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Germany–Ukraine relations on Ukraine’s path to NATO and the EU

Introduction

Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has faced a complex geopolitical landscape, often caught in the crosshairs of competing interests. Germany, as a prominent European power, initially viewed Ukraine through the lens of its strategic importance as a transit nation for Russian natural gas. This perspective, coupled with concerns about political and economic stability in the region, led Germany to adopt a pragmatic approach to its relations with Ukraine.

The early years of Ukraine’s independence were marked by Germany’s cautious assessment of Ukraine’s political and economic potential. Its oligarchic system and perceived alignment with Russia’s sphere of influence shaped Germany’s initial stance. Ukraine’s aspirations to become an EU member seemed like a distant and elusive goal from Berlin’s perspective, given the country’s economic challenges and political complexities.

However, the ever-evolving dynamics of geopolitics have challenged conventional paradigms. The bipolar world of the past has given way to a more fluid and multipolar global order. In this context, Ukraine found itself ensnared within Russia’s sphere of influence, constrained by an authoritarian regime that hindered its independent development and civilizational choices.

The Russo-Ukrainian war that erupted in 2014 transformed the landscape of international relations in the region and altered the trajectory of Germany-Ukraine relations. This crisis prompted a recalibration of Germany’s approach towards Ukraine, leading to improved cooperation and collaboration.

However, it's important to note that the outcomes of the Normandy Format negotiations and the subsequent Minsk Agreements have been a subject of debate.

While the Normandy Format and Minsk Agreements aimed to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, some argue that these agreements may have inadvertently served Russia's interests by cooling the intensity of the war. This perspective asserts that after the illegal annexation of Crimea and the partial occupation of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the agreements may have contributed to a situation where Ukraine's national interests appeared compromised.

In 2014, Ukraine took a significant step by signing an Association Agreement with the European Union, emphasizing political and economic cooperation. Germany played a pivotal role in facilitating this agreement, signaling its support for Ukraine's deeper integration into the EU.

Furthermore, Ukraine's longstanding aspiration to join NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) has garnered support from Germany and other NATO member states. Although the path to NATO membership involves complex criteria and necessary reforms, Ukraine's determination and Germany's backing underscore the evolving nature of their relationship.

Germany's commitment to Ukraine extends beyond politics, encompassing economic and humanitarian assistance, including financial aid, development projects, and support for internally displaced persons. Additionally, Germany has been a steadfast proponent of European Union sanctions against Russia in response to its actions in Ukraine, such as the annexation of Crimea and support for separatist groups in eastern Ukraine.

Energy security has also been a focal point of Germany-Ukraine relations. Germany has actively supported efforts to diversify Ukraine's energy sources and reduce its reliance on Russian gas, recognizing the importance of energy stability for both Ukraine and the broader European region.

This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Germany-Ukraine relations within the context of Ukraine's pursuit of NATO and EU membership. To achieve this, we will employ descriptive research methods commonly used by political scientists and economists, examining historical events, policy documents, and official statements to provide a nuanced understanding of this evolving relationship. By outlining the goals and objectives of this research, we aim to shed light on the multifaceted dynamics that have shaped and continue to influence Germany-Ukraine relations on Ukraine's path towards NATO and EU integration, including the impact of the Normandy Format and Minsk Agreements. The analysis of the relationship between

Germany and Ukraine concerning NATO membership and EU integration extends up to September 2023.

Main goal of the paper is to present the evolving dynamics in German-Ukrainian relations amidst the ongoing war in Ukraine, with a particular focus on Germany’s shift from a pro-Russia stance to actively supporting Ukraine’s path to NATO and the EU membership. The article emphasizes that the challenges in German-Ukrainian relations are likely to persist, requiring Germany to abandon old notions and stereotypes while Ukraine presents a comprehensive long-term development plan.

2.1. Historical pathway of Ukraine to NATO membership

NATO has always acknowledged Ukraine as a country of unique importance (*Fair Observer* 2023). Ukraine has signed several agreements, protocols, and other documents with NATO over the years. These documents have helped shape Ukraine’s relationship with NATO and outline various forms of cooperation. Here are some key agreements and protocols:

1. **Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program (1994):** Ukraine became the first former Soviet country to join the PfP program in 1994. This program aimed to build trust and cooperation between NATO and non-NATO countries, with a focus on military and defense-related activities.
2. **Charter on a Distinctive Partnership (1997):** In 1997, Ukraine and NATO agreed to a special partnership, leading to the Charter on Distinctive Partnership. This document emphasized the indivisibility of security in the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) area.
3. **NATO-Ukraine Action Plan (2002):** Signed in 2002, this plan identified areas where NATO and Ukraine could work closely together on mutual security interests. It aimed to deepen cooperation in various fields, including defense and security.
4. **Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances (1994):** While not a NATO-specific document, this memorandum involved Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. It provided security assurances to Ukraine in exchange for its commitment to give up its inherited nuclear weapons. This cooperative effort enhanced Ukraine’s relationship with NATO.
5. **Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP):** This document outlines the framework for Ukraine’s cooperation with NATO. It includes specific goals, priorities, and activities to strengthen Ukraine’s ability to work alongside NATO.

6. **Annual National Programme (ANP):** ANPs are developed by countries aspiring to join NATO. They serve as a tool for NATO and the aspiring country to work together on reforms and preparations for possible NATO membership. Ukraine has developed ANPs as part of its path toward NATO membership (*NATO 2023b*).
7. **NATO-Ukraine Annual Work Plans:** These plans detail the practical cooperation between NATO and Ukraine for each year, outlining specific activities and objectives in areas like defense reform, military training, and crisis management (*NATO 2002*).
8. **Joint Working Group on Defense Reform:** This forum facilitates cooperation and dialogue between Ukraine and NATO in the area of defense reform. It addresses various aspects of Ukraine's military capabilities and structures (*NATO 2023b*).

These documents represent key milestones in Ukraine's relationship with NATO. They have helped shape cooperation and provided a framework for Ukraine's efforts to align with NATO standards and principles. It's important to note that Ukraine's journey toward NATO membership involves a complex process, including political, military, and societal aspects, as well as ongoing cooperation and dialogue with NATO member states.

At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO Allies made a historic commitment: Ukraine would become a member of the alliance. This pledge marked the start of Ukraine's journey towards NATO membership, guided by **the Membership Action Plan (MAP)**, a comprehensive program encompassing political, economic, defense, resource, security, and legal reforms.

