Peace Program<sup>3</sup>. Over almost thirty years, Ukraine has gone from signing the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership in 1997, attempting to obtain the Membership Action Plan in 2008, abandoning the goal of NATO integration under Viktor Yanukovich’s presidency and obtaining an aspiring member status in 2018.

Georgia’s three decades have seen the evolution of the NATO-Georgia relationship. In 2002 Georgia expressed its intention to become a NATO member followed by a launch of intensified dialogue in 2006 and the 2008 Bucharest Summit decision that Georgia will become a NATO member<sup>4</sup>. Since 2011, Georgia has enjoyed the status of an aspirant country. At present, NATO membership remains Georgia’s top foreign and security policy priority<sup>5</sup>.

In Ukraine, a political consensus on NATO membership has also emerged. Accession to NATO is Kyiv’s top foreign and security priority alongside its intention to join the

<sup>3</sup> NATO, *Signatures of Partnership for Peace Framework Document*, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_82584.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_82584.htm)

<sup>4</sup> NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April, 2008, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm).

<sup>5</sup> *National Security Concept of Georgia*, <https://mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ForeignPolicy/NationalSecurityConcept.aspx>.



EU. For the past six years, there has been a groundswell of popular support for this step as well. The desire to join the Alliance is enshrined in the National Security Strategy of Ukraine published in September 2020 (moreover, the relevant provision is included in the Constitution).

Meanwhile, for the first time at the official level, Ukraine made a decision on NATO integration in 2002. As the then-President of Ukraine put it, «The year of 2002 will go down in history as the year of the proclamation of Ukraine's intention to join NATO.»<sup>6</sup> However, as early as 2004, the provision on Ukraine's accession to NATO was removed from Ukraine's Military Doctrine.

A real breakthrough could have come for Ukraine and Georgia in 2008, when both countries applied for the NATO Membership Action Plan. Although the countries were never granted the MAP, they received a rather optimistic promise as stated in the Bucharest Declaration, which makes it plain that «Ukraine and Georgia will become NATO members.»<sup>7</sup>

Besides, in 2008, both countries saw the start of the elaboration of the Annual National Programs (ANPs), a set of annual reforms and commitments agreed between the Government of Ukraine and Georgia on the one hand and NATO on the other. Although the ANP is not an analogue of the MAP, the Ukrainian government, for example, makes every effort to develop Annual

National Programs based on the Membership Action Plan so that the MAP can then be implemented as smoothly as possible<sup>8</sup>.

In the case of Georgia, the Georgia-NATO Commission was also established in 2008 to play a central role in overseeing what has been agreed at the Bucharest Summit. In the case of Ukraine, such a Commission was set up after the signing of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between Ukraine and NATO in 1997, which is 11 years earlier.

Following the historic NATO summit in Bucharest, the two countries parted ways in regard of Euro-Atlantic integration. Georgia set itself firmly on implementing the decisions of the Bucharest Summit. With the arrival to power of President Viktor Yanukovich in Ukraine, the introduction of a non-aligned status became a real crash test for relations with NATO. While Georgia had an opportunity to work systematically on the Euro-Atlantic track, Ukraine lost almost four years of momentum in relations with NATO precisely because of the legal implementation of the non-aligned status, which, according to its masterminds, was to become a kind of a security guarantee for Ukraine.

However, Ukraine's non-aligned status failed to become such a security guarantee in 2014 as Ukraine, a non-aligned country, was attacked by Russia, which resulted in the occupation of Crimea and was then followed by the occupation of certain parts of Donbas in Eastern Ukraine.

<sup>6</sup> *Cooperation with NATO: legal aspects. Ministry of Justice of Ukraine (in Ukrainian)*, [https://minjust.gov.ua/m/str\\_951](https://minjust.gov.ua/m/str_951)

<sup>7</sup> *NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April, 2008*, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm).

<sup>8</sup> *Government approves a new quality Ukraine-NATO Annual National Program, February 5, 2020*, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/uryad-shvaliv-richnu-nacionalnu-programu-ukrayina-nato-novoyi-yakosti>

Instead, though not immediately reflected in strategic security documents of Ukraine, relations with NATO were given an opportunity for a reset. For example, the 2015 National Security Strategy contained a rather circuitous wording on NATO membership – «creating the conditions for NATO accession.»<sup>9</sup> In 2017, Ukraine once again gave legal effect to the path to NATO membership<sup>10</sup>.

In 2014, Ukraine's relations with NATO entered a period when Ukraine made the greatest progress in its integration into the Alliance in all its years of independence. Nevertheless, this in no way brought it closer to NATO membership. The Alliance was rather cautious in its policy towards Ukraine in view of the existing armed conflict, the occupation of seven percent of Ukraine's territory and warnings from some allies about practical steps towards Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, which they believed would further destabilize the situation in the region.

