



# YOUTH LUBLIN TRIANGLE



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STUDY OF THE POTENTIAL

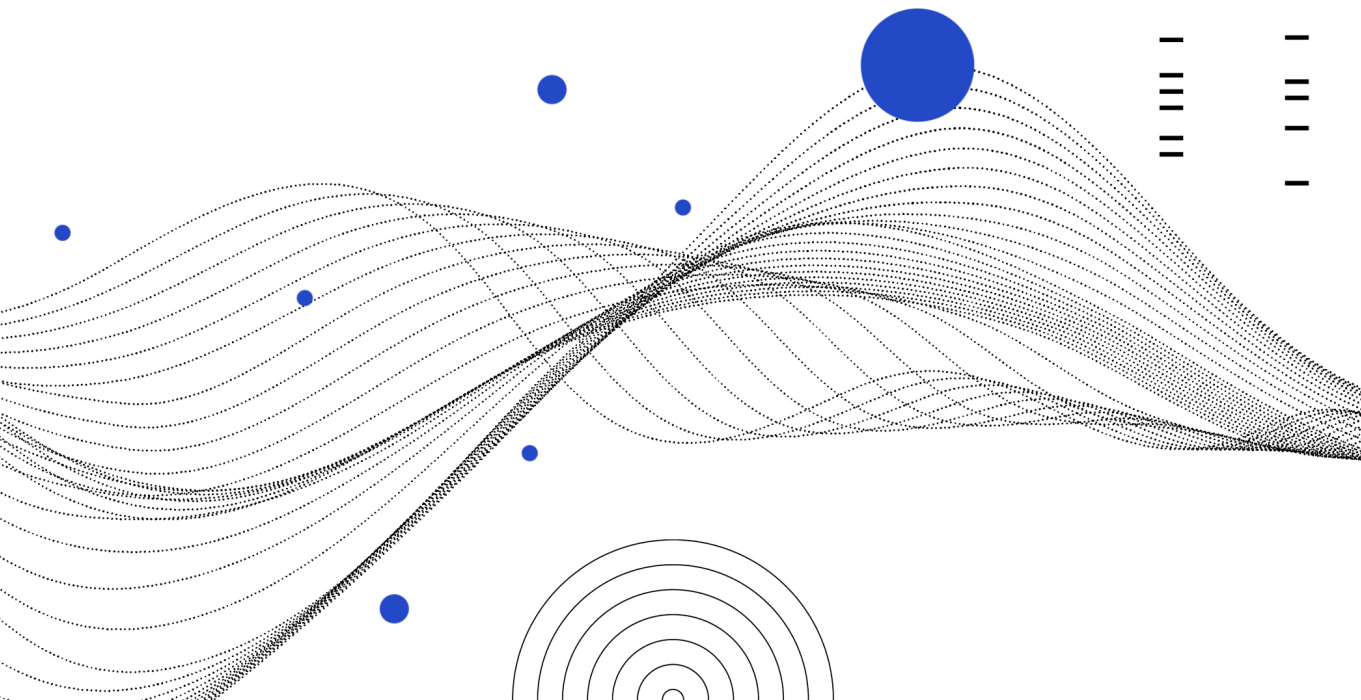
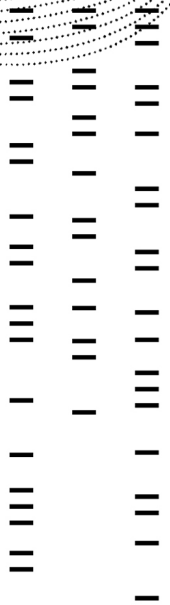


Public Diplomacy  
**PLATFORM**

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**KONRAD  
ADENAUER  
STIFTUNG**