Despite a brief period of non-alignment from 2010 to 2014, Ukraine's NATO aspirations were reinstated due to Russia's aggression. In 2017, Ukraine reaffirmed NATO membership as a key strategic goal, reinforced by a constitutional amendment in 2019.

In 2020, Ukraine's National Security Strategy emphasized developing a distinctive partnership with NATO towards full membership. In 2022, amid Russia's territorial incursions, Ukraine reiterated its NATO membership request.

On September 30, 2022, President Volodymyr Zelensky, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk, and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal signed Ukraine's application for accelerated NATO membership.

According to former Ukrainian Minister of Defense Oleksiy Reznikov, Ukraine's invitation to join the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) is virtually assured, given that it aligns with the interests of NATO member states (Ukrinform 2023).

Reznikov anticipates that this invitation will materialize after Ukraine achieves victory in its current challenges. He underscores that this decision

will be political rather than legal, as Ukraine is effectively regarded as a *de facto* NATO member based on various indicators. He expresses optimism that Ukraine will receive its NATO invitation at the next Alliance summit, citing two symbolic reasons for this. Firstly, the upcoming NATO summit will mark the 75th anniversary of the organization’s founding, to be hosted in Washington. Secondly, with Sweden’s impending NATO membership, the Alliance will have 32 member countries, and Ukraine, on the cusp of its 33rd year of independence, logically positions itself as the 33rd NATO member.

In July 2023, during the NATO summit in Vilnius (Lithuania) leaders of NATO member countries issued a final communiqué¹ reaffirming Ukraine’s future with NATO, with an invitation to join contingent upon unanimous member state agreement and the fulfillment of requisite conditions.

Additionally, at the NATO summit in Vilnius, it was announced that the Ukraine-NATO Council would be established, and the Membership Action Plan (MAP) would be abolished. Instead, NATO will continue supporting Ukraine’s progress, including democratic and security sector reforms, through the adapted Annual National Programme. Furthermore, leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) countries concurred on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Vilnius to release a “Joint Declaration in Support of Ukraine” (NATO 2023, July 11). NATO remains committed to extending an invitation to Ukraine when all conditions are met.

German support essential for Ukraine’s NATO membership aspiration

Ukraine’s desire to become a NATO member is driven by its belief in the importance of Western military protection for its security, especially considering the ongoing war with Russia. However, key NATO allies, including the United States and Germany, have shown caution and reluctance to establish specific pre-conditions for Ukraine’s NATO membership. The uncertainty surrounding the ongoing conflict with Russia has played a significant role in their hesitation to set clear criteria for Ukraine’s entry into the alliance (Sabbagh 2023).

¹ According to official NATO’s Communiqué in Vilnius: “We fully support Ukraine’s right to choose its own security arrangements. Ukraine’s future is in NATO. We reaffirm the commitment we made at the 2008 Summit in Bucharest that Ukraine will become a member of NATO, and today we recognise that Ukraine’s path to full Euro-Atlantic integration has moved beyond the need for the Membership Action Plan. The security of Ukraine is of great importance to Allies and the Alliance. To support Ukraine’s further integration with NATO, today we have agreed a substantial package of expanded political and practical support.” (NATO, 2023b).

At the heart of discussions about Ukraine's potential NATO membership is Article 5 of NATO's Founding Charter, which states that an attack on one member is considered an attack on all, requiring NATO member states to come to the defense of the attacked country. Article 5 is central to the conversations and considerations surrounding Ukraine's prospective NATO membership. Within the U.S. government, there is resistance to the idea of granting Ukraine automatic or immediate NATO membership.

The quest for Ukraine's NATO membership has gained significance, with a growing call for German support in paving the way for Ukraine's accession to the alliance. Germany's political influence within NATO has surged following Chancellor Olaf Scholz's pivotal *Zeitenwende* speech.² This transformation has seen an uptick in German defense spending, positioning Germany as a focal point for other NATO members seeking alignment with Ukraine's NATO aspirations (Hofmann 2023).

The German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), based in Berlin, has recently issued a strategic analysis titled "Lasting Security for Ukraine" in anticipation of the upcoming NATO summit in Vilnius. This comprehensive analysis outlines a series of concrete steps aimed at facilitating Ukraine's eventual NATO membership (Klein & Major 2023).

One key proposal within the report is the endorsement of a "pact for security, reconstruction, and peace," entailing coordinated actions involving the EU, NATO, the G7, and over 50 nations invested in Ukraine's well-being. Germany holds a pivotal role in this endeavor, contributing financial resources, military equipment, and substantial political influence, as emphasized by Margarete Klein, co-author of the report and head of SWP's Eastern Europe and Eurasia research group. The core objective is to secure Ukraine's long-term safety and stability. Klein underscores that three options exist: the improbable disarmament

² Olaf Scholz's speech emphasized Germany's commitment to defending and promoting an international order based on the principles of the UN Charter. He highlights that Germany's democracy, security, and prosperity rely on adhering to shared rules, and Germans aim to be the guarantor of European security, bridge builders within the EU, and advocates for multilateral solutions to global challenges. This approach is seen as the key to successfully navigating the current geopolitical divisions. Furthermore, Scholz discussed that the *Zeitenwende* extends beyond the Ukraine conflict and European security concerns. It raises a fundamental question: how can Europe and the EU assert their independence in an increasingly multipolar world? He believes that Germany and Europe can play a role in defending the rules-based international order without succumbing to a fatalistic belief in a return to competing blocs. Germany's historical experiences, including its fight against fascism, authoritarianism, and imperialism, and its division during the Cold War, have given it a unique responsibility and perspective on the risks of a new Cold War (Scholz 2022).

ment of Russia, the undesirable resurgence of nuclear weapons in Ukraine, or Ukraine’s integration into NATO (Klein & Major 2023).

The report by SWP articulates the importance of sustaining Western support for Ukraine, emphasizing consistent and long-term financing for arms deliveries. Simultaneously, building Ukraine’s defense industry to integrate with Western military structures is seen as essential, and Germany is envisioned as a central player in this process, potentially becoming Europe’s paramount defense and armaments nation in the coming years.

New Germany’s security agenda after the start of Russo-Ukrainian war

In the spring of 2023, approximately 15 months after the commencement of the Russia–Ukraine conflict and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s announcement of Germany’s strategic turning point, the country unveiled its inaugural National Security Strategy (NSS). This document stands out for its remarkable clarity, departing from the traditional German hesitancy and pro-Russian sentiments of the past. In March 2023, a refined document underwent final consultation and was published in May 2023, five months beyond the original plan (Kamp 2023: 73). This was the turning point of Germany international politics and perception of threats.