On the one hand, Ukraine received unquestionable political support from NATO on its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Still, there was a certain reluctance of some member countries with regards to closer cooperation between Ukraine and NATO, which was related to Ukraine's accession to the Enhanced Opportunity Partnership Program. Unlike Georgia, Ukraine was not invited to participate in the program at the NATO 2014 Wales Summit, along with five other partners of the Alliance<sup>11</sup>. Many diplomatic efforts were needed to enable Ukraine to join

the program only in 2020, six years later than Georgia. It was not until 2018 that Ukraine received the status of an aspiring member – seven years later than Georgia.

In turn, at the NATO Wales Summit Georgia was not only recognized as an Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP) but was also granted a Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP), a set of initiatives intended to bolster Georgia's defense capabilities and interoperability with NATO allies<sup>12</sup>.

The Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP) consists of such projects as the NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center (JTEC) and the Defense Institution Building School (DIBS). These institutions bring Georgia closer to NATO standards and enhance its international standing. Furthermore, under the SNGP, Georgia conducted two joint exercises dedicated to interoperability of forces and command and control capabilities with the participation of NATO allies in 2016 and 2019<sup>13</sup>. The next joint exercises are planned for 2022.

Ukraine also received its aid package from NATO. Since the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, NATO has stepped up its focus on domestic reforms in Ukraine, especially in the security and defense sectors. In 2014, the first five Trust Funds for Ukraine were launched

<sup>9</sup> *National Security Strategy of Ukraine, May 26, 2015 (in Ukrainian)*, <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/2872015-19070>

<sup>10</sup> *Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine (Regarding the Foreign Policy Course of Ukraine)*, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, June 8, 2017 (in Ukrainian), [http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4\\_2?id=&pf3516=6470&skl=9](http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_2?id=&pf3516=6470&skl=9)

<sup>11</sup> *NATO upgrades Ukraine, Ukraine Alert, June 2016*, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/nato-upgrades-ukraine/>

<sup>12</sup> «Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP)», *Media Backgrounder, February 2016*, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_02/160209-factsheet-sngp-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_02/160209-factsheet-sngp-en.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> «NATO Exercises – Evolution and Lessons Learned», *Report, Rapporteur: Lara Martino (Portugal, Defense and Security Committee, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 13 October, 2019*, <https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2019-10/REPORT%20137%20DSCFC%2019%20E-%20NATO%20EXERCISES%20EVOLUTION%20AND%20LESSONS%20LEARNED.pdf>.



at the NATO Wales Summit. At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, Ukraine was offered the Comprehensive NATO Assistance Package, which brought together the then assistance programs to Ukraine.

It is important to note that with the change of government in Ukraine in 2019, the course of NATO integration has not been revised. In the new 2020 National Security Strategy of Ukraine, the goal of NATO membership is set more clearly than in the 2015 Strategy<sup>14</sup>.

Georgia and Ukraine see the Membership Action Plan as the next logical step in NATO integration. This is in line with the declaration of the NATO Bucharest Summit, which clearly states not only that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of the Alliance but also that the «MAP is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct way to membership.»<sup>15</sup>

As is the case with Ukraine, NATO supports Georgia's territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders<sup>16</sup>. Bearing in mind the ongoing occupation and creeping annexation of the Georgian territories by Russia, given NATO's stance is valued both by the political elites and the wider public. As in Ukraine, the issue of territorial integrity has a practical as well as an emotional dimension in the eyes of the Georgian people due to a large number of internally displaced persons and refugees as well as enduring effects of multiple conflicts with Russia.

NATO has been forthcoming when it comes to elevating partnership with Georgia to a higher political level in line with the principle of «more NATO in Georgia and more Georgia in NATO.» In 2019, NATO held a record 5<sup>th</sup> North Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting in Batumi, which is unprecedented for a partner nation<sup>17</sup>. This symbolic gesture underlines the importance of the relationship between partners and sends a strong message of support to Georgia's aspirations.

Likewise, NATO is supportive of Georgia's efforts to meet its standards and qualifications. This support translates into offering Georgia substantial tools and mechanisms, as mentioned above, to enhance its capabilities and interoperability with NATO. As was stated in the Warsaw Summit communique, «Georgia's relationship with the Alliance contains all the practical tools to prepare for eventual membership.»<sup>18</sup> The alliance also commands Georgia's continued commitment to democratization. Yet, the political decision to grant Georgia a Membership Action Plan (MAP) is still missing.

Ukraine and Georgia value support of NATO members for the open door policy as demonstrated by the back to back accession of Montenegro and North Macedonia to the Alliance in spite of past reservations and inconsistent statements from some member states in relation

<sup>14</sup> *National Security Strategy of Ukraine, September 14, 2020 (in Ukrainian)*, <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3922020-35037>

<sup>15</sup> *NATO, Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April 2008*, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm)

<sup>16</sup> *David Kachkachishvili, «NATO Backs Georgia's Territorial Integrity: Stoltenberg», 25 March, 2019, Anadolu Agency*, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/nato-backs-georgias-territorial-integrity-stoltenberg/1429304>

<sup>17</sup> *«5th North Atlantic Council Meeting in Georgia, Unprecedented in the Council's History», 2 October, 2019, Agenda.ge*, <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2019/2644>.