## **Tim B. Peters**

**Head of office, Konrad Adenauer  
Foundation in Ukraine (Kyiv)**

**Dear friends,**

**Ukraine's path to successful European and Euro-Atlantic integration is not easy. All the more important in these conditions are joint initiatives designed to help Ukraine on this track, upholding common values and principles. This is exactly the initiative of the Lublin Triangle: it is a new format of cooperation between Ukraine and two of its European friends - Lithuania and Poland. All three are united by many common, sometimes ambiguous, pages of history, a difficult path to independence as well as realization of their own aspirations within the European community — accomplished for Poland and Lithuania, and perspective for Ukraine. It is especially important when such initiatives are of interest to the youth, because it is the young people who have been the driving force behind many key historical processes. They determine, where Ukraine, Europe and the whole world will move. Youth exchanges between Germany and France after the Second World War laid a solid foundation not only for reconciliation between the two peoples, but also for the strengthening of European integration. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation has always supported committed young people who want to change their country for the better in the spirit of democracy, freedom and respect for human rights. Therefore, we are convinced that the interaction of active youth from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania can give a new impetus to Ukraine's European integration aspirations and complete the official formats of cooperation between the countries within the Lublin Triangle. This research, conducted by the student organization "Public Diplomacy Platform", is aimed at studying the prospects of such important interaction.**



## **Denys Ganzha**

**Founder of the Public  
Diplomacy Platform**

**The last 6 years have become special in Ukrainian history. We, Ukrainian youth living in challenging times of changes, do understand the importance of developing Ukraine's cooperation with partners. Therefore, we decided to conduct a study of the potential of youth cooperation within the framework of the Lublin Triangle. This initiative of the three countries is crucial in the context of Ukraine's formation as a strong player on the geopolitical map of Europe. Moreover, having reliable partners, such as Poland and Lithuania, it will be easier for us to resist Russian aggression, which has been going on for almost 7 years. Youth is the driving force of changes and this is us who will soon have to deal with the problems of our countries. The sooner we start creating reliable platforms for collaboration and networking, the more we can achieve in the future when our generation stands on the forefront of the three countries. The main purpose of our research is to show that we need to create a powerful organisation that will become an "umbrella" for the joint activities of all youth initiatives as soon as possible. Our task is to create an organization that will unite the young leaders of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania and will work closely with governments to promote the common interests of youth by the end of 2021.**

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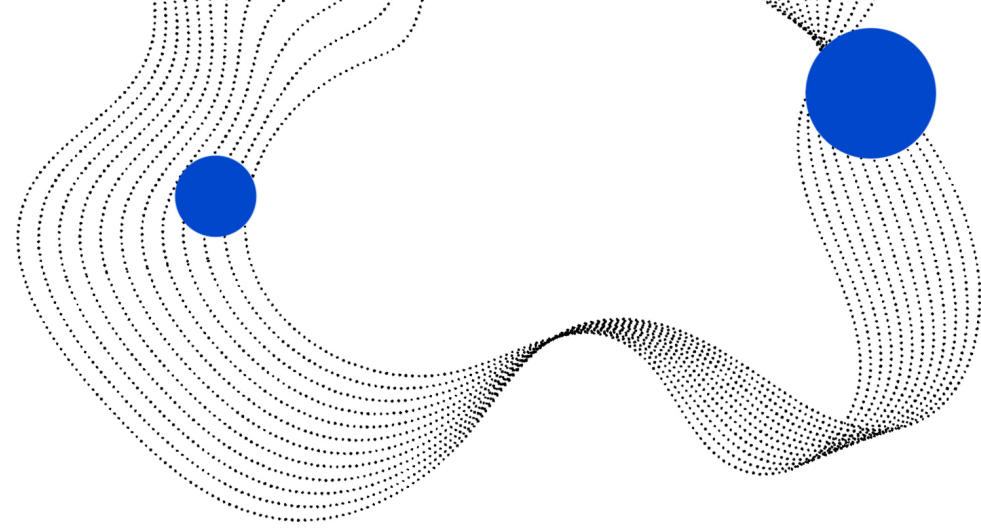
**“The Lublin Triangle is a political choice and an association of like-minded people. Two of its three parties are members of the EU and NATO, and the third one is on its way to membership. All three states have no illusions about Russia’s aggressive policy that poses a threat to them. By the way, that former Lublin Union was created, in particular, to counter Moscow’s expansion to the West, and it handled this task for a long time. In the new Lublin Triangle, there are no discussions about the need to resist Russian aggression, as well as about Ukraine’s future in NATO and the EU. The positive answer of the three countries to all these matters is reflected in the declaration”, — Dmytro Kuleba.**

Reliable partners are the key to a successful foreign policy and the driving force of diplomatic relations. Deepening cooperation between Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland will be the leitmotif of the Lublin Triangle, as well as the basis for the formation of new ties and areas of cooperation. Thus, this initiative is a promising platform for interaction not only at the government level, but at the public level as well.

