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Ukraine – European Union

- *THEME ANALYSIS: Will Ukraine have time to start EU membership negotiations before Hungary's presidency?*



Photo: UkrInform

This is a truly pivotal moment for Ukraine's path to the EU. On the one hand, Ukraine is about to reach the start of accession negotiations, but at the same time, more and more challenges are emerging. In this context, the Department of International Relations and Foreign Policy of the Educational and Research Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv together with the Institute for Foreign Policy Studies, with the assistance of the Directorate General for Foreign Missions, organised a roundtable on 3 April to mark the 80th anniversary of the Department of IRFP on the topic: "Ukraine in the EU Accession Negotiations: Challenges and Prospects for Implementing European Legislation".

A lot of expert opinions were presented during the event, including Ivan Nahirniak, Advisor at the Centre for Economic Recovery, CIVITTA partner, expert on European integration, PhD in Political Science, who noted that a lively dialogue process took place between February and June 2022. However, this period was caused by serious circumstances, in particular, the full scale of the invasion, which led to almost half of civil servants hiding in shelters or abroad. Despite this, thousands of issues related to European Union rights and the functioning of the state had to be resolved. This was an extremely difficult task. However, thanks to the joint efforts of the government and the expert community, the questionnaire was successfully completed, which ultimately allowed Ukraine to obtain the status of a candidate for membership in the European Union.

In June 2022, a decision was made and Ukraine was given seven political steps. With the successful implementation of these steps, the European Council could start negotiations on Ukraine's EU membership by the end of 2023. However, this is only the beginning of the process, as the negotiation process has several stages. The first stage is currently underway - the official screening, during which the European Commission explains to Ukraine how EU

law works in all 30 chapters. This phase will last until the end of May, after which a new sub-phase will begin, during which Ukraine will present its vision of implementing EU law in bilateral meetings with the European Commission. This is a big task for the government and other branches of power.

The first intergovernmental conference is expected to be held in June 2024, after the European Parliament elections and before Hungary takes over the presidency of the EU Council. This will allow Ukraine to officially start negotiations and work with the European Union to open the first cluster. To do so, Ukraine will need to prepare three roadmaps, which cover public administration, rule of law, and law enforcement sector reforms. In general, the average duration of the negotiation process is 7.5 to 8.5 years from the moment of obtaining candidate status to the conclusion of negotiations.

The negotiations we are now entering are based on the methodology developed in 2020 for the Western Balkans. At that time, the enlargement policy was not relevant for Ukraine, and the European Union aimed to create preconditions for the Balkan states to open and close negotiating chapters. It will be difficult to expect a dynamic negotiation process in Ukraine, as the entire procedure for opening and closing chapters depends on the decisions of the European Council. This could complicate our path to EU membership, as each decision of the Council could delay the process.

We are currently seeing ideas for reforming enlargement policy and institutional changes in the EU. Ursula von der Leyen presented a paper on this in March. But as a scholar, Mr Nahirniak is disappointed because he does not see any ambitious ideas there, except for the idea of gradual integration, which may be useful for countries such as the Western Balkans, Georgia and Moldova, but for Ukraine, which already has an association agreement, it may not be enough. There is also the question of the European Commission's autonomy in opening negotiating chapters. This is a positive step, but still, we need to insist on more autonomy in decision-making of the European Commission to avoid blocking the process.

Also, **we should work with our neighbouring countries and look for alternative accession paths that would not be so painful for key players in the EU**. Without a doubt, this is an important moment for Ukraine, and we have an ongoing dialogue with the European Commission and member states on changing the enlargement methodology.

Veronika Movchan, Deputy Director of the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, drew attention to the economic aspect. She noted that the conversation about farmers and the EU's common agricultural policy is really specific and requires attention. On the one hand, we are dealing with a powerful Ukrainian agricultural sector, and on the other hand, we are dealing with the growing costs of climate change adaptation. These costs, which Ukraine does not currently face, could become a significant factor in EU accession, but there is also the possibility that negotiations could be delayed.

However, looking at the broader context, **Ukraine remains competitive as a country with great potential for development**. Through agriculture and grain, Ukraine is already competitive, and even with climate change, it can remain so. However, sustainable development requires other components, such as human and physical capital, institutional structure and innovation.