The development of the NSS closely paralleled the evolution of German security policy throughout the ongoing Russia–Ukraine war. Remarkably, Germany transitioned from its initially modest offer of supplying 5,000 helmets before the outbreak of the war to its current role as the second-largest contributor, following the United States, in providing military and civilian support to Ukraine (Kiel Institute for World Economy, 2023a).

The formulation of Germany’s security policy strategy initially faced delays, but by January 2023, ministerial-level discussions had effectively addressed most issues. Primary points of disagreement included the 2% defense spending target, the proportional relationship between development aid and defense expenditure, and the potential National Security Council. The Ministry of Defense’s request to include the 2% commitment was approved, with the provision of a multiyear average (Kamp 2023, p. 76).

Primary security-policy objectives included safeguarding Germany and its allies, reinforcing partnerships with the EU, NATO, France, and the United States. Russia was recognized as an imminent threat, with the rivalry with China also a significant challenge. The *Bundeswehr* was positioned as the cornerstone for addressing threats, with Germany assuming a leadership role concerning NATO’s external borders.

Approximately fifteen months following the strategic shift, German society underwent a transformation in outlook. There was bipartisan support for Ukraine, a changing perception of Russia, and readiness to provide military equipment during conflicts. Even traditionally pacifist Greens supported sending tanks to Ukraine. The German public endorsed sanctions against Russia and favored the continued presence of American nuclear weapons on German territory.

The attainment of consensus within a diverse coalition government signals a sustained political transformation within Germany. The *Zeitenwende* is expected to endure, with Germans displaying a continued commitment to robust security policies. *Zeitenwende* signifies a pivotal shift in Germany's international politics and its approach to diverse challenges, spanning defense, energy, climate policy, economic competitiveness, and its economic model. This transformation is prompted by Germany's changing energy landscape, climate policy implications, and its economic ties with authoritarian regimes, notably China. It also encompasses Germany's stance on digitalization and technological progress (Scholz 2022).

The importance of *Zeitenwende* lies in its response to the evolving global landscape, requiring Germany to adapt its policies to address emerging challenges. It signifies a shift in Germany's strategic thinking in comparison with a previous one (Hide-Price 2015), emphasizing the interconnectedness of policy domains and the need for a holistic approach to security and foreign policy (Tallis 2023).

The allure of affordable Russian oil and gas led to the acceptance of German armed forces' weaknesses, as noted by K. Kamp (2023, p. 75). This consensus emerged due to Germany's perception of being surrounded by friendly nations, diverting investments from national defense to social welfare initiatives. The prevailing view was that close economic ties and 'modernization partnerships' with Russia would reduce the likelihood of military conflicts. However, this approach underestimated the potential risks posed by Russia to Germany's National Security System. Additionally, the commitment to projects like North Stream inadvertently supported the Russian military, disregarding Eastern countries' concerns which were dismissed as paranoia (*Ibid*).

In mid-December 2022, the National Security Strategy (NSS) was on the verge of being published as Germany's paramount security document. The Ministry of Defense was adamant that defense policy and, consequently, the role of the *Bundeswehr*, should assume a central position within this security strategy (Scheer 2023). It was imperative to establish combat-ready armed forces to ensure the defense of Germany and its allies.

It should be emphasized that the Russo-Ukrainian war constituted a pivotal moment that fundamentally transformed Germany’s security policy approach.

*Military and financial aid for Ukraine from Germany:
A complex transformation*

Support for Ukraine’s cause has become a significant achievement of the Scholz government over the past year, indicating substantial progress. Germany has emerged as Ukraine’s second-largest supporter, following only the United States, in terms of both financial and military contributions. The evolution from providing a mere 5,000 helmets to delivering substantial heavy weaponry like MARS 270 MLRS, Pzh-2000 Howitzers, IRIS-T air defense systems, and future plans for 18 Leopard 2A6 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) underscores Germany’s deepening commitment. Crucially, there exists a financial dedication to uphold and potentially enhance this assistance, demonstrating robust bipartisan support for Ukraine within the German government (Tallis 2023).

However, it is substantial to scrutinize not only what Germany is providing but also the timing, context, and adequacy of its assistance. While Western experts commend Germany’s contributions, they acknowledge that it still lags in terms of the urgency required. Although it may no longer be moving at the “speed of shame” witnessed when Germany responded only under intense pressure from allies, it has yet to take on a leading role in European security (Fix 2022). Ukrainian experts also consider the speed of military assistance as drips (Bogdan 2023). “This is like when a doctor gives a patient just a few drops of medicine instead of full treatment”, commented Polish General Waldemar Skrzypczak on the absence of long-range missiles in the Ukrainian army, which would allow targeting Russian troop concentrations deep within Russian territory in preparation for an offensive (cited by Sadova 2023).

Furthermore, there is a lack of clarity regarding the end goal of German support for Ukraine. While the Chancellery has repeatedly pledged to stand by Ukraine “for as long as it takes”, the specific objective remains undefined. Consequently, the phrase “as long as it takes” prompts the question: to achieve what? For Ukrainians the answer is clear. Substantially, Germany’s Defense Minister Boris Pistorius has asserted that Ukraine should prevail, implying the restoration of its 1991 borders — the official position of Ukraine. However, this sentiment has not been echoed by Chancellor’s level or his key advisors. This reticence at the highest levels gives the impression of caution rather than a resolute commitment to ambitious and expeditious progress in this facet of the *Zeitenwende* (Tallis 2023).

While engaging in military cooperation with allied nations, three distinct coalitions in the “Ramstein” format have arisen, aptly labeled by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and its collaborators: the Sky Defense Coalition, the Tank Coalition, and the “Military Schengen.” (Prasad 2023).

It is worth noting that the persistent challenges and disagreements concerning the tank coalition have highlighted issues in Germany’s relations with its allies. Tensions reached their peak in the autumn of 2022 when the shipment of German-manufactured Leopard 2 tanks faced delays. Chancellor Scholz’s hesitation about delivering these tanks to Ukraine was evident, and he initially declined to dispatch them (*Ibid*). The politician also temporarily blocked re-export licenses for them to reach Ukraine *via* other nations. In the end, he reversed his decision. Such a position stimulated the Americans to release the tanks as well.