Given that the future development of countries and international initiatives depends on the active engagement of young people, it is the creation of the youth wing of the Lublin Triangle that can become a logical continuation of the interstate initiative. This platform will not only ensure the participation of young people in social and political life of the countries but also will positively influence the development of Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian relations through youth diplomacy and will contribute to the development of European integration processes in Ukraine.

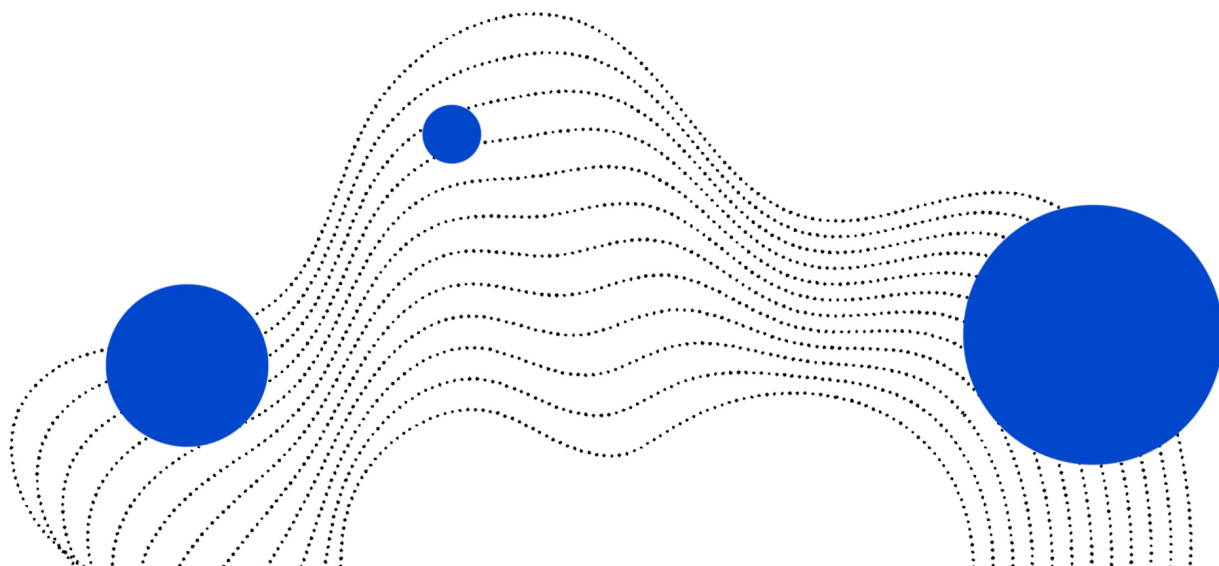
The NGO “Public Diplomacy Platform” with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ukraine conducted a research to determine the prospects for the creation of the Youth Lublin Triangle, as well as to study the current state of youth cooperation between the three countries, analyze youth policy and relations between Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania through the prism of a common historical past. We were supported by various public organisations and three youth councils — the National Youth Council of Ukraine, the Polish Council of Youth Organisations and the Lithuanian Council of Youth Organisations.

The practical result of the research was a detailed description of possible cooperation mechanisms of the Youth Lublin Triangle, which can be implemented during the commencement of the initiative. In particular, the results obtained can be used to compile and establish the statute of the potential youth wing of the Lublin Triangle.



**1.1** HISTORICAL EVENTS BEFORE 1991:  
FROM THE BIRTH OF STATEHOOD  
TO INDEPENDENCE

**1.2** MODERN HISTORY SINCE 1991:  
FORMATS OF INTERACTION,  
PROSPECTS, PECULIARITIES OF  
THE STATE OF THE COUNTRIES



# SECTION 1

HISTORY OF RELATIONS  
BETWEEN UKRAINE,  
POLAND AND LITHUANIA

# INTRODUCTION

Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine are the three countries of Central and Eastern Europe whose history of relations reflects the European civilisation's development in the East of this part of the world. United by geographical proximity, foreign policy threats and a common socio-cultural tradition, they have a complex history of development and coexistence. For centuries, these countries have participated in the major armed conflicts and disturbances in Central and East Europe. They have been the permanent victims of foreign aggression, devastating wars and sweeping political, economic and social transformations.