In the area of technology, Ukraine still has a long way to go to catch up with developed EU countries and produce innovations at their level. This is an important aspect for development, and the government should pay due attention to it.

Overall, Ukraine has the potential to become a strong player in the world, but it needs to use all the opportunities offered by EU accession and actively work on developing its own sectors and innovations.

The loss of capital due to Russia's invasion has indeed become a major challenge for Ukraine. However, there is a positive side to this negative context: an opportunity to review and develop infrastructure, and to switch to new technologies in various sectors, such as energy and metals.

In terms of capital recovery, the world needs to understand what is needed and where to find capital for recovery. Investment flows and the use of Russian assets for these purposes are a prospect, but it is important to ensure the safety of this process.

The worst situation may be in the labour market, but it is worth noting that Ukraine can change this situation. Before the full-scale invasion, Ukraine had a poor demographic situation, but it still had a significant population of around 44-45 million. Now it is important to change the approach to the labour market and work on attracting and retaining labour to effectively restore the economy and develop the country.

Ukraine should be realistic about its potential to join the European Union. We currently account for a very small share of trade with the EU, and our economy, while competitive in some sectors, is far from being a global leader. However, we do have certain advantages, for example, as a competitive exporter of grain and other agricultural products.

Despite the need for large investments to join the EU, our challenges, including war and destruction, allow us to receive significant international assistance. However, even if we do not join the EU, **integration with European standards could be beneficial for us, as it would reduce the costs of future adaptation.**

On the reform side, Ukraine has already made significant efforts to meet European standards through the Association Agreement. Our efforts should be focused on the gains promised by this agreement, not on the fear of how we will cope with the costs. We already have significant achievements, especially in the area of environmental standards, and we must continue on this path.

Vadym Halaychuk, First Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the European Union, shared the institutional perspective on European integration. He noted that the Verkhovna Rada plays a key role in the legislative process, adapting legislation to EU standards and fulfilling the obligations assumed under the Association Agreement. Thanks to the full political support and extensive experience gained over the past ten years, it has created optimistic conditions for moving forward quickly and efficiently.

In addition, the President is preparing a decree on the structure of the negotiation process, and negotiating teams are already being formed. The European partners are looking forward to the start of the negotiations, and the screening sessions that are currently underway are helping to understand the process of implementing European standards. Much of the EU legislation has already been implemented, but there is still work to be done.

Ukraine understands its unique challenges and the opportunities they create. Successful reform not only helps it, but also stimulates change in the European Union itself. The EU's assistance to Ukraine is unprecedented, demonstrating its support for its European path.

Officials expect talks to begin in June. While the elections may be a distraction, they are seeking to speed up the negotiation process and secure support from European institutions. It is important not to miss the moment and to make the most of this time to continue the European path.

Another important issue is cooperation with specialists and experts in the work of the Verkhovna Rada. Although their inputs may be of high quality, **the problem is the lack of responsibility for the preparation of final documents.** One possible solution would be to review the programmes that hire these experts and change their terms and conditions so that they are directly involved in the work of the Verkhovna Rada. The remuneration system could also be reviewed and the salaries of the Verkhovna Rada staff could be increased to bring them in line with those of experts working for external programmes.

In terms of cooperation with academic institutions, it is important to consider their participation in recruitment and joint project development. Such cooperation can help solve specific problems and ensure the exchange of information and ideas. With regard to the participation of MPs in negotiation groups, this can be an important step to ensure efficiency and speed of decision-making. However, it is important to ensure that the participation of

politicians does not interfere with the work of experts.

Regarding the political situation in the Verkhovna Rada itself, this is an important issue and work should be done on changes to the rules of procedure to ensure fast and effective decision-making. This could include revising procedures and introducing new rules that would speed up the process of adopting laws related to European integration.

It is also important to ensure a broad exchange of information and experience between the Verkhovna Rada and its partners in the European Union to make the most of the opportunities of European integration for Ukraine's development.

Based on this, it can be said that the process of Ukraine's accession to the European Union is indeed complex and highly regulated. The need to meet a number of criteria in order to avoid the destruction of the common market makes this process complex and requires significant efforts from the candidates.