Similarly, Germany’s provision of Eurofighter jets to Ukraine is facing hesitation from the official Berlin government, aligning with the skepticism of average Germans. According to a recent DeutschlandTrend poll commissioned by ARD, only 28% of Germans support supplying fighter jets to Ukraine, a slight increase from February (Teize 2023). The same applies to long-distance missiles. According to a sociological survey conducted by Trendbarometr and published on May 30, 2023, only 25% of Germans support providing Taurus missiles to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, while 66% are opposed (Nakonechna 2023).

Therefore, Germany’s approach to the war in Ukraine has undergone a significant transformation. Initially, after Putin’s invasion, Chancellor Scholz delivered the *Zeitenwende* speech, pledging an extra €100 billion to strengthen Germany’s military capabilities — a dramatic departure from their previous stance. However, this decisive move was followed by caution and hesitation, driven by concerns of a political backlash (Kampfner 2023).

Recent developments have caused a significant shift in Germany-Ukraine relations. On the experts’ opinion, a key factor is the appointment of Boris Pistorius as defense minister, who has worked to align Germany with NATO’s military requirements. As seen on the news, Germany applied effort to correct past mistakes. Pistorius announced a €3 billion aid package for Ukraine, highlighting Germany’s commitment to long-term assistance (*Ibid*).

In summary, Germany’s assistance to Ukraine has been multifaceted, including military, humanitarian, and financial aid. Initially, there was a lack of clarity in the government’s communication strategy, but transparency has improved over time. As of now, Germany’s bilateral support to Ukraine totals €6.15 billion, comprising €2.36 billion in military aid, €2.5 billion in humani-

tarian aid, and €1.3 billion in financial aid (Kiel Institute for the World Economy 2023).

The military aid from Germany has three main parts. Firstly, there’s the *Ertüchtigungshilfe*, which initially amounted to €1.2 billion but later increased to €1.36 billion intended for Ukraine. Secondly, Germany provided shipments of military items from *Bundeswehr* stocks to Ukraine, valued at €534 million, although this method may undervalue older items compared to market prices.

Thirdly, Germany also participated in *Ringtausch* or “circle exchange” schemes, where countries like Slovakia, Slovenia, Greece, and the Czech Republic sent weapons to Ukraine and received replacements from Germany. The total value of weapons sent to Ukraine as part of German *Ringtausch* is estimated to be between €82 and €127 million, with German replacements valued at €90 million (Kiel Institute for the World Economy 2023; 20-23).

Despite complexities in valuing military aid items and the intricacies of *Ringtausch* schemes, Germany’s contributions to Ukraine remain substantial and diverse.

Apart from military assistance, Ukraine will need substantial financial backing to address its fiscal requirements in the mid-term. According to the Ukraine Support Tracker from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Germany’s commitments to Ukraine are as follows:

- Total commitments: €20.863 billion (Rank: 2). Percentage of GDP for total commitments: 0.542% (Rank: 9)
- Humanitarian commitments: €2.476 billion (Rank: 2). Percentage of GDP for humanitarian commitments: 0.064% (Rank: 8)
- Financial commitments: €1.300 billion (Rank: 6). Percentage of GDP for financial commitments: 0.034% (Rank: 16)
- Military commitments: €17.087 billion (Rank: 2). Percentage of GDP for military commitments: 0.444% (Rank: 9).

At the level of the whole EU, as of June 1, 2023, allied nations committed 80.4 billion euros for military assistance to Ukraine, with 71.3 billion euros in financial aid. While these sums support Ukraine’s war efforts and public services, they represent just 7.1% of non-conflicted NATO members’ military spending in 2023. Moreover, this assistance comprises only 0.3% of Western democratic nations’ annual GDP (Bogdan 2023).

The Kiel Institute for the World Economy also evaluated the ratio of financial aid to Ukraine against EU countries’ energy subsidies. On average, this ratio is 12%, but some nations allocate less, such as Romania at 1.5%, Italy at 1.6%, Greece at 1.8%, Hungary at 2%, Spain at 2.3%, France and Ireland at 3% each, Germany at 4%, and Portugal at 4.7%. While Ukraine appreciate its allies’ support, it’s

vital to note significant issues in providing assistance to Ukraine in 2022-2023 (cited from Bogdan 2023): 1. Inadequate Western military aid in terms of types and quantities of weaponry. 2. Predominance of credit-based over grant-based EU financial aid, increasing Ukraine's financial burden despite its sacrifices for European security. 3. An impending funding gap alongside unrealistic hopes of private investments to rebuild Ukraine's war-torn economy.

Insufficient Western military aid is a major factor prolonging the war and causing unnecessary loss of life. In 2022, allies pledged 471 tanks and 379 howitzers to Ukraine, excluding combat aviation support. In contrast, during World War II, the U.S. provided the UK with 27,751 tanks and 4,356 artillery pieces, and the Soviet Union received 7,172 tanks and 961 artillery pieces (Kiel Institute for the World Economy cited by Bogdan, 2023).

To give a summary, Europe has taken the lead over the United States in delivering promised aid to Ukraine, with total European commitments now double that of the United States. This shift is primarily attributed to the EU's substantial €50 billion "Ukraine Facility." Germany stands out for its remarkable commitment, pledging a substantial 4-year military assistance package, totaling €10.5 billion from 2024 to 2027. In addition to Germany's resolute commitment, several other European countries, including Norway, Denmark, the UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, and Lithuania, have also stepped forward with multi-year support packages (Kiel Institute for the World Economy 2023).

This complex landscape underscores the ongoing challenges and opportunities in Germany's evolving role in supporting Ukraine during these critical times.

Accumulative expert opinion regarding the military equipment essential for Ukraine's successful counteroffensive is presented in box 1.

Box 1

Expert Opinion: Military Equipment Essential for Ukraine's Successful Counteroffensive

Long-Range and Cruise Missiles (Approximately 300-400)

- Vital for disrupting adversary logistical chains
- Crucial for applying comprehensive pressure on Russian military formations
- Minimum requirement to achieve the objective of dismantling the Moscow regime

Fighter Jets (Up to Four Squadrons in 2023)

- Essential for achieving air superiority
- Key for de-occupation of Crimea and Donbas
- Potential aircraft sources include American F-16s, Australian F-18s, and future consideration of Swedish Gripen aircraft
- Contingent on support from the Biden administration for de-occupation efforts

Drones

- Reconnaissance and strike drones
- Long-range, high-endurance killer drones capable of flying thousands of kilometers
- Variants encompass aerial, ground, surface, and underwater drones
- Drones are essential for intelligence, surveillance, and targeted strikes

Electronic Warfare Systems

- Vital for disrupting enemy communications and radar systems
- Enhances the effectiveness of Ukrainian military operations

Mine-Clearing Equipment (Current Supply Meeting Only 15% of Requirement)

- Necessary for ensuring safe troop movement and reducing casualties

Precision-Guided Munitions for Artillery

- Enhances artillery accuracy and effectiveness

Helicopters (Operational-Tactical and Potentially Operational-Strategic UAVs)

- Beneficial for various combat scenarios
- However, these systems are costly and vulnerable, potentially considered within Ukraine’s domestic capabilities due to existing expertise.