Over centuries of coexistence, relations between the three countries have undergone many examples of confrontation and cooperation. It is one of the paradoxes of Central and Eastern European history and modernity: regional relations within the Baltic-Black Sea arc are characterised by the simultaneous presence of cooperation and conflicts. Important to note that such contradictions are also indicated among other key countries of the Baltic-Black Sea arc: Belarus and Moldova, which had been included in common political

and socio-economic processes for a long time, but whose paths of development in the late twentieth century followed different directions. The main reason for this tendency is some peculiarities of the historical development of the region, among which are the borderland status with constant mobility of state and ethnic borders; clashes between several key confessions in the region and weak democratic traditions continuing until the end of the twentieth century. Thus, the "Gateway of Europe" (according to S. Plohij's concept) was always more of a windy corridor than of the impregnable walls. Constant internal conflicts characterised the Limitrophic-border zone of the periphery of European (Western) civilisation and, at the same time, the defence of the European frontier against external aggression (whether it was Mongol or Russian invasion). It determined the great mobility of the borders of the "European frontier", whose heterogeneous population was forced to coexist together, cherishing common norms of confessional, class and ethnic tolerance. We will learn if they were able to do this from an excursion into the past of Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian relations.

## SUBSECTION 1

### HISTORICAL EVENTS BEFORE 1991: FROM THE BIRTH OF STATEHOOD TO INDEPENDENCE

#### STATEHOOD ESTABLISHMENT OF KYIVAN RUS, THE KINGDOM OF POLAND AND THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA. FORMATION OF THE UNIFIED POLITICAL SYSTEM

The emergence of states in the three nations took place during the Middle Ages. For Poland, it was the second half of the 10th century, when Prince Mieszko founded the Polish state. For Rus-Ukraine, it was the second half of the 11th century (Scandinavian Vikings' rise to power in Kyiv and the beginning of the unification of the eastern Slavs). In Lithuania, inception of the State occurred in the 13th century, when Prince Mindaugas united most of the Lithuanian lands under his rule. At the same time, all three countries converted to Christianity – Poland in 966, in 988 – Kyivan Rus, in 1387 – The Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Poles and Lithuanians embraced the Catholic faith, while Rus-Ukraine adopted the Eastern version of Christianity – Orthodoxy. It had a radical impact on their culture and mutual relations in the future: whereas Poles and Lithuanians had no fundamental conflict with each other on confessional matters, the religious confrontation between Orthodox Ruthenians-Ukrainians and Catholics-Polesians regularly influenced their relations.



Polish Christianization (Catholicism)



Christianization of Kyivan Rus (Orthodoxy)

Relations between the three states were not progressing easily. During the flourishing of Kyivan Rus (late 10th to mid-11th centuries), its princes waged aggressive campaigns against the Polish and Lithuanian lands. When Rus was growing weaker, Poland and Lithuania paid back. After the Mongol-Tatar invasion, which destroyed the civilisational and cultural unity of Kievan Rus and caused immense demographic and economic damage, Lithuania started its "velvet" invasion of Rus' lands. Already during the reign of Prince Gedimin, the Belarusian principalities were captured by Lithuania. Under its successor Olgerd South-Western Rus was freed from the yoke of the Horde: a united army of Rus and Lithuania defeated the Mongol-Tatar forces in the Battle of Blue Waters in 1362. At the same time, due to the disintegration of the principality of Galicia-Volhynia, the last echo of the former Rus' power, the Polish kingdom began its expansion. Eventually, it was divided between Poland, which received eastern Galicia and western Podolia, and Lithuania, which obtained the vast majority of the lands of former Kyivan Rus.

The newly created Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus and Zhemaitia consisted mostly of Ukrainian and Belarusian lands. The official language was Old East Slavic, the administrative apparatus remained the same, and the legal system was based on the "Rus' Justice", the prototype of the future three Lithuanian Statutes.

The Union of Krewo in 1385, which united Lithuania and Poland under one king, began the process of Lithuanian catholicization. At the same time, Poles attempted to extend their authority over all Ruthenian-Lithuanian lands for the first time. During the further Unions in 1401 and 1413, civil wars within Lithuania and conflicts with Polish forces, the Ukrainian lands gradually lost their autonomy. Finally, they were transformed into voivodeships in the second half of the fifteenth century.

However, elements of mutually beneficial cooperation are also worth noting. Thus, in 1399 Lithuanians and Ruthenians fought together against the Tatars on the Vorskla River. Another example of coordinated cooperation was the battle of Grunwald (1410) – the decisive battle of the Great War (1409-1411).