Indeed, it is important to bear in mind that decisions on EU enlargement must be taken unanimously, and even a perfect reform may not guarantee the agreement of all member states. However, an initiative to change the enlargement methodology, which would require a qualified majority decision to open negotiating chapters, could reduce the possibility of blocking the start of negotiations. This could be a significant incentive for other candidate states to participate in the negotiations.

At present, the main obstacle to Ukraine's accession may be the Hungarian presidency, which is increasingly distancing itself from Brussels and will definitely oppose Ukraine's integration. However, the positive thing is that not only Kyiv but also most European countries are aware of this. That is why politicians from various European countries are already making statements about the need to speed up the start of negotiations. And, given the preliminary estimates of experts, *Ukraine has every chance to make it if it really shows perseverance and initiative, as well as commitment to further reform.*

Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine

- *THEME ANALYSIS: The dilemma of Ukraine's NATO membership depends on its victory in the war with Russia, which the United States does not want*



Source: flickr.com

On 29 April, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visited Ukraine. During his visit, he met with Volodymyr Zelensky and stressed the importance of Ukraine-NATO relations in the context of European and Euro-Atlantic security. According to Zelensky, Ukraine must achieve the highest level of cooperation with the Alliance, as the country's participation in NATO is essential to ensure a peaceful and stable situation.

The President also noted that Russia is trying to use Ukraine for its strategic purposes, and therefore the defence of Ukraine is a key element of the common security of Europe and the Atlantic. This underscores the importance of the NATO-Ukraine partnership in ensuring international security. Such meetings and mutual statements are important to support Ukraine in its efforts to ensure its security and integration into international organisations, including NATO, as the accession process is still rather vague and complicated.

For example, the decision to invite Ukraine to join NATO requires a unanimous decision of all 32 member states, so it is unlikely that such a step will be taken during the anniversary summit in Washington in July this year. Nevertheless, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg reaffirmed the Alliance's commitment to Ukraine's integration into NATO. This demonstrates NATO's support for Ukraine and its intention to facilitate its integration into international security, but without taking concrete steps to do so.

"I am truly convinced that Ukraine's rightful place is in NATO. We are working hard to ensure that Ukraine becomes a member of this Alliance. For such a decision, we need all allies to agree, we need consensus - not just a majority, but all 32 members to agree. I do not expect that we will have that agreement before the summit in July. But I do hope that we will be able to demonstrate that we are moving Ukraine closer to membership, and that we are bringing the day when Ukraine becomes a full member closer as soon as possible," the

Alliance Secretary General said.¹

Meanwhile, NATO's 75th anniversary summit in Washington, DC, will take place in less than three months. However, although this is the third summit in the context of a full-scale war in Europe, the international security situation is extremely tense. Ukraine is actively expressing its desire to receive a political invitation to join the Alliance. This could take the form of a roadmap, as recently mentioned by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, or the opening of accession talks, as was already the case at the EU summit in 2023.

However, reaching a consensus on this issue is extremely difficult, mainly because of tensions with Russia. The Russian threat is the main factor that complicates the process of resolving the issue of Ukraine's membership in NATO. Despite this, the key importance of NATO as a forum for discussing and coordinating strategic issues among its allies remains unshakable. Further steps regarding Ukraine's participation in the Alliance will require great political will and compromise from all parties, as the attitude towards this issue is of great importance for international security and stability.

This is especially true against the backdrop of the threat of Moscow's attack on NATO in the near future and the tense political situation in the United States. A recent poll by the Razumkov Centre shows that Ukrainians' attitudes towards the US have deteriorated significantly in recent months. The level of positive perception compared to negative perception has dropped from 84.1% in August 2023 to 67.1% in March 2024. This is not surprising, as the \$60 billion military aid package for Ukraine has been blocked in Congress for more than six months. And Trump's possible election victory only increases the degree of tension.²

In addition, military aid from the EU is also at a standstill. Hungary has blocked a €500 million tranche from the European Peace Fund, and member states have failed to agree on a package of military aid to Ukraine for the coming years. Initiatives by individual countries, such as the Czech Republic and Germany, provide some assistance, but it is not enough for effective defence.

Much has changed in the year since the NATO Summit in Vilnius. Not only do we need significant efforts to obtain military assistance, but also to manage the risks of conflict escalation. And while there was once talk of an "Israeli model" for Ukraine, such talk is no longer relevant.