<sup>18</sup> *Warsaw Summit Communique, 9 July, 2016*, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm).

to the mentioned issue<sup>19</sup>. This policy remains to be an important impetus and driver for Ukrainian and Georgian reform-minded policy makers. The Georgian public is also highly supportive of Georgia's NATO membership as approval rating continues to stay close to 70 percent<sup>20</sup>. In Ukraine, this level is lower, but since 2014, there has been an unprecedented support, with almost 50 percent of Ukrainians endorsing the country's membership in the Alliance<sup>21</sup>.

Nevertheless, one might argue that the application of the open door policy has been selective despite Ukraine's and especially Georgia's success in modernizing its military, enhancing interoperability with NATO and substantial contribution to various NATO missions and operations.<sup>22</sup> Some experts believe that the Russian occupation of Ukrainian and Georgian territories hampers Western policy-makers from further steps in terms of Ukraine's and Georgia's integration to NATO, notwithstanding plenty of arguments in favor of Ukraine and Georgia's future membership such as their reliability as partners, embrace of democracy coupled with

their strategic location.<sup>23</sup> If true, this premise equals the de facto Russian veto over NATO's enlargement. Yet, in case of a clear-cut political will to grant Ukraine and Georgia a membership, there are temporary, tailored solutions available as was the case with the accession of Turkey and Greece in 1951<sup>24</sup>.

It is important to note here that both Ukraine and Georgia are not only consumers but also contributors to transatlantic security. Ukraine is the only partner to have actively contributed to all major NATO-led operations and missions.

Over the years, Ukrainian troops have worked alongside NATO troops in the NATO-led missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Ukraine's contribution to NATO's work in Afghanistan continued after the end of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in 2014. Ukraine has increased its contribution to the Resolute Support Mission, which provides training, advice and assistance for Afghan forces and institutions<sup>25</sup>.

From 2005 on, Ukraine contributed officers to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq. Ukraine deployed ships in support of Operation Active Endeavor – NATO's maritime operation in the Mediterranean – six times since 2007. At the end of 2013, Ukraine also contributed a frigate to

<sup>19</sup> «Hollande Statement on NATO Enlargement Under Scrutiny», 4 March, 2015, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, <https://www.rferl.org/a/nato-hollande-statement-enlargement-georgia-montenegro/26882183.html>.

<sup>20</sup> «Public Attitudes in Georgia», June 2020, NDI Public Opinion Survey, [https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Georgia%20Poll%20Results\\_June\\_2020\\_Final%20Version\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Georgia%20Poll%20Results_June_2020_Final%20Version_ENG.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Razumkov Center, Attitudes towards the EU and NATO, January, 2020 (in Ukrainian), <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/riven-pidtrymky-gromadianamy-vstupu-ukrainy-do-yes-ta-nato-sichen-2020r>

<sup>22</sup> Amanda Paul and Ana Andguladze, «10 Years after Bucharest Summit Why NATO Should Double-down on Georgian Membership», Policy Brief, 3 July, 2018, [http://aei.pitt.edu/94235/1/pub\\_8651\\_10yearsafterbucharest.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/94235/1/pub_8651_10yearsafterbucharest.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Robert E. Hamilton, «Georgia's NATO Aspirations: Rhetoric and Reality», 8 July, 2016, Foreign Policy Research Institute website, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2016/07/georgias-nato-aspirations-rhetoric-reality/>.

<sup>24</sup> Coffey, Luke. «NATO Membership for Georgia: In U.S. and European Interest.» The Heritage Foundation, 29 January 2018, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/nato-membership-georgia-us-and-european-interest>.

<sup>25</sup> NATO can help itself by pulling Ukraine closer now, Alexander Vershbow, June 19 2018, RealClearWorld, [https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2018/06/19/nato\\_can\\_help\\_itself\\_by\\_pulling\\_ukraine\\_closer\\_now\\_112829.html](https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2018/06/19/nato_can_help_itself_by_pulling_ukraine_closer_now_112829.html)



NATO's counter-piracy Operation Ocean Shield off the coast of Somalia. Ukraine was also the first partner country to contribute to the NATO Response Force (NRF) in 2011, with a platoon specialized in nuclear, biological and chemical threats and strategic airlift capabilities<sup>26</sup>. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ukrainian cargo planes, including in the framework of NATO's SALIS (Strategic Airlift International Solution) program, have delivered humanitarian cargo to different countries around the world<sup>27</sup>.

Georgia also has not solely been on the receiving side of this relationship as it has been contributing a significant number of troops to the NATO-led international missions. Currently, 860 Georgian troops are deployed in Afghanistan under the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), making it the 5<sup>th</sup> largest contingent as well as a number one non-NATO contributor. The RSM is a follow-up mission to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that lasted from 2004 to 2014.