The alliance of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania under the leadership of King Wladyslaw II Jagiello and Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania gained a decisive victory over the army of the Teutonic Order. The allied forces included a considerable number of Ruthenians from the Lviv Voivodeship, as well as from the lands of Northern Ukraine and Belarus. On the other hand, the Poles, Lithuanians and Ruthenians were threatened by Moscow. During the wars with the Muscovites in the sixteenth century, these nations fought together. The Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian coalition, led by the Orthodox Prince Konstantin Ostrozhsy, achieved an especially resounding victory at Orsha in 1514.

Due to the constant attacks by the Crimean Khanate and the gradual enslavement of the peasantry, the phenomenon of the Cossacks emerged in the Ukrainian lands. The first Zaporizhian Sich on Khortytsia Island was built by “Ukrainian condottiere on Lithuanian service” Dmitry Baida-Vyshnevetsky in 1556. The first official register of the Cossacks was formed in 1572 – the Polish crown hired them on regular military service, paying salary and guaranteeing the rights and freedoms. Subsequently, the Cossacks became a powerful force in both foreign and domestic politics of Poland and Lithuania. Moreover, the Zaporozhian Cossacks were the ones who formed the modern Ukrainian statehood and the fundamental Ukrainian historical myth.

While the Ukrainian lands were part of Lithuania and Poland, Ukrainians joined Western culture, philosophy, religious and political thought. Renaissance and Reformation tendencies were directly reflected in the works of such Ukrainian thinkers as Yuriy Drohobych, Pavlo Rusyn, Stanislaw Orzechowski, Ivan Vyshenskyi, Meletius Smotrytsky, Lawrentij Zyzanij and the others. The Magdeburg law, humanism and anthropocentrism were spreading to the Ukrainian lands. Many Ruthenian-Ukrainians were educated in universities in Italy, France, England, Germany and later in the leading cities of Bohemia (modern Czech Republic), Poland and Lithuania: Prague, Krakow and Vilnius. The first Slavic-Greek-Latin and Jesuit schools were founded and the institution of teaching was formed. Later an attempt to unite the Catholic and Orthodox churches within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by the conclusion of the Union of Brest in 1596 took place. At first, it would lead to a conflict between Ukrainians and Poles, but later it became the main institution for mutual understanding and preserving national identity in the western Ukrainian lands.

## THE UNION OF LUBLIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 16TH — 17TH CENTURIES

In the Modern Age, Poles, Ukrainians and Lithuanians became part of one state – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth formed as a result of the Union of Lublin in 1569. But actually, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a federation of two countries – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. The rights and interests of the Orthodox Ruthenians-Ukrainians mainly weren't considered. Lithuania, which had found itself in difficulties in the Livonian war with the Moscow Kingdom (1558-1583), became the initiator of the new union. Thus, the factor of the external threat was again the main reason for deepening the mutual integration of the three nations.



The illustration "The Union of Lublin" by Jan Matejko, 1869

During the joint Polish-Lithuanian Sejm in Lublin, where the provisions of the union were discussed, the Ukrainian nobility, taking advantage of the difficult position of the Lithuanians and seeking equal rights with the Polish nobility, decided to incorporate the provinces into the Polish Crown.

After conclusion of the Union and including the vast majority of southwestern provinces of Rus to Poland, a process of large-scale penetration of Polish culture, language and religion into Ukrainian lands began. The local population and elite were under increasing pressure – for example, the Orthodox were forced to convert to Catholicism to receive an access to quality education and the prospect of better social standing. Eventually, this led to growing tension between the Ukrainian population and the Polish nobility and government, who began to inhabit the Ukrainian lands after 1569.

Despite the significant conflicts and confrontations, in times of external threats, Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians came together and fought back against the common enemy. It was most noticeable during the rule of Petro Konashevych Sahaidachny in Zaporizhian Sich. Being aware of the threat of the Ottoman Empire and its vassals not only to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but also to Europe, the King and the Sejm de facto supported Cossacks' attacks against Turkey. It was the beginning of the 17th century, when the Cossack troops inflicted a crushing blow to the possessions of the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Porte, holding back the Turkish onslaught on Europe and earning themselves the fame of the leading warriors of the Christian world.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, however, also had other powerful external enemies. During the war with Moscow from 1609 to 1618, the joint Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian forces fought together. Allied forces, whose Ukrainian units were commanded by kish otaman Sahaidachny, stormed Moscow. The war resulted in the return of the ethnic Rus' lands – Smolensk and Chernihiv-Severia – to the Polish-Lithuanian state.