In response to these challenges, Jens Stoltenberg put forward the idea of a new multi-year initiative to support Ukraine. He stated that the Allies should change the approach to providing security assistance to Ukraine, moving from voluntary contributions to more stable commitments. This initiative has two main components.

The first component is to strengthen NATO's role in coordinating military assistance to Ukraine. This means shifting the lead role from the Defence Contact Group to the Alliance itself. This new coordination mechanism will also include non-NATO states.

The second component involves the creation of a multi-year fund to support Ukraine under the auspices of NATO. The initial proposal is for a five-year, \$100 billion fund. This fund would be a common channel for financing the Alliance's ongoing military support, training of the Ukrainian military, and lethal military assistance to Ukraine.

While this is a step towards improving the situation, it is still too moderate a solution compared to the size of the potential threat. We should also not forget the complicated bureaucratic situation in the Alliance, which will further delay this process. At the same time, Russia's destabilisation machine is unstoppable.

¹ Україну навряд чи запросять до НАТО у Вашингтоні – Столтенберг. 29.04.2024. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/3858049-ukrainu-navrad-ci-zaprosat-do-nato-u-vasingtoni-stoltenberg.html>

² Збройна підтримка України розблокована: лише для того, щоб втримати фронт, проте не для перемоги. 24.04.2024. <https://tsn.ua/exclusive/zbroyna-pidtrimka-ukrayini-rozblokovana-ale-lishe-dlya-togo-schob-vtrimati-front-prote-ne-dlya-peremogi-2564739.html>

Moscow, trying to explain the failure to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, has been actively promoting the thesis that it is fighting "the whole of NATO" in Ukraine. This is just a propaganda manipulation, but it is based on the idea that the Alliance countries are supplying Ukraine with weapons and are therefore directly involved in the conflict. However, NATO has tried to distance itself from this thesis as much as possible, emphasising that lethal military assistance is a matter for individual member states.

But now Stoltenberg has decided to cross the red line by proposing even more new initiatives to support Ukraine. His decision may have been aimed at securing support in the event of a future Donald Trump presidency in the US, whose unpredictability has caused some concern. The creation of a multi-year fund under the auspices of the Alliance could be a "cushion" against Trump's unpredictable actions.

This may be Jens Stoltenberg's last year as NATO Secretary General, and he may be genuinely keen to ensure that Ukraine is supported as much as possible during this important period. His decision to tackle the issue of support for Ukraine may be an increase in his emotionalism, especially when it comes to Ukraine.

For example, after a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in early April, Jens Stoltenberg expressed optimism about further planning for a stronger role for the Alliance in coordinating security assistance and exercises for Ukraine. He stressed that Ukraine can count on NATO's support both now and in the long term.

It is worth noting that the Secretary General's proposal has not been approved by all Allies and needs to be further developed. This process, according to Stoltenberg himself, will take several weeks, after which more specific details will be known. NATO members have different approaches to financing the idea of creating a fund to support Ukraine.

One proposal includes filling the fund in proportion to the GDP of NATO member states, which is supported by the Baltic states. Another suggestion, made by the British newspaper *The Telegraph*, envisages major funding from Germany, the UK, France and the US to avoid overburdening the US in this regard.

However, there are reservations, particularly from Germany, about the possible duplication of EU initiatives to fund its own defence industry and rearmament. This could be a problem, especially given the existing European Peace Fund project, which has a similar goal.

Despite these difficulties, no NATO member state has publicly expressed any fundamental objections to NATO funding of military assistance to Ukraine. Therefore, it can be expected that the proposal of the Alliance's Secretary General may be agreed upon at the summit in Washington.

However, there is a threat of a hidden dispute among member states that could derail the decision. Especially with regard to the transfer of the Ramstein Group's leadership to NATO. The United States, which currently leads Ramstein, avoids discussing such a transfer, while Hungary opposes the idea.

Hungary believes that such an initiative could increase the risk of NATO involvement in the conflict. The most important struggle in the coming weeks will be not only for words, but also for funding, especially before the summit in Washington. Discussions on NATO's role in supporting Ukraine could cause tensions between member states, particularly with Turkey and Hungary, which have their own positions on the issue. Turkey and Hungary have different views on how NATO should support Ukraine.