Georgia also contributes to NATO's collective defense and crisis management capabilities by participating in the NATO Response Force (NRF) with one infantry battalion since 2015. By doing so, Georgia intends to make a case for its NATO membership as well as a commitment to global security.

## 2 APPROACHES AND EXPECTATIONS OF UKRAINE AND GEORGIA REGARDING NATO

### 2.1. ANALYSIS OF COMMON CHALLENGES IN THE REGION AND THE WORLD FACED BY UKRAINE, GEORGIA, AND NATO

Ukraine, Georgia, and NATO face a long list of challenges, both external and internal. Russia's aggressive policy poses the greatest threat to the very existence of the statehood of Ukraine and Georgia. Russia remains a significant security challenge to the entire Euro-Atlantic space.

The Heads of States and Governments, who attended the North Atlantic Council summit in Wales in September 2014, unequivocally described Russia's policy as aggressive: «Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine are fundamentally changing our vision of the entire Europe, free and peaceful.»<sup>28</sup> The same document emphasizes the importance of «the right tools and procedures required to contain and respond effectively to hybrid military threats.»<sup>29</sup> All subsequent NATO documents in fact repeated the definition of Russia's actions as a threat; it is important that such a definition is also reflected in the new Strategic Concept.

The so-called Gerasimov Doctrine is believed to have initiated Russia's active use of hybrid methods of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries and corresponding

<sup>26</sup> *NATO's Relations with Ukraine, October 2015*, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2015\\_10/20151007\\_1510-backgroundunder-nato-ukraine\\_en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_10/20151007_1510-backgroundunder-nato-ukraine_en.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> *Ukrainian planes continue to contribute to global fight against COVID19, Mission of Ukraine to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 27 April 2020, <https://nato.mfa.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayinski-litaki-dopomagayut-svitu-borotis-z-koronavirusom>

<sup>28</sup> *NATO, Wales Summit Declaration, 5 September, 2014*, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm)

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

destabilization.<sup>30</sup> Uncertainty and unpredictability, which have been and remain integral parts of international relations, have reached dramatic proportions. Non-state actors (primarily terrorist organizations), who most often used hybrid methods of destabilization, had significantly less resources at their disposal compared to state ones. As a source of hybrid intervention, the state (Russia in this case) has the most advanced technological developments, detailed intelligence, and agents of influence in the victim countries.<sup>31</sup>

Ukraine and Georgia were the first target countries to gain significant experience in countering hybrid warfare. NATO Member States have also witnessed numerous attempts of interference in their internal affairs by Russia and China. Closer cooperation between Ukraine, Georgia, and NATO would strengthen the stability and resilience of the Euro-Atlantic space in the face of external malign influences.

The Black Sea has historically been a crossroads of interests of various regional and global actors. Russia's war with Georgia in 2008 and the use of the Russian Army to occupy the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in 2014 marked a catastrophic undermining of the international legal order. Russia's policy is equally a threat to Ukraine and Georgia, as well as to Alliance members, who are forced to take into account the unpredictable nature of the country's aggressive

actions and the possibility of a hybrid attack on Member States.<sup>32</sup>

Since 2014, Russia has made significant efforts to militarize Crimea, building a bridge across the Kerch Strait that connects the peninsula to Russia's Taman Peninsula, which exacerbates an already precarious security situation. In December 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that draws attention to the problem of militarization of Crimea, as well as parts of the Black and Azov Seas.<sup>33</sup> Russia remains to be the main security challenge for Georgia as well. It is the source of the majority of threats undermining its security and well-being. These threats are diverse and far-reaching in nature, ranging from direct intervention and creeping «borderization» to cyberattacks and malign influence campaigns.

Frozen conflicts, low-intensity conflicts in which Russia has been involved, should be the focus of NATO Member States. Russian-occupied territories are a convenient place to undermine international law, which involves human rights abuse, smuggling, and uncontrolled arms trafficking. For the last 30 years, Russia's policy has been aimed at expanding and preserving such zones, which would not be subject to either the national (sovereign) or international law.

<sup>30</sup> Gerasimov, V., 'Tsennost nauki v predvideniyi', *Voyenno-promishlenniy kuryer*, 26 February 2013, <http://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>, <https://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>

<sup>31</sup> Racz, A., *Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine. Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist*, *The Finnish Institute of International Affairs*, 2015. <https://www.fjia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/fjiareport43.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> «James Appathurai: NATO is helping Georgia During Pandemic and Will continue to do so», *Interview with Georgian Radio First Channel FM 102.4*, 7 May, 2020, <https://1tv.ge/en/news/james-appathurai-nato-takes-four-clear-steps-to-make-georgia-more-involved-in-black-sea-security/>.