The Ukrainian Cossacks led by Sahaidachny provided the greatest assistance to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Khotyn war in 1620-1621. After the major defeat of the Republican forces by the Turks at Tutora in 1620, the authorities asked the Cossacks for help. In the Battle of Khotyn (1621) the Ukrainians' participation was decisive in the defeating Turkish troops and preserving the independence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The victory at Khotyn significantly slowed down the Ottoman expansion to Europe and strengthened the status of the Ukrainian Cossacks as a powerful military force.

However, while the cooperation between the three nations in the foreign policy area was growing, the confrontation in the domestic arena intensified. The final enslavement of the Ukrainian peasants according to the III Statute of Lithuania in 1588 was a time bomb for the internal political situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The increase of the social oppression made the peasants flee to the south – to the new settlements, free from serfdom – or directly to the Sich. The uprisings in the 1590s were the first harbingers of popular discontent. Further, following the end of the Sahaidachny rules (the time of fruitful cooperation between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth authorities and the Ukrainian Cossacks), the Cossacks faced new restrictions in 1625-1638, which was followed by new rebellions. Almost all of them ended with defeat. The "Ordination of the Zaporozhian Host" in 1638 placed further restrictions on Cossacks' rights and freedoms. The "Golden Decade", which replaced several uprisings, proved to be deceptive. Privileged conditions for the new frontier settlements were coming to an end, which meant extending the serfdom to them. The Cossacks, for their part, were not going to accept the restrictions of the Ordination for long either.

The uprising led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky, which broke out in early 1648, was radically different from all the previous ones. The simple Cossack uprising quickly engulfed most of the Ukrainian lands and grew to the real civil war. Peasants smashed lordly estates, killed Catholic nobles and Jews and expelled Polish officials. The magnates and nobles responded to the insurgents with the same brutality. It was a tragic page in our common history.

Having secured the support of the Crimean Khanate, Khmelnytskyi was able to inflict several significant defeats on the Polish-Lithuanian forces. It led to the rebirth of Ukrainian statehood in the form of the Zaporizhian Host, autonomy within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was confirmed by The Treaty of Zboriv (1649) and The Treaty of Bila Tserkva (1651). The formation of Cossacks' statehood took place right after signing The Peace of Westphalia which has drawn the line under the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) in Europe and laid a foundation for the first system of international relationships, which was the demonstrative fact. In other words, the Ukrainians had a chance to become a full-fledged subject in the new system of international relations.

However, the authorities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were not going to put up with the emergence of Cossack autonomy. The war continued, but the Crimean Khanate proved an unreliable ally, so Khmelnytskyi was forced to turn to The Tsardom of Russia for help. In addition to this, the alliance with Moscow was facilitated by the orthodox faith shared by the Ruthenians-Ukrainians and Muscovites. After long negotiations in January 1654 at the Pereyaslav Council, the hetman and the forefathers swore allegiance to the Moscow tsar. The transition of Zaporizhzhia armies under the protection of Moscow was legally issued in the form of the "March articles". Thus, Moscow had legal grounds and real opportunities to interfere in the internal conflict between the three nations.

The war, erupted with renewed vigour, only worsened the situation as for the Ukrainians as for the Poles and Lithuanians. Until his death, Bogdan Khmelnytsky tried to find a new ally for fighting against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The leading contender after Moscow was Sweden, whose forces invaded Poland and quickly seized most of its territory. The Lithuanians defected to the side of the interventionists, and the joint Swedish-Moscow-Lithuanian-Cossack coalition fought against the Poles. However, unprecedented patriotic enthusiasm, the Truce of Vilna and the beginning of the Moskovian-Swedish War and other international events allowed Polish forces to liberate the vast majority of their ethnic territories within a year and focus again on the fight against the rebellious Ukrainians.

