



## Voices of Ukraine: #2 What does Ukraine need the EU for?

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### Edwin Bendyk

The situation remains extraordinary. We are watching closely and anxiously as the situation develops in the Donbas, where the decisive battle is set to take place. The Ukrainians are preparing for this clash. As European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said during her visit to Kyiv, the battle does not only concern Ukraine's sovereignty – though that is obviously its key objective. Ukraine is fighting not only for itself, but for all of Europe and its values. These words were accompanied by a significant political gesture, as von der Leyen traveled to Kyiv with an EU accession questionnaire. This is a response to the Ukrainian authorities' political initiative since the start of the war. The request to launch the accession process was quickly accepted by the European Parliament, which recommended that the process begin. Ursula von der Leyen said that the first stage of the accession process – which involves filling out the questionnaire and analysing it – normally takes years,

The *Voices of Ukraine* series of debates organised by the Batory Foundation ideaForum and the weekly news magazine *Polityka*.

Russian aggression and the war in Ukraine have dominated media coverage in recent weeks. With great suspense, we follow the news from the battlefield each day. We watch in horror as cities are bombed and civilians suffer. The news and the sight of people fleeing war arouse sympathy, resulting in gestures of unprecedented solidarity.

Given the abundance of news and information, the voices of the Ukrainian people often get lost. What makes the Ukrainian resistance so effective, and why is the Ukrainian society so resilient? What goals have the Ukrainians set for themselves in their armed resistance against the Russian aggression? What are the

but that, in the case of Ukraine, it would be just a few weeks. President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that Ukraine would fill out the questionnaire within a week.

There is a political intention to accelerate this process, at least. The Ukrainian side's intentions are obvious. According to the latest poll by Rating group,<sup>1</sup> 91% of Ukrainians support integration with the EU. These results have remained at this level for weeks. The level of support for joining NATO is equally high: almost 70%. Of course, not everything depends on Ukraine, as the accession process depends mainly on member states and the political mood within them. Opinion polls in Poland show that the same percentage of Poles support the Ukrainians' aspirations: over 90% support Ukraine's EU accession. The level of support for NATO accession is similar.

Let me start by citing Professor Adam Daniel Rotfeld who, as foreign minister of Poland, said that alliances are not an end in themselves. The EU is also a sort of alliance, which should not be a means to a strategic end chosen by a given country or society. What is Ukraine's objective and why is EU integration the means to this end?

## Pavlo Klimkin

In 2005, as a diplomat in London, I made a speech in front of a big group in the House of Lords. After my speech on the Orange Revolution and our road to the EU, one of the Lords, an older man who was an ardent proponent of Brexit, said: "You gained independence 15 years ago. Why do you wish to give up this independence by joining the EU?" I remember this question and the discussion well, yet this example had many repercussions. This example shows that Mr Adam Rotfeld's words are not devoid of meaning.

I will start with three theses. Firstly, Putin does not plan to stop. We Ukrainians can stop him with the help of our friends and partners. But I assure you that Putin does not intend to stop. He believes he has a mission that stretches to Ukraine, because, in his opinion, Ukraine does not have its own statehood – it is artificial, devoid of history, identity or territory, except perhaps a small part of western Ukraine. He calls us the Anti-Russia. This is not a matter of geopolitics – as many people believe – but rather of ideology. It is not about NATO membership, because Putin does not believe in any

limitations of a peace agreement? What do the Ukrainians want with regard to the European Union, NATO, and other alliances? What is the reconstruction of the country following the war supposed to look like? What will the relations between Ukraine and its neighbouring countries be like?

These are just some of the questions we are going to ask Ukrainian experts, journalists, artists, and politicians. There is no doubt that the future is now being shaped in Ukraine, and, to a great extent, its final form will depend on the men and women of Ukraine. Let's hear what they have to say!