<sup>33</sup> UN, «General Assembly Adopts Resolution Urging Russian Federation to Withdraw Its Armed Forces from Crimea», 9 December, 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ga12223.doc.htm>



## 2.2. JOINT EFFORTS OF UKRAINE, GEORGIA, AND NATO TO ADDRESS REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN THE UPCOMING DECADE

As the world gets more and more unpredictable and volatile, NATO allies and partners alike need to carefully devise strategies to respond to a plethora of common threats and challenges. Considering the multitude and intensity of these threats as well as resource scarcity, amid COVID-19 pandemic, cooperative security will be in high demand. Allies will need assistance from partners to attain sustainable solutions to the existing problems.

Despite the different approaches of the Black Sea countries to Russia, all actors are equally aware of the existing and potential threats posed by the strengthening of Russian military capabilities in the region. Therefore, closer cooperation of Ukraine and Georgia, as countries with a special framework of partnership with the Alliance, with NATO Member States would make a significant contribution to stabilizing the region and deterring Russia's aggressive behavior.

Apart from Georgia and Ukraine, Black Sea NATO member states – Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania – have been affected by the shift in the power balance in the region.<sup>34</sup> Given power imbalance prompted allies to start deliberation about NATO's posture in the Black Sea at the Warsaw Summit in 2016.<sup>35</sup> Following the summit the alliance upped its presence in the Black

Sea region by implementing tailored forward presence.<sup>36</sup> The constantly evolving security environment begs for a coherent and long-term NATO response involving like-minded partners, especially amid the newly-emerged status quo in the South Caucasus as a result of the Azerbaijan-Armenia ceasefire agreement as well as increasingly ambitious and independent foreign policy of Turkey.

It is vital to organize joint military exercises that ensure a permanent and large-scale presence of Allies in the region, which could have an indirect preventive effect on Russia's potential aggressive actions.

As the security situation in the Black Sea deteriorates, strengthening deterrence in the South-Eastern part of the alliance becomes crucial.<sup>37</sup> As littoral states Georgia and Ukraine can add value to the NATO efforts in developing adequate forward presence. They can host NATO maritime patrols provided that the Alliance will make necessary arrangements. Both of these states can help NATO develop its Black Sea strategy with emphasis not only on maritime dimension but also on air and land components. Strategic location of Georgia and Ukraine renders them crucial to any level-headed response to the Russian aggressive posture in the Black Sea.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> «James Appathurai: NATO is helping Georgia During Pandemic and Will continue to do so», Interview with Georgian Radio First Channel FM 102.4, 7 May, 2020, <https://1tv.ge/en/news/james-appathurai-nato-takes-four-clear-steps-to-make-georgia-more-involved-in-black-sea-security/>.

<sup>35</sup> Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 9 July, 2016, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm).

<sup>36</sup> «Boosting NATO's Presence in the East and Southeast», 20 October, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_136388.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm).

<sup>37</sup> Lt. Gen. (Ret) Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Ray Wojcik, Carsten Schmiedl, «NATO Needs a Coherent Approach to Defending its Eastern Flank», 12 June, 2020, War on the Rocks, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/nato-needs-a-coherent-approach-to-defending-its-eastern-flank/>.

<sup>38</sup> Luke Coffey, «No Time for NATO Complacency in the Black Sea», 27 April, 2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/no-time-nato-complacency-black-sea>.

Neutralizing the Kremlin's energy influence is another important objective that unites the interests of Ukraine, Georgia, and NATO Member States. Thanks to its location, Georgia is an important transit route for energy carriers of Azerbaijan and the Central Asian republics. It hosts a number of important gas and oil pipelines and thus prevents Russia from locking-in energy supplies from the Caspian Sea producers to Europe. It also helps Turkey amplify its role as an energy hub by balancing Russian energy dominance in the region. At the same time, Ukraine has implemented drastic reforms in the energy sector; despite Russian aggression, it remained a reliable supplier of energy resources to the Allies. Ukraine and some NATO countries strongly oppose the construction of bypass pipelines, which would significantly increase Russia's leverage on Europe, which in turn would free Moscow's hands for larger-scale provocations in the region. The alignment of energy policies of Ukraine, Georgia, and NATO member states would play a key role in curbing Moscow's hostile ambitions.

Moreover, Georgia and Ukraine are important channels for all types of freight transportation. Both countries have a favorable geographical location, which creates opportunities for the development of transport routes between East and West. By connecting regional states to the rest of the world, Georgia is rightfully identified as a logistical hub linking the West with East and the other way around. Its two ports in Batumi and Poti are crucial access points and with the plan of building a deep-water port in Anaklia with specifications to accommodate all types of vessels [commercial or military], Georgia's significance will grow further. It is unfortunate that the current government in Tbilisi has not been supportive of the Anaklia project. Yet, this can change quickly after any subsequent election. The strategic location has allowed Ukraine and Georgia to facilitate NATO supplies

to Afghanistan as part of the ISAF mission.<sup>39</sup> Ukraine, Georgia, and NATO could further develop relevant strategic capabilities. One also has to take into account China's growing interest to include Georgia in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).<sup>40</sup> This development will adversely affect NATO's Black Sea plans. Keeping Ukraine and Georgia on board and proactively engaged is vital to NATO's Eastern plans.