This expert opinion highlights the critical military equipment Ukraine requires for a successful counteroffensive, including the essential role of long-range missiles, fighter jets, drones, electronic warfare systems, mine-clearing equipment, precision-guided munitions, and the potential consideration of helicopters and UAVs, all of which are vital in the context of the ongoing conflict.

Source: (Sadova 2023; Hychko 2023).

Ukraine’s Way to EU

Russia’s aggression in Ukraine has brought the EU enlargement question back to the top of the Union’s agenda, adding three more countries to the pool of membership candidates. As the EU’s approach has been guided primarily by geopolitics, shortening the normal time frame for their accession procedures seems possible. The tragedy of the Ukraine reinvigorated member states’ commitment to enlargement, perceived as a gesture of solidarity toward Ukraine and those facing Russia as a common threat (Sirbiladze & Ventura 2023).

The beginning of the EU-Ukraine relations dates back to the period following the proclamation of Ukraine’s independence in 1991. In June 1994 the EU signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Ukraine, which entered into force in March 1998. Political and economic cooperation was enhanced in 2004 when Ukraine became an EU priority partner within the European Neighbourhood Policy and further strengthened with the launch of the Eastern Partnership Initiative in 2009.

Integration with the European Union has been an important foreign and internal policy dimension of Ukraine for many years. The Orange Revolution

in 2004 against electoral fraud and corruption was also about the orientation towards the West and integration with the EU. Following the parliamentary elections in March 2006, the EU decided to start consultations to negotiate a new enhanced agreement with Ukraine.

In 2005 the European Union officially recognized Ukraine as a country with a market economy as the Council Decision of the European Union No. 2005/935/EU of December 19, 2005 “On the status of Ukraine as a country with a market economy” was published (Council of European Union 2005).

Mutual negotiations concerning Ukrainian membership in the EU started in March 2007. The Association Agreement (AA) draft was initiated in March 2012. The first political chapters were signed in March 2014, and the remaining chapters were signed on 27 June 2014 following the presidential elections in Ukraine. Meaningful parts of the Agreement were already provisionally applied as of 1 September 2014. During the following years, eight meetings of the Association Council were held. On 15 December 2014, the first meeting of the Association Council took place, under the new Association Agreement. During the second meeting, in 2015, the Association Council endorsed the updated association agenda which was the key element in guiding the process of enhanced reforms and economic modernization in Ukraine. It constituted the main political tool for implementing and monitoring the association agreement. The sixth EU-Ukraine association council took place on 28 January 2020. The meeting reviewed the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, as well as relevant developments related to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. During the seventh EU-Ukraine Association Council which took place on 11 February 2021 the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was discussed, with a special focus on political reforms, the rule of law, economic cooperation and trade, and developments related to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The eighth EU-Ukraine Association Council took place on 5 September 2022, marking the first meeting since Ukraine was granted EU candidate status. The EU reaffirmed its continued support for Ukraine in the wake of Russia’s aggression. The meeting participants also discussed the implementation of the association agreement and EU-Ukraine cooperation. On 11 July 2017, the Council adopted a decision to conclude the Association Agreement with Ukraine on behalf of the EU. This was the final step of the ratification process, allowing the full implementation of the agreement as of 1 September 2017.

The Association Agreement was the main tool for bringing Ukraine and the EU closer together. It promoted deeper political ties, stronger economic links, the respect for common values. The economic part of the Agreement laid

the foundations for the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) signed in 2014. The provisional application of the DCFTA started on 1 January 2016. Its legal framework brought Ukraine and the EU closer together, promoted deeper political ties, stronger economic links, and respect for common values. Parallel to the enlargement process, the EU and Ukraine also cooperated to strengthen political and economic relations through the Eastern Partnership.

Since 2017, an Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine is in force and the partners have been continuously working on its implementation, aimed at further deepening Ukraine’s political association and economic integration with the EU.

On 20 April 2016, the European Commission presented a proposal to allow visa-free travel to the Schengen area for Ukrainian citizens. The Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the proposal on 28 February 2017. On the 11th of May 2017, the Council adopted a regulation on visa liberalization for Ukrainian citizens travelling to the EU for a period of stay of 90 days in any 180 days.

On 28 February 2022, Ukraine applied for EU membership. President Zelensky requested immediate admission to the European Union under a special procedure. On the same day, eight EU member states (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) signed a letter supporting an accelerated accession process for Ukraine. Additionally, on 1 March, the Hungarian foreign minister confirmed his country’s support to speed up this process.

On 1 March, the European Parliament, following a debate in which the President of Ukraine addressed and received applause, recommended that Ukraine be made an official candidate for EU membership. The European Parliament voted to advance Ukraine’s membership with 637 in favour, 13 against, and 26 abstained.

On 17 June 2022, the European Commission issued its opinion on the application for EU membership. It set seven conditions for Ukraine to fulfill before accession negotiations could be opened. Among them are: Constitutional Court reform, judicial reform, fight against corruption, anti-money laundering and law enforcement sector reforms, anti-oligarch legislation, media market, and legislation on national minorities (European Commission 2022a).

On 23 June 2022, the European Council took the historic decision to grant candidate status to Ukraine. This decision was based on a European Commission Opinion which set seven conditions mentioned above (European Commission 2022a). Successful implementation of these conditions is a necessary but probably not sufficient criterion for Ukraine to progress further on its path

to EU accession talks. It invited the European Commission to report to the Council on the fulfillment of the conditions specified in the Commission's opinion on the membership application as part of the Commission's regular enlargement package. The Council will decide on further steps once all these conditions are fully met.

This decision represents the strong political will of supportive allies and is based on multiple factors, including Ukraine's progress in implementing pre-war reforms, meeting EU membership criteria,³ and considering geopolitical and strategic considerations. The EU's decision recognizes Ukraine's European aspirations and demonstrates support for its reform efforts. Ukraine has showcased its readiness to become an EU member and actively uphold democracy and democratic values for its citizens and the global community at large. This significant decision solidifies Ukraine's commitment to the EU and reflects the European civilizational choice of the Ukrainian people (Moskalenko & Aigner 2023).