The main question of the second discussion in the series was: What does Ukraine need the EU for? Where does the Ukrainian pro-European enthusiasm come from? After all, the Ukrainian media have shown that, since the war started, the assistance provided by the EU member states has been several dozen times less than the money they have paid Russia for coal, oil, and gas. What kind of European Union does Ukraine want to join? What should the integration process look like? What role will Poland, Germany, France, and the other member states play? The discussion took place on April 13, 2022 with the participation of Pavlo Klimkin, Veronika Movchan and Edwin Bendyk as the interviewer.

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://ratinggroup.ua/research/Ukraine/>.

guarantees, written or not. It is about destroying Ukraine. This is why, when we speak about what the Russian troops are doing on our territory, we are speaking about features of genocide.

Your security is our security – this was once a slogan, but it no longer is. Putin is ready to go further: he wants NATO to return to its 1997 borders and for him to regain his sphere of influence from that time. This is the only chance to stop him, and here support is crucial. For Putin, being part of the EU is the same as NATO membership. Recall 2014, the blackmail of Yanukovich, and the association agreement. I chaired the negotiations on association and visa-free movement at the time.

EU membership is not a matter of “why?” or “why do the Ukrainians need this?”. For the Ukrainians, it is about the future and the return to Europe. It is a matter of identity for us. We cannot shape the Ukrainian nation like in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but we can shape it like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as part of a European mentality with a unique Ukrainian quality. People who value freedom choose freedom. The move towards the EU is important not because it concerns policies in particular sectors or bureaucracy. It is a matter of democracy, the sovereignty of the law, and market economy. The Copenhagen criteria will be perceived differently today because reality has changed, but they are no less timely. This is my first thesis.

The second thesis: we can discuss endlessly what shaping identity involves, where the shared moments of Ukrainian and pan-European identity lie, and how Central European identity manifests itself. Yet let us rather try to answer the question: “How can this be done?” We are paying an incredible price for the chance to finally receive EU candidate status. All the Ukrainians expect this; everyone understands that it is linked to the sacrifice they are making for their country. Receiving candidate status should not be a solely political gesture. We should specify the date of preliminary talks, too. Poland has a big, critical role to play here. This should not be a simply political gesture, followed by another one a few years later. We know that this is not a simple process, but we should organise it.

And the third matter. We understand that we should take care of a few matters: rebuilding and renewing Ukraine, while moving forward in the preparations to join the EU. I am conducting talks on the matter with the European Commission and many countries; the Germans, the French, the Spaniards, the Scandinavians. We could also begin this kind of conversation with our Polish friends. The task of renewing and building the future Ukraine, as well as our road to the EU, is meant to be strategically, politically, organisationally, and financially connected. I am in favour of creating a single agency in Ukraine that would combine the tasks of joining the EU and rebuilding Ukraine. The European Commission, EU countries and our friends – for example, the United States and Japan – should work directly with this agency. The EU should not only play the role of a chairperson, but also of a leader. We need to create a separate institution in Brussels with a special status to coordinate this process, so that we can go through all the stages. This should be a thought-out, well-designed process.

Our Polish friends understand well that we must cooperate not only with government structures, but also with cities and municipalities; those that will be executing this directly. This is incredibly important.

I am not a classical politician or diplomat. Once, I wanted to be a physicist. I remember a story about Albert Einstein who, while lecturing at the university in Zurich, was handing out tasks to students during an exam. One of them noticed that they were the same tasks as two years earlier. Einstein confirmed this, but added that the answers had changed. In my opinion, Russia’s war in Ukraine has fundamentally changed all the answers. We cannot apply the same quasi-bureaucratic approach and

long political discussions or manipulations that we are using in relation to the Balkans, for example, in Ukraine now. In the case of European integration and Ukraine's renewal, we should develop a unique approach. It is not a matter of copying or repeating Poland's experiences, but our Polish friends can help us set off in this direction faster. We do not have time; this cannot be 12 or 15 years of bureaucracy. We must proceed more rapidly, which will obviously be very difficult. After the war, a window of opportunity will open; there will be human emotions and huge expectations. We must take advantage of this, because we know the price we will pay for it will be high.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

A new path is appearing now. It requires not only opening up to Ukraine, but also changes and discussion in Europe about the EU itself, which is clearly changing in response to the Ukrainian experience. Over half of Ukrainians are counting on the integration process being rather fast, lasting a year or two. However, around 25% are convinced that it will take at least five years. To what extent is a parallel process possible, in which talks on full EU integration have intermediary stages, for example, through economic cooperation with the European Economic Area modelled on Norway or Switzerland? Not full political integration, but a fragment concerning economic aspects linked to reconstruction, for example? Is this part of the repertoire of political thinking in Ukraine at all?