As we have already mentioned, Russia does not only resort to hard power methods against its adversaries; it has increasingly been relying on a wide spectrum of malign influence activities such as cyberattacks, disinformation and propaganda campaigns. Its objective is twofold: to undercut Ukraine's and Georgia's pro-western stance as well as to cause friction and division between various societal groups. These campaigns generate distorted narratives and false dichotomies and are spread using multiple media platforms.<sup>41</sup> Georgia and Ukraine are not the only targets of such efforts as the Kremlin does not shy away from employing similar methods against NATO members on their own soil including the U.S., France and Germany.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> «Memorandum between Ukraine and NATO», 17 March 2004 (in Ukrainian), [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/950\\_005#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/950_005#Text). «NATO and Georgia Sign Transit Agreement», press-release, 2 March 2005, <https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p05-026e.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> «China, Georgia Pledge to Enhance All-round Cooperation under BRI», May 5, 2019, Xinhua News Agency, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/25/c\\_138087273.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/25/c_138087273.htm).

<sup>41</sup> Zaza Shengelia, «thin Red Line, Is Georgia's Civil Society Capable of Fighting State-Sponsored Disinformation», *Visegrad Insight*, 14 January, 2020, <https://visegradinsight.eu/thin-red-line-civil-society-georgia-disinformation/>.

<sup>42</sup> Christina Carrega, «6 Russian Military Officers Charged with a Worldwide Cyberattack», *CNN*, 19 October, 2020, [https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/19/politics/russian-nationals-charged-justice-department/index.html?utm\\_term=link&utm\\_content=2020-10-19T19%3A02%3A21&utm\\_source=fbCNNp&utm\\_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR1vxfXspxXWTMo5xHfjml35-0Po4pmb-ivVC1Fxx9AGDJOtnHaq1Tt0HCA](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/19/politics/russian-nationals-charged-justice-department/index.html?utm_term=link&utm_content=2020-10-19T19%3A02%3A21&utm_source=fbCNNp&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR1vxfXspxXWTMo5xHfjml35-0Po4pmb-ivVC1Fxx9AGDJOtnHaq1Tt0HCA).



As warfare methods continue to change due technological advances and globalized nature of the world Russia will continue weaponizing information to pursue its goals. Going forward Georgia, Ukraine and NATO can beef up cooperation in countering disinformation campaigns by coordinated detection, analysis and response to such hostile acts. It can help all parties to better manage strategic communications and devise smart counterstrategies. Better understanding of the disinformation campaigns can help preemptively immunize societies to such acts and close the gaps that the adversary attempts to exploit. As noted, NATO has a high approval rate among Georgians and Ukrainians, but this picture can gradually change if amid barrage of the Russian disinformation adequate joint reactions will be absent.

### 2.3. COMMON PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP FOR THE UPCOMING DECADE

#### *Support for Open Door Policy*

Open door policy helps keep pro-western political elites in Ukraine and Georgia on track. It helps them to embrace reforms and transform their institutions both politically as well as militarily. It also empowers pro-western opinion makers vis-a-vis Russian disinformation efforts. At the same time, enlargement dynamics allow NATO to support like-minded states and expand the area of stability and predictability in a constantly evolving and unpredictable world.

#### *Common Stance on Russia*

There is discrepancy in the way NATO members perceive the Russian threat. The Baltic States and Poland considering their collective memory

of Russia as an immediate threat are more concerned about its aggressive actions.<sup>43</sup> Given asymmetry of threat perception induces differentiated response expediency among the member states. Continuing to see Russia as the key, long-term threat undermining the collective security of NATO members is essential for the block.

#### *Internal Cohesion*

Internal NATO disunity and squabbles between member states (for instance in relation to defense spending) negatively impact its image. It gives ammunition to adversaries, especially Russia, to discredit the organization and portray the alliance mired in disarray. The unity factor is especially relevant in strategic communications and public outreach efforts. In light of this, it is crucial that NATO public statements are consistent with those of individual member states. When allies speak with one voice, it projects strength and confidence.

#### *Ukraine and Georgia – Reliable Partners*

Ukraine and Georgia are committed NATO partners that despite not always having sufficient resources to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. They both commit to international law to resolve conflict-related issues and resort to negotiations in this process. They both embrace democracy while building the state institutions.

<sup>43</sup> Michal Baranowski, Linas Kojala, Toms Rostoks, Kalev Stoicescu, «What Next for NATO, View From The North-East of The Alliance», June 2020, Policy Paper, [https://icds.ee/wpcontent/uploads/2020/06/ICDS\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_What\\_Next\\_for\\_NATO\\_Baranowski\\_Kojala\\_Rostoks\\_Stoicescu\\_June\\_2020.pdf](https://icds.ee/wpcontent/uploads/2020/06/ICDS_Policy_Paper_What_Next_for_NATO_Baranowski_Kojala_Rostoks_Stoicescu_June_2020.pdf).