This also means a change in NATO's role in the conflict in Ukraine. Until now, NATO has avoided direct intervention, but by taking the lead in supplying weapons, the Alliance is now actively involved in support processes. These changes are taking place against the backdrop of political shifts in the United States, where there is growing support for autocratic tendencies.

A Pew study shows that more than a quarter of Americans believe autocracy is an acceptable form of government, and more than 80% believe that politicians do not care what

ordinary citizens think. This indicates a general degradation of democratic values.³

Polarisation and distrust are also important aspects of this process. The divided electorate leads to support for more extreme candidates, which complicates the democratic process in the United States.

These trends point to a general decline in democracy in the United States, as reflected in the EIU Democracy Index. This means that regardless of who wins the presidential election, democracy in the *United States may continue to face difficulties*.

For Ukraine, this is a really important moment, because it is in fact the US that will make the final decision on Kyiv's accession to the Alliance. And despite certain autonomous shifts in the NATO structure, they will not be fully implemented without Washington's political will. **And given current American trends, the outlook is rather pessimistic.**

After all, the official condition for Ukraine's membership, which was announced at the previous Vilnius Summit of the Alliance, is as follows: **"the application for membership will be considered after the end of the Russian-Ukrainian war, i.e. after Ukraine's victory in it", which is extremely undesirable for the United States.** *However, this position may change, so Ukraine should not slow down its activity on the Atlantic course, but rather increase it.*

³ НАТО гарантує Україні надійне постачання зброї навіть у змінних політичних умовах у США.03.04.2024.
<https://mezha.net/ua/bukvy/nato-harantuie-ukraini-nadiine-postachannia-zbroi-navit-u-zminnykh-politychnykh-umovakh-u-ssha/>



Source: Army FM

■ *Changes at the front*

Trend: *In anticipation of the main direction of Russia's large-scale summer offensive.*

The situation was particularly difficult in the Bakhmut direction in the areas east of Chasiv Yar and Klishchivka; in the Avdiivka direction - in the areas of Berdychiv, Orlovka, Vodiane, Pervomayske; in the Novopavlivka direction - in the area of Novomykhailivka. Chasiv Yar remains under the control of the Ukrainian Defence Forces, and all enemy attempts to break through to the settlement have failed.

In the Lyman direction, the Russian proxies are conducting localised offensives in the areas of Bilohorivka and Vesele;

In the Orikhivsk direction - in the areas of Robotyne and Verbove, Russia is trying to regain its lost ground;

In the Kherson direction, Russia is trying to force Ukrainian troops out of the bridgehead on the left bank of the Dnipro River near Krynka. The enemy is not successful in these areas.

At the same time, the Armed Forces of Ukraine are having some tactical success on the **Kupyansk and Lyman directions**.

■ *Military assistance*

On 24 April 2024, **the United States** announced a new military aid package for Ukraine, which reaches \$1 billion. In particular, it includes air defence systems, artillery ammunition, armoured

vehicles and anti-tank weapons.⁴

Thus, the package will include:

- RIM-7 and AIM-9M air defence missiles;
- Stinger anti-aircraft missiles;
- small arms and additional ammunition for small arms, including 50mm ammunition for drone warfare;
- additional ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS);
- 155 mm artillery shells, including high explosive shells and improved conventional dual-purpose ammunition;
- 105-mm artillery shells;
- 60-mm mortar rounds;
- Bradley infantry fighting vehicles;
- Mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles (MRAP);
- High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV);
- logistics vehicles;
- tactical vehicles for towing and transporting equipment;
- Optical tracking and wire guided tube-launched missiles (TOW);
- Javelin and AT-4 anti-tank systems;
- high-precision aerial munitions;
- airfield auxiliary equipment;
- anti-armour mines;
- Claymore anti-personnel ammunition;
- explosive munitions for obstacle clearance; and
- night vision devices;
- spare parts, field equipment, training ammunition, maintenance and other support equipment.

The day before, U.S. President Joe Biden signed a bill to provide nearly \$61 billion in aid to Ukraine.

Earlier, the US Senate had passed the bill. "79 congressmen voted in favour (51 out of the required 51) and 18 against. The bill also includes assistance to Israel and Taiwan.

On 23 April, the US Senate supports consideration of a bill to provide nearly \$61 billion in aid to Ukraine. Lawmakers supported shortening the procedure for considering aid packages for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. This allowed for a quick discussion of the bill within 30 hours with limited time for each senator.