## **Pavlo Klimkin**

I am sceptical about the case of Norway or Switzerland because those are different approaches. In Switzerland, there are sectoral agreements. Norway adopted a significant part up the EU's jurisprudence – sometimes, it even did more than the EU – but ultimately decided not to join the EU due to questions of assistance for farms, fisheries, and others. In the case of Ukraine, political support for investments and reconstruction will be decisive after the war. We should do this through further regulating reforms. I say this is a person who has cooperated with the EU for over 20 years. Political will is needed here.

Of course, one can speculate about how long this will take; five or ten years. This is not a task for today. I believe in the possibility of a political impulse and Ukraine's full integration. Of course, there will be long transition periods and deep reforms, which we need, because Ukraine after the war will differ from Ukraine before the war. The social agreement and approach to politics will be different. It is worth taking advantage of this to move closer to the EU more rapidly. After the war, many things can be done under the slogan of accession efforts.

The Swiss or Norwegian variant applies to rich countries that can simply benefit from cooperation with the EU, but only to a limited degree.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

The economic dimension is a key dimension of European integration. Ukraine's political integration will have to be linked to the reconstruction process. Is this feasible? Some critics point out that the EU's economic dimension means greater competition for companies. It is not only a matter of help with reconstruction, but also the common market, which means competing with existing companies. In Poland, this argument was often made prior to EU accession: "more modern or richer western companies will simply beat ours". Ultimately, this was not the case, but the argument was made.

## Veronika Movchan

Ukraine's integration with the EU means not only funds for reconstruction, but also competitiveness. It is clear that all of this will change, but the change will be less dramatic than if Ukraine had never been present on EU markets. For the past eight years, Ukraine has been integrating with the EU; we have an association agreement that foresees economic integration. This has already been written down and confirmed. I think the EU felt it when Ukraine disappeared from the market. Certain details are missing; for example, we are struggling to access animal feed without genetically modified organisms, the production of which has halted. Ukraine has already merged with the EU. Many processes will now take place in parallel. We should not lose time by separating the processes of rebuilding the country and European integration. After victory, the Ukrainian economy will not be a blank slate, but it will change significantly; for example, through the loss of facilities or energy infrastructure.

Ukraine will rebuild itself. This raises the question: what should it rebuild? Should it rebuild itself as it was? Or perhaps it should rebuild a completely new economy; for example, one that is energy efficient and based on the latest global technologies? The EU is supporting us, which raises the question of how EU funds will be used. The experience of previous reforms shows that there is a straight path and a crooked path if the aim is clear. For example, in the case of visa free travel, certain reforms seemed impossible, but it turned out that the obstacles can be overcome. On the other hand, if we lack a concrete aim, and we are only told that we are, in general, a good candidate for the EU, but have our problems, then the political question will get lost, and the reforms needed to rebuild the country effectively will grind to a halt.

What do we see if we look at Ukraine's economic development in recent years? Various legal acts, largely harmonised with the EU, were adopted. And where did Ukraine lag behind? In areas linked to the rule of law. Despite changes, that is where the elements hampering investment are: judicial reform and the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. In my opinion, judicial reform is key, because if the judiciary works, the anti-corruption system will function, too.