At the same time, there are political actors in these countries that seek to reverse the vector of democratic development of Kyiv and Tbilisi. Through supporting anti-Western actors and efforts, Russia is directing its resources to the preservation of authoritarian regimes as well as undermining of new democracies, which have not yet fully strengthened their own democratic institutions. Despite this Ukraine and Georgia continue to work on the state of their democracy.

Taking into consideration the ongoing demonstrations in Belarus and nascent protests in Russia stakes are high for democratic neighbors [Georgia and Ukraine] to succeed as their successful development trajectory will encourage democratic processes in the region. This very idea needs to be coupled with NATO's open-door policy to further reassure aspirant countries on their path to becoming consolidated and prosperous democracies.<sup>44</sup> In spite of differences inside the Alliance about the future of NATO enlargement, doors need to stay open. By doing so, apart from supporting reform-oriented governments in aspirant countries, this policy will bolster expansion of the community of like-minded, predictable and stable democracies.

NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia would allow to correct the regional military disbalance as well as create a proper counterweight to Russia's aggressive policies, and become a sort of preventive measure against new provocations.

Ukraine and Georgia seek to achieve interoperability with NATO members, and

therefore implement numerous standards, adopting the best practices developed by the Alliance. Further advisory support and expertise will allow Partner Countries to prepare strategic documents based on the Alliance's best practices. The goal of improving the interoperability of the armed forces of Ukraine and Georgia, with NATO Member States, will contribute to greater resilience of the Euro-Atlantic community.

Many countries in the post-Soviet space are still characterized by the use of the army and special services for political pursuits and the suppression of political opponents. Democratic control over the armed forces and special services in Ukraine and Georgia is a guarantee of fundamental political changes that will lead to the strengthening of the rule of law as well as the freedoms and rights of ordinary citizens. NATO's support in this regard would ensure the successful development of proper mechanisms of civilian control over respective military and law enforcement institutions in Ukraine and Georgia, which would then become models for positive change for other countries in the region.

Additionally, Georgia and Ukraine should take initiative to move forward with domestic reform agendas in judiciary, good governance, anti-corruption and election administration. Success on the domestic front will greatly increase arguments in favor of the NATO membership and prompt the alliance to meet growing expectations of Kyiv and Tbilisi.

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<sup>44</sup> Molly Montgomery, «Europe Whole and Free: Why NATO's Open Door Must Remain Open», 3 April, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/04/03/europe-whole-and-free-why-natos-open-door-must-remain-open/>.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **NATO should continue identifying Russia as the main long-term threat to the security of allies and its partners;** put an equal emphasis on a subset of hard and soft dimensions of this threat while devising a spectrum of responses. Georgian and Ukrainian decades-long experience of dealing with the Russian hybrid warfare can be helpful in identifying and responding to the common threats faced by the Alliance and its Black Sea partners.
- 2 **NATO should continue supporting the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Georgia and Ukraine;** NATO should acknowledge the fact of occupation and adopt relevant language. Additionally, NATO needs to reflect its support for the non-recognition policy of Russia-occupied/annexed territories in relevant policy documents and political statements.
- 3 **Strengthening NATO's Eastern flank requires the active involvement of Partner Countries – Ukraine and Georgia.** NATO should continue developing its partnership with Ukraine and Georgia within the framework of the NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia Commissions, building on the NATO's decisions taken at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Ukraine and Georgia must become full members of the Alliance.
- 4 **Elaborating coherent Black Sea Strategy with participation of Georgia and Ukraine matches NATO's interests.** Their strategic location makes them indispensable to any lasting arrangement in the region. Initially it can start with a joint threat assessment with participation of Georgia and Ukraine. The Alliance should pay a special attention to maintaining sustained Black Sea forward presence integrating maritime, land and air components. NATO's Black Sea presence should be commensurate with that of its presence in the Baltics in order to eliminate any gaps in defensibility of NATO's entire eastern flank. Another interesting idea is the establishment of the US/NATO logistical/transportation training center in Georgia.
- 5 **NATO should support open door policy and offer Georgia and Ukraine a credible roadmap to the NATO membership.** It is of paramount importance that in respective NATO documents Georgia and Ukraine are mentioned in the open door policy paragraph. It will encourage Georgia and Ukraine to stay on track in relation to improving the state of their democracy and advancing their reform agenda. By doing so NATO will expand the community of like-minded, stable and predictable democracies. **It is in NATO's interest to support the reform efforts of Partner Countries.** Ukraine and Georgia could be new examples of radical change in the political, military, and economic sectors.
- 6 **Third parties should not be an obstacle to the membership of the candidate country.** The Alliance's enlargement policy offers countries that meet the membership criteria to freely choose the organizations

they aspire to join. Aggressive actions of a third party against a candidate country, or the existence of temporarily occupied territories should not be an obstacle to the acquisition of full membership by such a candidate country. Ongoing Russian occupation of Ukraine's and Georgia's territories cannot hamper granting them membership as there are corresponding precedents of states being admitted having territorial issues (example of Turkey and Greece).

between the Alliance and individual Member States is key to the effective fulfillment of NATO's mission. Russia and other adversaries, in their disinformation campaigns, exploit inconsistencies in strategic communication of NATO and its individual Member States.