Olivér Várhelyi, the European Commissioner for enlargement, during a meeting with ministers in Stockholm in June 2023 stated that Ukraine fully met two of the seven conditions that Brussels established as part of Ukraine's candidacy. The completed reforms were related to the composition of two high-level judicial bodies and the media sector, whose legislation was amended to align with EU standards. Ukraine made "good progress" on a third requirement – the selection of judges for the Constitutional Court – and "some progress" on the remaining four: the fight against corruption, the prevention of money laundering, the mitigation of the excessive influence exerted by oligarchs, and the protection of national minorities (Liboneiro 2023).

Ukraine could begin accession talks as soon as all seven conditions will be fulfilled. That process will be a long and technical one, but Ukrainian officials

³ In order to become a full member of the European Union, Ukraine must also fulfill the Copenhagen criteria established in 1993, which form the basis for the EU's enlargement process. These criteria encompass political, economic, and *acquis* criteria, known as the *acquis communautaire*. Meeting these criteria is a challenging yet essential step for Ukraine's path to EU membership. The Treaty on European Union sets out the conditions (Article 49) and principles (Article 6(1)) to which any country wishing to become a member of the European Union (EU) must conform. Certain criteria must be met for accession. These criteria (known as the Copenhagen criteria) were established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. They are: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities and a functioning market economy and the ability to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU.

and the Ukrainian people have demonstrated their strong commitment to the process.

In September 2023, in the annual “State of the Union” speech Ursula von der Leyen said that the European Union must immediately prepare for radical changes needed for Ukraine and other countries to become members of the bloc. The European Commission President warned member states of the need to “match the determination” of Ukraine and others to get ready for an enlarged EU. “We cannot afford to leave our fellow Europeans behind” claimed von der Leyen. But even as she opened the door to a bigger EU, still insisted that candidates had to go through Brussels’ accession process, underscoring that accession was “merit-based,” or contingent on aspiring members’ ability to meet EU standards on judicial independence and economic stability, among other requirements (European Commission 2023). This speech was an important sign that Brussels was thinking completely differently about EU enlargement since the start of the war in Ukraine. Von der Leyen presented the EU as a geopolitical union that would take a proactive approach to adding new members. The “merit-based” principle of EU accession would continue to apply but there is a key shift in perspective. „Accession is merit-based – and the Commission will always defend this principle”, she said, “it takes hard work and leadership. But there is already a lot of progress”. She notably pushed back on the idea, floated by Council Chief Charles Michel, to set a 2030 target date for accession. The first media comments draw attention to the fact that nowadays the European Commission President treats further enlargement as a “catalyst for success” for the EU itself, rather than focusing on the benefit it brings to new member states.

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine changed not only politicians’ opinions, especially those who had previously opposed further EU enlargement (e.g. in France and Germany) but also the opinions of thousands of citizens in the EU countries. These changes are shown by public opinion polls. In the period preceding the aggression, many people were reluctant to further enlargement. This situation occurred, among others, in Germany and had many reasons.

In the past, Ukraine and Germany shared mutual dependencies and therefore they were strategic allies. German support is critical in bringing Ukraine closer to the West, especially in the context of NATO and the EU. Ukraine as a full of natural resources country and a natural barrier from the east strengthens German economic stability. Nevertheless, both countries often spar publicly over a range of issues and present different opinions and interests. The main disagreement results from the countries’ different opin-

ions and interests with Russia. The Russian invasion of Ukraine verified and significantly influenced German opinions, but hotspots didn't disappear and there are still palpable disagreements on many issues, such as what an acceptable outcome of the Russian-Ukrainian war would look like (Kusa 2023). In the years preceding the invasion, Ukraine and Germany presented different approaches to the threat posed by Russia and democratic reforms in Ukraine. German leaders wanted Ukraine to implement pro-Western changes, distance itself from Russia, and choose the European path. They were also disappointed with the situation in Ukraine where Petro Poroshenko's presidency did not bring the expected democratic reforms, any attempts were made to overhaul the economy, reform policies, and the financial sector, implement law enforcement, or the legal system. Instead, oligarchs dominated the national economy and the scale of the deep state even increased. German citizens grew tired of the conflict with Russia because sanctions induced economic losses, and Germany advocated for a return to business as usual. This generated several public disagreements between Germany and Ukraine, such as over the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in 2017–2021. Before the aggression, the Germans considered the Russian military threat to be far less great than the Ukrainians did. Europeans, mainly German and French, were skeptical about the prospect of a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Additionally, many people in Germany considered Ukraine as a part of the Russian sphere of influence and they weren't prepared to discuss its full-scale Euro-Atlantic integration. Therefore, the Eastern Partnership project started in 2009 served as a substitute for Ukraine's accession to the European Union. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Germany could no longer afford to stand idly by while another assault was made against European security. Thus, the opinion of Ukraine's accession to the European Union among German citizens had to change.

Ukraine's accession to EU – surveys results

The opinion regarding Ukraine's membership in the EU has evolved in German society over the period in question. They were influenced by, among others: the political situation, in particular Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the economic situation in individual countries, and the information and disinformation policy of all interested parties (including EU countries, candidate countries, and Russia). Changes in Germans' perception of Ukraine's membership in the EU can be analyzed based on the results of surveys conducted by well-known international institutions.

In 2022 Gilles Finchelstein, Amandine Clavaud, and Jérémie Peltier published the results of survey research titled “European peoples behind Ukraine” (Finchelstein, Clavaud, Peltier 2022). Comparing the findings of this survey with those of previous European surveys on the same issue, they found two major conclusions: support for Ukraine’s accession has never been stronger than it is in 2022, and support for Ukraine’s accession has risen in all four countries surveyed:

- by comparison with 2007, support increased by 6 points in France, 12 points in Italy, 18 in Poland and 25 points in Germany;
- by comparison with 2014 (Franco-German survey only), the increase is even more striking with +31 points in Germany and +33 points in France.

A deeper analysis of the situations in France and Germany explained the reasons for these changes. In Germany, while the opponents of Ukrainian accession were in the majority in 2007 as in 2014, only 29% of respondents were opposed to the idea. However, support for membership was as high as 71% among *CDU* supporters and 79% among those of the *SPD*. Even in eastern Germany, where opposition to enlargement traditionally runs high, 56% were in favour. Only a majority of *AfD* supporters remain hostile (59%). In France, the working class and young people were now just as much in favour of Ukraine’s accession as the other categories (they were less in favour beforehand), with even 61% of Marine Le Pen’s voters approving. The only category with a majority against Ukraine’s accession was Éric Zemmour supporters (61%) (Finchelstein, Clavaud, Peltier 2022).

