

Expert survey results

“Eastern Europe Regional Security System: Place and Engagement of Ukraine”

Since the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, the geopolitical and security situation in Eastern Europe and in Europe as a whole has changed. For more than three years, it has not improved and even had a tendency to gradual aggravation that was proved during the Russian-Belarusian military exercises "West-2017". A security vacuum emerged after the collapse of the collective security system in Eastern Europe, despite continued efforts of the OSCE, the EU, NATO and even the UN.

Experts from Ukraine and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe assessed the security situation in the Eastern European region within the survey conducted by the Centre for Global Studies “Strategy XXI” in partnership with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Office Ukraine¹.

Assessing the factors that marked dramatic changes of the security situation in the Eastern European region for last 10 years, two thirds of respondents – 68.8 per cent - considered that the annexation of Crimea by Russia was the primary one (several answers were allowed). Among other main factors experts also mentioned: the war in Georgia in 2008 (56.3 per cent); the unleashed by Russia war on Donbas (37.5 per cent); Putin’s speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007 (31.3 per cent); unclear EU policy to the East (25 per cent); separation of Kosovo (18.8 per cent); refusal to give MAP to Ukraine and Georgia at the NATO Bucharest Summit in 2008 (18.8 per cent).

This means that changes in the Eastern European region were provoked by violation of the international law and order by Russia. Correspondently, 68.6 per cent estimated that the key cause of the deterioration of the security situation in the region was Russia’s aggressive policy, while 12.5 per cent - weakness of key universal international organizations - the UN, OSCE and CoE (Fig.1).



Fig.1. What is the key cause of the deterioration of the security situation in Eastern Europe?

The defined key cause of insecurity in Eastern Europe remains actual even today. According to the surveyed experts (several answers were allowed), the main current problems for the security in the region are: occupation and annexation of Crimea by Russia (56.3 per cent); protracted conflicts

¹ The expert survey was held in the period from October 27 to November 08, 2017, and involved 16 respondents.

(43.8 per cent); Russian invasion into Donbas (43.8 per cent); unstable domestic political situation in some Eastern European countries (37.5 per cent); uncontrolled by governments / occupied territories (25 per cent); militarization of the region (25 per cent); bureaucratization of the EU and NATO institutions (18.8 per cent); information warfare (18.8 per cent).

As a result, Russia (with 10 points) was regarded as a country, which had the main influence on the security situation in Eastern Europe. Among countries, the most influential security players in Eastern Europe were also named Ukraine (8), the USA (8), Poland (6), Germany (4), Turkey (2) and Romania (2).

In addition to countries of the Eastern European region, such international organizations as the European Union and NATO also influence the security situation, although they are mostly concentrated on security of their member countries. 87.5 per cent of respondents believe that deepening of the EU-NATO security cooperation can ameliorate the security situation in Eastern Europe, and only 12.5 per cent have an opposite opinion (Fig.2).

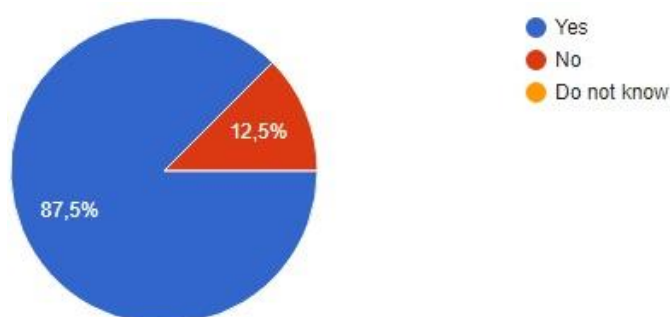


Fig.2. Can deepening of the EU-NATO security cooperation ameliorate the security situation in Eastern Europe?

The majority of the surveyed experts estimated that NATO should play a key role in the regional security in Eastern Europe in forms of NATO enlargement to the East, strengthening NATO role in the region and/or development of special partnership with NATO. According to respondents, the EU should also play an active security role by strengthening sanctions against Russia, decreasing dependence on Russian energy resources, assistance to the countries of the region in strengthening their national resilience and dealing with security challenges.

The respondents generally support the idea of establishing a new regional security format but without Russia and under the EU/NATO umbrella.

While answering the question what is the place and role of Ukraine in the Eastern European security system, almost all surveyed experts called Ukraine a security provider for Eastern Europe, a key component and a main player of the European security, a new Eastern European pillar of the Transatlantic security, an Eastern outpost against new challenges and threats with a key role in deterring Russian aggressive policy and demonstrating an alternative to Russia model of development for other states from the post-Soviet area. Ukraine becomes an example and a source of experience of countering all types of hybrid warfare. Thus, settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict would help strengthening the regional security in Eastern Europe.