

The Impact of the Russian War Against Ukraine on the EaP Region: UKRAINE

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The last months of the Russian war against Ukraine were characterized by three major trends: Russian defeats on the battlefield; invincible will from the Ukrainians to continue resistance despite missile attacks; even stronger support from the side of key international actors for Ukraine. The first trend is that the Ukrainian army has demonstrated a significant ability to defeat the enemy on the battlefield. The retreat of Russian troops in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions inspired Ukrainians to continue their struggle. At this moment, according to Ukraine's General Staff, [Russian losses have reached 93,390 soldiers](#).

The second trend is that Russia has shifted the approaches of its military actions, where the main target of strikes has become the energy and power infrastructure of Ukraine. At the time of preparation of this analysis, since October 10, 2022, there have been eight waves of missile strikes directed at Ukraine's power grid – each strike contained [no fewer than 100 missiles](#). Constant power outages indicate that the situation in the energy sector is in critical condition. No matter how successfully Ukraine's air defense works, it is not able to prevent mass attacks to 100 percent. However, if Russia expected to destroy the Ukrainian will to resist through its new strikes, it miscalculated: attacks against the civilian sector mobilized citizens even more to continue their struggle until the total defeat of Russia. [86% of Ukrainians](#) are in favor of continued resistance and not making any concessions in response to the “terrorist practices” of the enemy.

The third trend is firm and unwavering external support. The international community, which at a certain period reportedly began to send ambiguous messages about the need to resume negotiation process, acknowledged that Russia is actually pretending to be ready for a diplomatic settlement, demanding in fact the complete surrender of Ukraine. Putin's actions have already received a fairly clear classification as “terrorist” in its nature. The resolutions of the [NATO Parliamentary Assembly](#) and the [European Parliament](#) became a symbolic political assessment of terrorism sponsorship committed by Russia in Ukraine.

The war continues to cause terrible harm to Ukraine, official statistics can only reflect this tragic reality to a certain extent: it is not always possible to determine the true numbers of victims or the scale of damage, which are constantly changing. Below are just a few official figures that are available as of now. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported [6,595 civilian deaths during the Russian invasion](#) as of November 20, 2022 (including 415 children). [More than 3,000](#) civilians died during the eight-year war waged by Russia in eastern Ukraine. In general, [Ukraine will need at least 350 billion dollars](#) to recover from the devastating damage caused by the Russian invasion and its missile strikes. As a result of Russian attacks on the Ukrainian energy infrastructure, the losses of the electricity transmission system operator *Ukrenergo* exceed [1.8 bln Euros](#).

The international community, albeit with considerable delay, has launched a spectacular campaign to help Ukraine in countering Russian aggression. In nine months, financial, humanitarian and military aid was allocated in the total amount of [more than €50 billion](#). However massive this number looks it is plainly insufficient, especially considering that Russia is mobilizing more resources for its deathful attacks. The problem is that Western governments face their own budgetary or political challenges in providing emergency aid to Ukraine.

From the first days of the war, the leadership of Ukraine emphasized three main expectations that should ensure the resilience of the state. The first is the provision of weapons that have already helped Ukrainians carry out successful counter-offensives. The second is to punish Russia through tough sanctions and other political and economic measures. The third is the necessary means to support Ukrainian economy and to recover the state. After the wave of massive attacks on the energy infrastructure Kyiv underlined the need for more supplies of air defense systems, as well as generators and transformers to save Ukrainians from the cold winter.

The Ukrainian authorities [continue to emphasize](#) their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, but at the same time they do not accept the language of ultimatums chosen by Russia. Moscow, declaring its desire to reach a truce through negotiations, openly claims its interest in concessions from Ukraine, which are tantamount to an utter capitulation. Ukraine's stance in this regard is logical, grounded, and legitimate, and based on international law and its doubtless successes on the battlefield. In particular, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced the '*peace formula*' consisting of ten articles. The [fundamentals of the Ukrainian vision of peace](#) call for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Ukraine, the creation of a tribunal on the crime of Russian aggression against Ukraine, the provision of security guarantees and some others.

The expected challenges for the next year will remain essentially identical but on a larger scale. Ukrainians will continue to need extensive support in the military and political sphere. Officials in Kyiv especially emphasize that Germany and the USA need to unblock the supply of modern tanks to Ukraine, which would be a significant game changer in the war. Backing the Ukrainian economy, which is plummeting at a record pace, will be indispensable as well. According to the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the drop in GDP in Ukraine is estimated at [30 per cent](#). Reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure will require significant resources Ukraine itself cannot provide.

Last but not least, Ukraine's nearest future has to be marked by reformist efforts necessary for its European integration. Next year is crucial in Kyiv's ambition to open accession negotiations with the European Union. The New Europe Center initiated the process of independent evaluation of the government's reformist efforts to meet 7 EU recommendations accompanying the June decision on granting Ukraine candidate status. As of now, the situation with the implementation steps looks rather mixed: in some areas, progress is noticeable (for example, there are positive dynamics in fighting corruption), but in other areas, more decisive steps are needed (in particular, in the field of judicial reform). Experts' assessment '[Candidate Check](#)' showed the government's efforts in carrying out pro-European reforms can be estimated at 4.7 points out of the 10 highest, which is quite a good indicator, but not sufficient for Kyiv's self-proclaimed ambition to open accession negotiations as soon as possible. Government representatives admit that they face the following main challenges: lack of an institutional capacity (parliament's work is limited due to security conditions); scarcity of sectoral specialists for the proper translation of draft laws into English; certain EU recommendations are spelled out in a rather vague manner, which may allow the European Commission to prolong the assessment process. Last but not least, Ukraine's progress depends to large extent on the speed of work of the institutions in the EU itself, which are supposed to evaluate Ukrainian efforts. Officials in Kyiv fear that the EU will deliberately delay the process in order to postpone the difficult decisions regarding accession negotiations. Meanwhile, Ukraine insists that the EU adhere to an honest merit-based approach and has expressed the idea that Ukraine's joining of the Single Market and the Four Freedoms can be a [significant intermediate stage on the way to membership](#).