The geographical diversification of opinions within Germany is confirmed by a survey conducted by *Der Spiegel* and commented on by *EURACTIVE* in June 2022. The findings show that 45% of Germans said they would support Ukraine joining the EU, while 42% opposed it, and 13% were undecided. Germans from the eastern part of the country and those from the western part had different views on that matter. While almost half of those in the West favoured Ukraine’s joining the EU and only 37% opposed it, according to the survey, 60% in the East said they opposed potential EU accession of Ukraine, with less than one-third being in favour.

Germans in the Eastern part of the country, East Germany, before the 1990s, were traditionally more pro-Russian and tended to have closer economic ties with the country due to geographical proximity. The survey’s respondents were also split along party lines. Those most in favour of Ukraine’s EU accession were voters of the Green party, which was pushing for Kyiv’s EU membership very strongly. There was a greater reservation among voters of the far-right *AfD*, which had faced criticism for its ties to Putin.

“End of Summer, End of Solidarity?” was the survey conducted by Bertelsmann Stiftung in 2022 (Hoffmann, de Vries 2022). It tracked changing views on Ukraine between March 2022 and September 2022 among Germans. The report showed that there was still a clear majority in favour of admitting Ukraine to the European Union. Just under two-thirds of respondents in the EU indicated that they were in favour of this step, a share six percentage points lower than in March. The level of support remains highest in Poland (82%), followed by Spain (78%). In contrast, Germany shows the greatest degree of skepticism, the majority in favour of accession has shrunk to just 55% (down from 61% in March).

Euroskopia presented the results of the polling which took place in March 2022. The poll was conducted by Sigma Dos in Spain, SWG in Italy, Opinionway in France, Insa in Germany, Prorata in Greece, and I&O Research in the Netherlands and canvassed the opinions of 1,000 adults in each country, and the fieldwork period was March 8-11, 2022. The survey showed the share of respondents in six EU countries who said they support or were against the idea of Ukraine’s EU membership when asked “Do you think Ukraine should be admitted as a member of the EU?” “Yes, immediately” answered 53% of Spanish, 22% of Germans, 21% of Greeks, 25% of French, 12% of Netherlands and 19% of Italian. “Yes, in a couple of years” responded 23% of Spanish, 41% of Germans, 33% of Greeks, 24% of French, 23% of Netherlands, and 26% of Italian. “No” answered: 13% of Spanish, 24% of Germans, 39% of Greeks, 24% of French, 29% of Netherlands and 28% of Italian. The rest of the respondents answered: “I do not know”.

The answers given by German respondents did not differ significantly from the answers of respondents from other countries. This means that the above-mentioned problems in bilateral relations did not negatively affect Germans’ perception of Ukraine’s membership in the EU.

The evolution of opinions about membership in the EU can be seen also in Ukraine. In March 2023 the poll made by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology for the National Democratic Institute (NDI) found that 92% of Ukrainians were in favour of the EU membership by 2030. Before Russia invaded Ukraine in December 2021, only 67% said they would vote ‘yes’ in a referendum for immediate accession. This trend is confirmed by a rating poll of January 2023 which found that 87% of Ukrainians would vote to join the EU in a referendum – the highest figure ever measured. In 2017 only 57%, in 2015 58%, and in 2013 only 49% of respondents said „yes” to immediate accession. A similar trend was observed in Ukrainian public opinion on NATO membership. The NDI poll found that 86% would like Ukraine to

be a NATO member by 2030, while 59% supported immediate membership before the war.

Conclusions

Our review paper on the evolving dynamics between Germany and Ukraine concerning Ukraine’s journey towards integration into NATO and the EU amid the ongoing conflict with Russia, up to September 2023, has led to the following conclusions:

1. The ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia presents complex challenges and uncertainties for both Ukraine and the Western countries supporting its sovereignty. While the West is unlikely to recognize Russia’s annexation of Ukrainian territories, the path to restoring Ukraine’s territorial integrity remains fraught with difficulties (Heisbourg 2023, p. 7–24). The analysis reveals a significant shift in Germany’s stance from a pragmatic approach, influenced by Ukraine’s role as a transit nation for Russian gas and its political and economic instability, to a more supportive position following the 2014 Russo-Ukrainian war. Germany’s role in facilitating Ukraine’s Association Agreement with the EU and its backing of Ukraine’s aspirations to join NATO underscore this transformation. The research underscores the complexity and multifaceted nature of this bilateral relationship, emphasizing the need for Germany to discard outdated perceptions and for Ukraine to present a robust, long-term development strategy. This dynamic continues to evolve, shaping the broader geopolitical landscape and influencing the future of European integration and security. In this way, there is an important need for strong support from international allies to protect the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine. Membership in NATO and the EU are vital for Ukraine in the restoration phase and for future prospects as a democratic European nation.

2. The existential war with Russia underscores the vital importance of Ukraine’s accession to NATO. Our analysis has revealed that NATO integration not only enhances Ukraine’s security but also solidifies its status as a democratic European nation. Joining NATO offers Ukraine a security umbrella and a network of allies dedicated to upholding democratic principles and freedom. Despite persistent challenges, Ukraine’s steadfast commitment to NATO aligns with the interests of Western nations supporting its sovereignty. To make this aspiration a reality, Ukraine must continue its path of military and political reforms to foster stability and democracy within its borders. Germany, as a pivotal player in this evolving relationship, will undoubtedly play a crucial role

in advocating for Ukraine's NATO membership. Ultimately, Ukraine's journey toward NATO integration not only showcases its resilience but also serves as a beacon of hope for other nations striving for democracy and security in an increasingly multipolar world. Through such partnerships and alliances, Ukraine can secure its rightful place among the community of democratic nations, ensuring stability and peace in the European region.

3. Germany plays a pivotal role in Ukraine's aspirations for full NATO and EU membership, encompassing both military and economic aspects. The evolution of German-Ukrainian relations reflects a significant shift from an unequal footing marked by predominant economic interests, such as Germany's gas dependence on Russia, to a new paradigm centered on Germany's national security. This transformation is evident in Germany's suspension of the Nord Stream-2 pipeline project, contrary to economic interests, highlighting a commitment to broader European security. Germany's international posture concerning Ukraine has transitioned from indifference to robust military and economic support, including the acceptance of war refugees and individuals with temporary protection status within its borders.