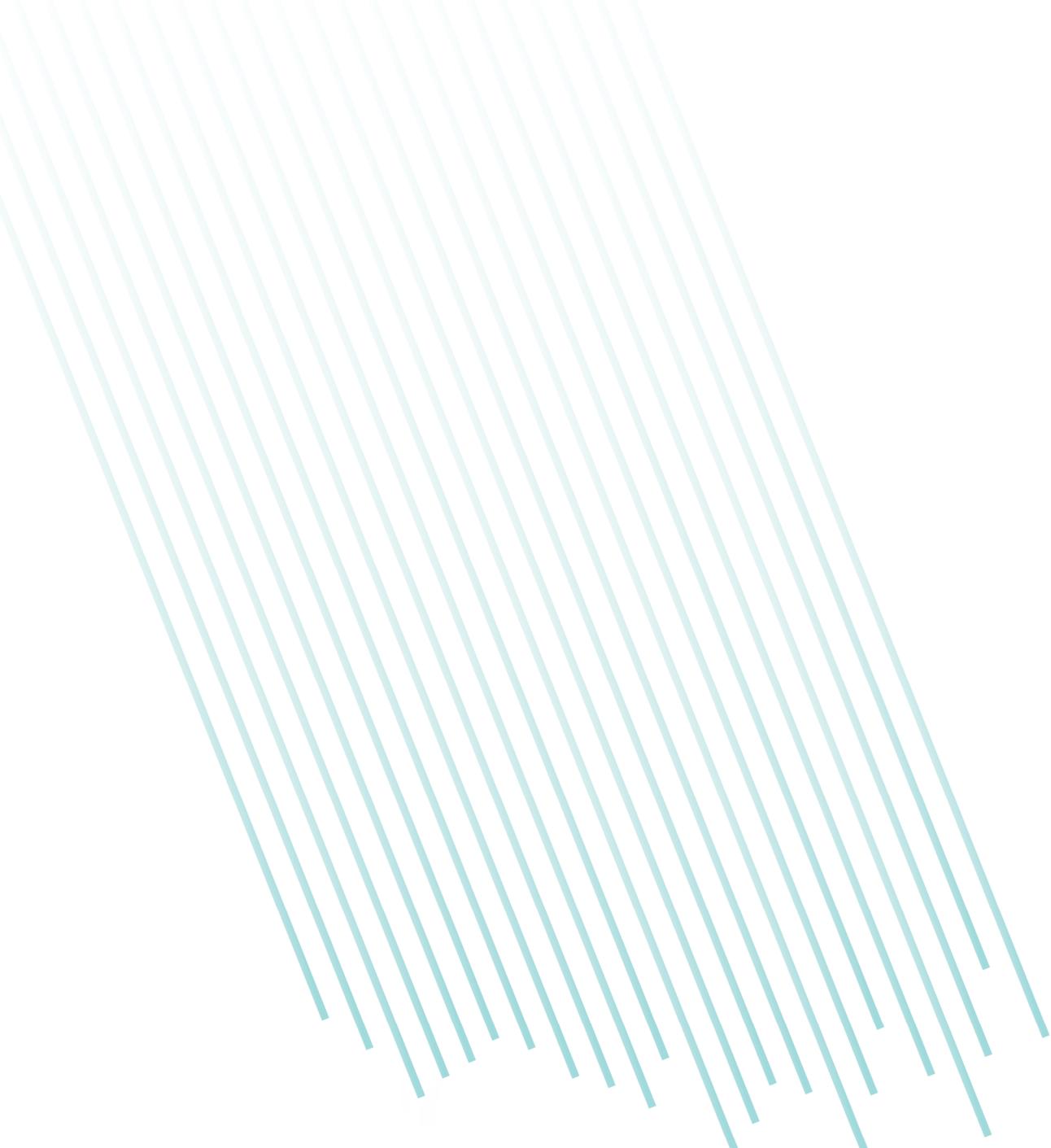
**7 The potential use of NATO as a pressure tool to pursue their own national interests by individual members is unacceptable.**

NATO is an alliance of nations that share democratic values and are united by common security interests. Given the growing trend of undemocratic political forces and radical movements in the Euro-Atlantic area, this feature of the Alliance is becoming even more significant.

**8 NATO should enhance cooperative security arrangements with Georgia and Ukraine**

by increasing interoperability through joint military exercises, information and intelligence sharing, resource complementarity and capabilities' development. NATO will empower its operational partners by involving them in decision making at the strategic and tactical levels on the issues related to NATO-led operations. By investing in cooperative security with Georgia and Ukraine NATO will augment its collective defense and crisis management core tasks.

**9 NATO should maintain effective and consequential strategic communication with partners and third parties.** Alignment of statements and main messages



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