When Ukraine starts rebuilding itself after the war, we will have two possibilities. Number one: a clear path as part of pre-accession negotiations and well-defined criteria for how to proceed, what changes to introduce and how to make them irreversible. We should understand the schematics and the EU's active role as a leader. Number two: we get stuck somewhere between the EU, which is telling us: "Yes, you are Europeans, but keep waiting", and an aggressive Russia, which might seek revenge, and Belarus, with its attitude to Ukraine. Ukraine may have sacrificed a lot for victory, but it could suddenly find itself in a situation where we know the direction we want to go in, but are not welcome there, while being pulled and killed in the direction we do not wish to go in. That would be the worst. That message would ruin our economic reconstruction. As an economist, I know that it is a matter of fundamentals now; the institutions that shape a lasting market economy are fundamental.

Will competition increase within the EU? Of course, but this is what the whole market economy is based on: competition leads to efficiency. The EU has taken in over 4 million Ukrainians, including workers, who will slowly start integrating. The thing that people most feared about EU enlargement is taking place. The EU has absorbed academics and students, who are actively integrating. During the war, this integration has accelerated. It is difficult to say who will return and how. We need to recognise what is happening and keep going as part of the negotiation process. This will leverage the EU's influence. It will be an important move by Ukraine that will enable us to formulate our objectives and further course.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

EU assistance in the reconstruction process will be a significant part of the integration process. This question might be premature, but discussions on the model of reconstruction are already underway. What influence will Ukrainians have on defining this model, bearing in mind that they wish to benefit from external funding? Perhaps the EU will want to influence the direction of the Ukrainian reforms. Will the Ukrainians be able to develop their own autonomous model, which partners in the EU also find convincing?

## **Veronika Movchan**

I like the idea of creating an agency that would act as a focal point for Ukraine's and donors' interests. Fundamentally, though, this is not about donors and grants. I would like Russia to pay for the renewal. The question is: how do we ensure that this is a loan that will be repaid with Russian money? It is not a matter of the EU, Britain or the US rebuilding Ukraine using their own money – they should receive compensation for what they invest in Ukraine.

When it comes to rebuilding infrastructure, the question of investments is important. How can we ensure that all this will be an integral process? We obviously have a war economy, which differs from a reconstruction economy. Yet Ukraine is already starting to develop a strategy of economic renewal and reconstruction. We are not only talking about reconstruction, but also about modernisation. It is not a matter of returning to where we were, but rather about moving on to the next level in qualitative terms. We are already discussing how to implement this. We will consult all this with our partners so that everything is done together.

Rebuilding the cities is a separate matter. Famous architects have announced that they are ready to help with the reconstruction. Yet finding ways to engage local communities in the reconstruction is important. We obviously want to rebuild some of what was destroyed, as those were monuments. Yet some things are worth building from scratch and local communities want to have their say. Before the war, Ukraine had many effective voting and social consultation mechanisms, because decentralisation has made it a dynamic country that listens to its citizens. After the war, people will feel this even more strongly. Ukraine has recognised that the people have their voice and can take part in reconstruction, like they take part in polls. I am an optimist here: I do not think that someone wants to impose something on us. It will be a joint effort.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

I will add a question from one of our listeners. During its integration process, could Ukrainian learn from the experience of Cyprus, part of which has been under Turkish occupation since 1974?

## **Pavlo Klimkin**

The situation in Cyprus was completely different; there, the northern part of the island is not controlled by the authorities. I do not know how the war in Ukraine will end, but this is our starting point: part of our territory is occupied, in particular Crimea, and we understand that we cannot carry out our policy on these territories. Ukrainian law simply does not work there and there is a problem connecting the economy. The accession process should take place within the framework of the territories that we control; this must be noted. The legal situation in Ukraine and its territorial integrity should be clearly set out and, as soon as occupied territories are liberated, everything should be agreed on

within the framework of the path to the EU. In this sense, we can speak of similarity to Cyprus. However, the mechanisms will be completely different; for example, the question of a referendum.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

Speaking about Ukraine's security priority, President Zelensky likened Ukraine to a big Israel. In terms of security model, Ukraine cannot be a fully liberal democracy because it must be a militarised democracy. Will Ukraine's priority defined in this way – due to its experience of war, of course – be compatible with the values of the EU, which strongly emphasises the values of liberal democracy, for instance, in its dispute with Hungary and Poland?