Germany has handed over a new military aid package to Ukraine, which includes the SKYNEX anti-aircraft missile system and ammunition for the IRIS-T anti-aircraft missile system. This is stated in the list of military aid transferred to Ukraine, updated on 29 April, published on the website of the German Ministry of Defence.

The list includes

- SKYNEX anti-aircraft missile system with ammunition;
- missiles for the IRIS-T SLM air defence system;
- ammunition for LEOPARD 2 tanks;
- ammunition for GEPARD anti-aircraft tanks;
- ammunition of 155 mm calibre;
- MARDER armoured personnel carriers with ammunition and spare parts;
- BIBER bridge laying tank with spare parts;
- DACHS engineering tank;
- ploughs for demining;
- M1070 Oshkosh heavy-duty semi-trailers.

⁴ США оголосили про новий пакет військової допомоги для України на \$1 млрд. 24.04.2024. <https://suspilne.media/731537-ssa-ogolosili-pro-novij-paket-vijskovo-dopomogi-dla-ukraini/>

- TRML-4D radar;
- AMPS helicopter self-defence system.
- motors;
- LED lamps;
- 40 mm ammunition;
- RGW 90 anti-tank weapon;
- 120 mm mortar ammunition;
- camouflage nets;
- first aid kits.⁵

■ *Russia: External and internal challenges*

Trend: *How much more Ukrainian territory can the United States seize if there are "red lines"?*

The past month has seen a welcome shift in US political uncertainty. For example, President Zelensky had a telephone conversation with Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, stressing the importance of swift congressional approval of aid for Ukraine in the face of the escalation on the frontline and growing Russian air terror. Zelensky stressed that the issue of aid to Ukraine should remain a factor of unity in Congress, although there may be different positions in the House of Representatives on how to provide this aid. The politicians also discussed the need to cut off the sources of funding that Russia uses to finance its war as soon as possible and to use frozen Russian assets for the benefit of Ukraine. Zelensky expressed hope for Congressional leadership on these issues.

It is worth noting that the US Senate has already approved a bill that provides additional funding for US national security priorities, including a significant amount for Ukraine. However, Speaker Johnson has expressed criticism of it and is trying to find alternatives. Nevertheless, Congress's delay is seen as a reason that gives Russia the opportunity to use every moment to attack Ukraine.

Looking at the course of events in more detail, members of the US House of Representatives introduced 137 amendments to the H.R. 8035 bill on US assistance to Ukraine. Of these amendments, only two were submitted by a member of the Democratic Party, the rest were submitted by Republicans.

The largest number of amendments (24) were submitted by Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor-Green, who put forward proposals to require funding for the wall on the border with Mexico, to ban funding for NATO troops in Ukraine, to withdraw the United States from NATO, and other provisions. Congresswoman Victoria Spartz, a native of Ukraine, also introduced five amendments to the bill. Her initiatives relate to the cancellation of aid to Ukrainian refugees and the requirement to obtain explicit congressional authorisation to cancel any debt owed by other countries. These amendments reflect different views and approaches to providing assistance to Ukraine, and are scheduled to be considered in the House of Representatives at its next session.⁶

Negotiations on a bilateral security agreement between the United States and Ukraine continue, as reported by the US State Department. Representatives of the State Department, the Department of Defence and the US National Security Council have already met with their

⁵ Німеччина передала Україні чергову партію озброєння та боєприпасів. 29.04.2024.
<https://armyinform.com.ua/2024/04/29/nimechchyna-peredala-ukrayini-chergovu-partiyu-ozbroyennya-ta-boeyprypasiv/>

⁶ Палаті представників внесли понад 130 правок до законопроекту про допомогу Україні. 19.04.2024.
<https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/3854333-u-palati-predstavnikov-vnesli-ponad-130-pravok-do-zakonoproektu-pro-dopomogu-ukraini.html>

Ukrainian counterparts to continue the negotiations. These talks are important for long-term bilateral security arrangements and other commitments under the G7 Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine.