4. The Russo-Ukrainian war has catalyzed a profound transformation in Germany's perception of its role in an evolving, multipolar world. Germany's new National Security Strategy, marking a pivotal shift in its geopolitical stance, underscores its commitment to robust security policies and support for Ukraine. This evolving relationship exemplifies the broader changes in international alliances and strategic priorities, reinforcing the need for continued cooperation and understanding of diverse member state perspectives within NATO. Chancellor Scholz's *Zeitenwende* speech marked a strategic reorientation of Germany's national security system, emphasizing a steadfast commitment to robust security policies. *Zeitenwende* signifies a pivotal shift in Germany's international politics, encompassing diverse challenges such as defense, energy, climate policy, economic competitiveness, and its economic model. This transformation is driven by Germany's changing energy landscape, the implications of climate policy, and its economic entanglements with authoritarian regimes, notably China. It also extends to Germany's approach to digitalization and technological progress (Scholz 2022). Consequently, the positive influence of the evolving German-Ukrainian relationship has translated into a more unified German political system and a prompt response to emerging global challenges.

5. Germany's approach to supporting Ukraine during the Russo-Ukrainian war has undergone a significant transformation, marked by substantial military and financial aid. Initially hesitant, Germany has emerged as Ukraine's

second-largest supporter, providing critical heavy weaponry and financial assistance, reflecting robust bipartisan support within the German government. However, despite these contributions, there remains scrutiny over the adequacy and timeliness of the aid, with experts pointing out the need for more decisive action and a clear strategic objective. The appointment of Boris Pistorius as defense minister has notably realigned Germany’s commitments with NATO’s requirements, underscoring a more proactive stance. Nevertheless, public opinion and political caution continue to influence Germany’s decisions, particularly regarding the provision of advanced military equipment such as fighter jets and long-range missiles. As Germany navigates these complexities, its evolving role highlights both the challenges and opportunities in shaping a unified response to global security threats.

6. Geopolitical changes, in particular Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, have caused significant changes in the perception of Ukraine as a member of the EU among both politicians and citizens of member states. Especially in recent weeks, i.e. in September 2023, EU representatives, including Ursula von der Leyen, The European Commission President, expressed strong support for Ukraine’s membership in the EU. So, what once seemed completely impossible has become possible. Ukraine is aware that it does not meet several membership requirements, but the EU has also understood that Ukraine is needed by the EU, both in the political and economic sense. Survey research shows that citizens of member states also look favourably at the possibility of EU enlargement. The prolonged war does not discourage them, on the contrary, after the Russian aggression, support for Ukraine’s accession aspirations has increased and remains at a high level, even in countries that were very skeptical in the past, such as Germany, France and Italy. It seems obvious that Ukraine will not be able to meet the membership requirements shortly because the goals of the economy in the state of war are different from those in peacetime. Nevertheless, the process of rebuilding the Ukrainian economy with wise support from the EU can accelerate and be mutually beneficial. All parties should meet somewhere along this path, guided by mutual understanding and trust.

In summary, Germany’s evolving relationship with Ukraine amid the backdrop of the Russo-Ukrainian war has not only reshaped its international stance but also contributed to its resilience and adaptability in a rapidly changing world. As Ukraine pursues its path toward NATO and EU membership, the unwavering support of Germany and its allies remains pivotal in ensuring stability and security in the European region.

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ABSTRACT

*This review paper aims to comprehensively analyze Germany-Ukraine relations in the context of Ukraine’s pursuit of NATO and EU membership amidst the ongoing conflict. It focuses on Germany’s shift from a pro-Russia stance to actively supporting Ukraine’s NATO and EU aspirations. While tensions persist between the two countries, Germany has become a crucial ally, aiding Ukraine in repelling the Russian invasion and strengthening its Western ties. The article explores the factors driving these contradictions and highlights Germany’s policy reevaluation in response to Russia’s actions in Ukraine, including implications for Ukraine’s NATO aspirations. It delves into Ukraine’s historical path towards NATO and EU integration, critically assessing the Normandy format and Minsk agreements in the evolving German-Ukraine relationship. The article also examines how the war has transformed Germany’s National Security System, as seen in Scholz’s *Zeitenwende* speech. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of Ukraine’s NATO and EU membership for its democratic future and security. The analysis of Germany and Ukraine’s relationships regarding NATO membership and EU integration is made until September 2023.*

The goal of the article is to provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of German-Ukraine relationships during the Russo-Ukrainian war, highlighting turning points from tensions to strong support while analyzing Ukraine’s path to membership in NATO and the EU.

To reveal this, we employed descriptive research methods commonly used by political scientists and economists, examining historical events, policy documents, and official statements to provide a nuanced understanding of this evolving relationship.



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Moskiewski łącznik Sieć Schrödera i droga Niemiec ku zależności

Tłumaczenie z niemieckiego Joanna Czudec

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Oprawa miękka

Niemcy przez wiele lat lekcewały zagrożenie, jakie dla bezpieczeństwa Europy stwarza Rosja rządzona przez Putina. Mimo ostrzeżeń ze strony sąsiadów wciąż zwiększały swoje uzależnienie od rosyjskiego gazu i ropy. Reinhard Bingener i Merkus Wehner we wnikliwym i pasjonującym reportażu udowadniają, że w znacznej mierze odpowiedzialność za ten największy błąd w niemieckiej polityce zagranicznej od momentu powstania RFN ponosi były kanclerz Gerhard Schröder wraz ze swoim otoczeniem polityczno-biznesowym. Sieć jego powiązań, jak piszą dziennikarze niemieckiej „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, obejmuje „nie tylko niemieckich socjaldemokratów, ale też menadżerów, przedsiębiorców i zagranicznych polityków oraz ludzi z szemraną przeszłością. Sięga od spotkań na szczycie z udziałem światowych przywódców do dyskretnych schadzek, od miliardów, którymi obraca się w międzynarodowym biznesie gazowym, do strumieni pieniędzy z co prawda mniejszą liczbą zer, ale wciąż znaczących. Trafimy tu na ważne urzędy, polityczne ideały, napuszone tytuły i malujące rzeczywistość na różowo książki”.

Jest to pierwsza książka z nowej serii Instytutu Zachodniego Speculum. Celem serii jest wprowadzenie do polskiego obiegu prac – poświęconych historii, kulturze, gospodarce, społeczeństwu i polityce Niemiec – reprezentujących nowe spojrzenie na problemy i zagadnienia, wokół których koncentruje się debata publiczna w tym kraju.