## **Pavlo Klimkin**

It is difficult to say how we will build the process of integration. I repeat: we cannot speak of using a carbon copy. I am not a proponent of likening Ukraine to Israel, as the latter is in a different geographical situation, including in terms of security. I agree with President Zelensky that there is a similarity when it comes to the existential threat. Could we become a second Israel? I have many doubts here.

It is worth considering things in Israel and whether they would work in Ukraine. In terms of EU accession, we should try to find meaning in building our own rule of law and in the diversity of the European tradition. It is clear that Israel is a very effective democracy, but its economy, society and diaspora abroad operate based on different rules. Ukraine has a big diaspora, too. In a few years' time, we will have the same number of Ukrainians living in the country as abroad.

We will simply be unique on our path to the EU. We cannot build an ideal model. Poland had a unique path, too, just like any country, which does not bother anyone. I understand President Zelensky's comparison when it comes to society, the economy, and the armed forces. But if we look at how the political system in Israel works and the social contract there – it will not work like that in Ukraine. I do not think Volodymyr Zelensky really had that in mind, as we are a country with a different DNA and a different mentality. We are travelling to Europe and we know how everything there works; we are a European country. We are a country that is ready to fight for itself – and, in that sense, the EU can follow our example.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

Ukraine's wartime experience and earlier decentralisation reforms show the potential in Ukrainian society and the resistant structure it has created. At the start of the war, most observers, even those most favourably disposed towards Ukraine, feared that the Russian invasion could lead to a catastrophe and the collapse of the state within a few days. That did not happen. You have held on in conditions that remain democratic; there is no censorship, there is debate within Ukraine, a functioning media, and no need to control what is being said. How can Ukraine be a source of inspiration for the transformation of Europe, which is also seeking an idea for itself and its own reform?

## **Veronika Movchan**

This is a very complicated question. Why has Ukraine proved to be so resilient? Of course, Ukraine had no choice. We were told very clearly that we must cease to exist, and we replied: "We exist, we want to continue to exist, we will continue to exist." For us, this is a war for our land, our freedom, and our



right to exist. This war did not begin on 24 February 2022 or eight years ago; it is a continuation of our long-term struggle. Little is said about this in the West but, after the Second World War, there was considerable resistance in western Ukraine. This war has been going on for more than a hundred years...

The Western observer was shocked that Ukraine is holding on. Yet I was shocked when my contacts in Western countries were convinced that Ukraine would capitulate and surrender. I struggled to understand that they did not believe in us. The message appeared that Ukraine would disappear, cease to exist, for there could be no compromise here.

What do we owe our resistance to? Poland should understand this because the Poles had the same problem a hundred years ago. The Poles understand why Ukraine is fighting and will continue to fight. What should the EU learn from us? Ukraine is definitely less Eurosceptic than the EU itself. To us, the principles of freedom and democracy seem anarchistic or chaotic in the EU, but this has always helped Ukraine survive. Ukraine is not a hierarchical country; it can adapt to the situation and to fighting an external threat. We are a country of horizontal relations, which will really help us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The part of society we call global, democratic, and educated is not hierarchical society. We have strong social relationships; this is a civil society with developed networks. Of course, the Internet serves as our technological foundation. Within a framework of concrete tasks, Ukraine is ready to self-organise and take many roads at once.

It is worth noticing how one can adapt during a crisis. I will give you a childlike example. We all know the *Asterix and Obelix* comic books and cartoons, in which a small Gaul village is defending itself against Rome. In this village, there are various conflicts; the villagers do not agree with the authorities or between themselves and are always arguing. Yet when they are attacked, they always join forces to push back the enemy... and then continue their internal quarrels. Ukraine resembles the village in Gaul. I hope that we will push back the enemy and then continue our internal disputes. Maybe one day we will get closer to the EU and, once we are part of it, share our views about how one can keep developing. Although it might not be worth scaring you for now...