As for Johnson's bill, his bill provides for \$60.84 billion in aid to Ukraine and related expenses. It is worth noting that more than a third of these funds (\$23.2 billion) will actually remain in the United States, as they will be used to replenish the US weapons and supplies transferred to Ukraine. The remaining funds, according to the draft law, will be distributed as follows: USD 13.8 billion for the purchase of advanced weapons systems, defence products and defence services for Ukraine, USD 11.3 billion for ongoing US military operations in Europe, and another USD 26 million for continued oversight and accountability of the assistance provided. It also provides for direct financial assistance to the Ukrainian budget in the amount of \$7.85 billion, but this will be in the form of a loan.

However, the situation is far from clear. Johnson's bill opens up the possibility of writing off this loan by the president's decision, but only after 5 November, when the US elections are held. Thus, who will make the decision to write off the loan will directly depend on the results of the American vote. If Biden is re-elected for a second term, Ukrainians do not have to worry about the loan being written off. But the situation with Trump, who has a fairly high chance of returning to the presidency and has repeatedly said that aid to Ukraine should not be a "gift", may change. Moreover, Johnson's bill prohibits the Ukrainian government from using these funds to pay pensions.

Another interesting detail in the bill is the US president's commitment to immediately transfer long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine. However, Biden has a certain backup plan in this matter. According to the text of the document, the president may refuse to transfer ATACMS if such a step would harm US national interests.

If the president refuses, Biden is obliged to formally notify the Congressional Defence Committees, the Senate Appropriations and Foreign Relations Committees, and the House Appropriations and Foreign Relations Committees. Most of these committees are controlled by Republicans, so it is likely that they will not keep the president's refusal a secret. In other words, denying ATACMS could affect Biden's approval rating.

In his other bill concerning US national security, Johnson envisaged the adoption of the so-called REPO law, which gives the US president the ability to transfer seized Russian assets to Ukraine.

As explained by Ukraine's Ambassador to the US Oksana Markarova, the document stipulates that no later than 90 days after its adoption, the US President must submit a report to Congress listing all individuals and entities subject to EU and UK sanctions. It is expected that this bill will allow Ukraine to receive up to \$8bn of Russian assets that were seized in the US.

On the one hand, this is indeed a ray of light after a long period of uncertainty and the most pessimistic forecasts, but it does not completely solve the problem. Indeed, it is far from a solution to the entire problem, but rather a first step that leaves behind many risks. Russia continues to make significant efforts to rebuild and expand its army, which makes aggression against Ukraine an international problem. This is the opinion of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Charles Brown. He emphasised that this aggression poses a direct threat to global security, as well as to the security of NATO and the United States.

According to the General, the Armed Forces of Ukraine are facing difficulties at the front, but this is due to a decrease in the supply of weapons from their partners. At the same time, he noted that the Ukrainian military continues to strengthen its defence, but without the West's continued military support, it will be difficult for them to counter Russian aggression.

"Meanwhile, Russia is actively rebuilding its military forces, using numerical superiority to undermine Ukraine's resolve and resources. That's why we all need to act now," the US

military officer stressed.⁷

Indeed, the time when the situation took a turn for the worse in October, when Europe and the US were discussing how much aid to provide, led to the successes of Russian aggression, including the capture of Avdiivka and the advance.

Maintaining the defence of the frontline in such circumstances becomes extremely difficult, and even more so is thinking about the strategic de-occupation of one's own territories. "For a moment, it seemed that Ukraine was playing the role of a 'dummy' in geopolitical games, as in the old Polish preference. On the one hand, the West was supporting us, but on the other hand, it was slowing down the necessary assistance," he adds.

That is, in fact, **the long-term supply from the United States is still unresolved**, while the speed of arms delivery is still a significant risk that affects the ability of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to hold their positions. *In addition, the US leadership continues to view Ukraine as a factor in the internal struggle rather than a foreign and security policy priority. This approach is quite dangerous, as it allows American officials to constantly delay decisions at a time of great criticality for Ukraine.* Therefore, if this attitude towards Ukraine does not change, **Ukraine may find itself in a critical situation with more losses on the frontline, and the Western security architecture in an even more precarious position.**

⁷ Росія агресивно відновлює армію, партнерам України необхідно швидко діяти — генерал США. 28.04.2024. <https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/rosiya-shvidko-vidnovlyuye-armiyu-partneram-ukrayini-neobhidno-shvidko-diyati-general-ssha-2566383.html>