## **Edwin Bendyk**

We are discussing the potential of the political process and the hopes that Ukraine places on political support from countries such as Poland. But we also know that political processes are taking place within EU member states, such as the recent elections in Hungary and Viktor Orbán's latest victory. How does Ukraine view these political processes in EU countries? To what extent can you be certain that you will obtain political support from every society in the EU? How do you intend to obtain these societies' political support at this difficult time?

## **Pavlo Klimkin**

Apart from the accession process, we must obtain the support of the Netherlands and France, for instance. Before the war, this was practically impossible, but in this war, we have shown how much we are worth. This should go hand in hand with consistently disposing of Soviet remains. Today's processes in the EU are political, but the real leaders will appear later. The EU needs a reset; it cannot find itself on the edge of global political processes. The huge political, technological, economic, and intellectual potential needs to be taken advantage of. Ukraine wants to move forward and not be afraid. Ukraine has the opportunity to take advantage of the current political situation, but this should not be the result of long, boring, bureaucratic discussions. We should obtain political support. We must



follow our path, but European countries must follow their own, too – if they do not want to connect with Ukraine, it will pose a threat to the entire EU's existence.

Do Europeans not want people like the Ukrainians have turned out to be? You mentioned people who asked: "When will you surrender?" – even the ones I had known for a while and who seemed aware. There were also people who had doubts, but asked: "What do you need? Keep fighting, we will buy everything and help you." In every country, there are various kinds of people, various stories, and various attitudes. If the EU does not understand this or does not want millions of people like the Ukrainians, then it should reflect on itself and its place in this world, which will be changing very rapidly. Nobody can wait it out in a warm bath, in their comfort zone. I have seen many things during my political career. My forecast is: in ten years' time, many people will not recognise this world. However, it will be a better world if arranged together with Ukrainians. Full stop.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

Let me ask you about Poland's role. What would be most valuable, in terms of support? To what extent are visits by the Polish president and prime minister, gestures of solidarity, enough? What else is needed? We know that, after 2015, Polish-Ukrainian relations were less dynamic than before. What should we do now?

## **Pavlo Klimkin**

Firstly, I want Poland to play an active role in the EU and NATO, showing that Ukraine needs economic aid immediately. It is not just a matter of reconstruction after the war. Right now, almost half our economy is not operating. We need to support our state and move forward. Poland has a lot to say here. Secondly, we obviously need military aid from Poland. The third matter is support for the Ukrainians in Poland: so that they can be friends with our Polish friends, but also so that Ukrainian schools and mutual communication exist. Many people have not had this possibility yet.

The most important thing we need from the Poles is to look to the future together. We have held many discussions about our shared history, because, as we know, it is not simple. We can acknowledge these difficult moments – but perhaps first look to the future together and deal with historical matters later. This is possible. Let us look to the future together because our security is your security. And then we will sort it all out.

## **Edwin Bendyk**

Are there processes in EU member states that could be deemed threats to the integration process? To what extent are Ukrainians already working with entities in Poland when planning the reconstruction? What type of support and engagement from the Poles is needed?

## **Veronika Movchan**

Are we seeing threats to Ukraine's integration with the EU? In Ukraine, we held very serious debates when signing the association agreement. Many companies feared that opening our markets would lead to major competition for Ukrainian entrepreneurs. This did not happen; instead, commercial activity accelerated, and the range of products increased. As part of the association agreement, Ukraine has done a lot to integrate economically.

These economic topics mean a lot to me. For example, the safety of industrial goods, along with responsibility for products. When it comes to industrial goods, Ukraine already has all the EU regulations in place. Before the war, Ukraine was in the process of fully adapting to EU standards and harmonising its regulations. We were preparing the infrastructure. We have the same safety norms, in terms of how businesses operate. The institutions might not yet be perfectly identical, but we are heading in that direction.

The same is happening when it comes to food product safety, though somewhat more slowly. Right now, Ukrainian animal products cannot enter the European market as they constitute production by third parties. First the goods are accepted, then the regulations and compliance are verified. In 2014, fewer than 100 Ukrainian enterprises were allowed to operate on the EU market. By 2017, Ukraine overtook Russia and Turkey in terms of the number of products on the EU market. This means that Ukraine entered the EU market very actively as soon as it had the opportunity.

Of course, our economy's structure does not correspond to that of the EU economy. This applies to the energy sector, too. Ukraine is not fully ready yet, but it already exists in the EU legislative space. Many of our legal acts have been harmonised with EU legislation. In terms of financial markets, the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID), which ensures markets' financial security, is being applied. In both Ukraine and the EU, there are people who fear that their companies will shut down. Yet in my opinion, there are no economic threats. There are challenges, but significantly more opportunities for development than challenges.

In terms of help from Poland: Poland has taken in a huge number of refugees, for which a huge "thank you" is due. Yet this also connects our countries in a particular way. Many Ukrainian children are in Poland, which is now playing a role in shaping our future, in a way. What else do we need? Weapons and financial support are timely and urgent, but so is help rebuilding our economy. When people started being displaced by the war, our economy froze. Now it is reawakening, but much more slowly than we would like.

One of the reasons is the loss of exports. With the war and Black Sea blockade, the only route to foreign markets is via Poland. Earlier, Poland and Ukraine spoke a lot about permits, but the matter has been resolved for now. We should discuss systemic matters: how to speed up deliveries that previously went via ports, and how to compensate, because the railways are struggling to keep up and road transport does not always work. We should discuss rapidly expanding border crossings or points where goods pass through the border. There is talk of building temporary railway tracks with a European gauge. In southern Ukraine, we have a few river ports, but they are overloaded. The EU should help us overcome economic bottlenecks.

We would also be grateful if the EU could help with insurance to stimulate cooperation with Ukraine. The risk is obviously huge. Will insuring businesses foster better cooperation with other countries? Will Ukrainian businesses look beyond the domestic market? We are in a complicated situation now, but we should think about foreign markets, too. As we develop the war economy and defend ourselves, we are thinking about how we can rebuild our economy in the future. Energy efficiency and new technologies should be taken care of first; there is no need to return to the past there. We should also think about how to make it as easy as possible for businesses to operate. How can the people currently in Poland help? Can they work at all? And if they are working in Poland, what will happen to their remuneration, for instance? How can all this be organised?

It is no secret that Ukraine received many money transfers in recent years, above all from Poland. To a large extent, this allowed us to maintain our trade balance. Some of the Ukrainians will find jobs and support their relatives who have not left the country. There are many issues that Poland can help us resolve.

## Edwin Bendyk

I mentioned opinion polls on support for Ukraine's EU membership. A recent poll showed that 91% of Ukrainians support EU accession. Asked about their identity and sense of belonging, 98% of Ukrainians said they are citizens of Ukraine, 96% residents of their region, and 57% Europeans. Less than a year ago, on the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's independence, just 27% highlighted their European identity so strongly. We are seeing how rapidly the sense of the connection with Europe and the West is growing.

**Edwin Bendyk** – President of the Board of the Stefan Batory Foundation, journalist and writer, until recently head of the science section of the weekly news magazine *Polityka*. He lectures at the Graduate School for Social Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Collegium Civitas, where he co-founded the Centre for Future Studies.

**Pavlo Klimkin (Павло Клімкін)** – diplomat, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs (2010–2012), Ambassador of Ukraine in Germany (2012–2014), and Minister for Foreign Affairs (2014–2019). He played a central role in negotiating the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine in 2017.

**Veronika Movchan (Вероніка Мовчан)** – Head of the Kyiv Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting (IER). Previously, she has worked for Stanford University, Harvard University, and the World Bank. She is an expert on macroeconomics. She has analysed the consequences of Ukraine joining the World Trade Organization, Ukrainian economic relations with the EU and Russia, and regional integration.

### Stefan Batory Foundation

Sapieżyńska 10a  
00-215 Warszawa  
tel. (48-22) 536 02 00  
fax (48-22) 536 02 20  
batory@batory.org.pl  
www.batory.org.pl

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