After Khmelnytskyi died in 1657, Ivan Vygovsky took power over the Zaporozhian Host and made decisive steps towards reconciliation with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He signed the Treaty of Gadyach in 1658 that transformed dualistic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into a federation of three peoples and envisaged the creation of the "Grand Duchy of Rus" in its eastern outskirts – an equal partner to the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania within one state. For the first time, Catholics (Poles and Lithuanians) declared their readiness to recognise the Orthodox Ukrainians as equals. Relevant provisions were included in the text of the treaty. However, the Polish-Lithuanian Sejm ratified the treaty in a very abridged version, which caused discontent among the Cossacks' leadership. In addition to this, the restoration of the serfdom turned the broad masses of the Ukrainian population against the Treaty of Hadiach. Therefore, in a few months, a civil war broke out in the Cossack Hetmanate, the Zaporizhian army split for the first time along the Dnieper. Moscow declared war on Vyhovsky.

The hard times of the Ruin began, characterised by devastating wars on Ukrainian lands, involving Poland, Lithuania, the Kingdom of Moscow, Turkey and its satellites. During that period the Cossack Hetmanate was finally split into several parts and had two, three or even more hetmans at the same time, supported by one or another external force. As a result of several decades of bloody confrontation, Right-Bank Ukraine was devastated, and the parts of the once united Zaporozhian Host on both banks of the Dnieper gradually lost their autonomy.

The Ruin period ended in 1686 with the "Treaty of Eternal Peace" between Moscow and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Due to the Treaty of Smolensk, Left-Bank Ukraine, the Zaporozhian Sich and Kyiv were withdrawn to the Russian side, while the Right-Bank remained part of Poland. Thus, the international political situation in Central and Eastern Europe changed dramatically. Moscow proved to be the main beneficiary of a bloody era of almost four decades of continuous warfare. Having seized a part of the Ukrainian lands, Moscow became much stronger, which allowed it to pursue the idea of "gathering the Russian lands". In turn, enormous demographic, territorial and economic losses undermined the power of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Following the devastation of Right-Bank Ukraine during Ruin, it became a kind of 'neutral line' between Poland and Moscow. Over time, the Cossacks began to settle down there again. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth government did not like it and therefore demanded that the Cossacks leave the land or accept the rule of the nobility. In 1702, an uprising led by Semen Paliy broke out on the Right-Bank. Almost at the same time, the Swedish army led by Charles XII invaded the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Polish forces were defeated, territories were occupied, and the Swedish protege was placed on the throne. Hetman Ivan Mazepa took advantage of it, briefly managing to reunite most of the Ukrainian lands on both sides of the Dnieper. To preserve the autonomy of The Cossack Hetmanate in 1708 Mazepa signed the treaty with Charles XII that made the Zaporozhian Host transfer under the protectorate of Sweden.

However, the defeat of the Swedes at the Battle of Poltava (and later in the Northern War as a whole) nullified Mazepa's efforts. The Muscovy's victory, which turned it on the Russian Empire, meant the removal of Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the list of great-powered states and further elimination of Ukrainian autonomy for both the Cossack Hetmanate and the Zaporozhian Sich. At that point Russia had a decisive voice not only in choosing the Cossack hetmans, but also the kings of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

### THREE EMPIRES – THREE PEOPLES? THE DEMISE OF THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH. ASSIMILATION AND NATIONAL REVIVAL IN THE 19TH CENTURY

After the Polish War of Succession (1733-1735) the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became so weak that it depended on the "Three Black Eagles", namely the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Kingdom of Prussia.

"Poland fell – and we were crushed" – wrote the prominent Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko. Thus, the Haidamaka uprising in 1786 ("Koliivshchyna") gave a cause for the invasion of Russian troops and The First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Trying to save the country, Czartoryski princes' family, King Stanislaw August Poniatowski and later – the Four-year Sejm attempted to reform the country, turning it into a powerful modern monarchy, capable of resisting external threats.

However, coalition of magnates, who did not want to lose their privileges, repeatedly hindered their efforts.

Despite these failures, patriotic and reformist circles still managed to adopt the Constitution of 3rd May 1791 – the first in Europe and the second in the world. It was influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, the American and French Revolutions. The Constitution of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth transformed it into a unitary state, reinforced the central authority and the state apparatus, strengthened their power and enlarged the rights and freedoms of the citizens. However, it was not meant to be fulfilled. In 1793, unwilling to make the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth stronger, Russia and Prussia divided the country again.



The illustration of The Second Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

In 1794, the national uprising erupted in Poland. It was led by Tadeusz Kosciuszko — the hero of the American Revolutionary War. The insurgents protested against foreign encroachments on the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic and they also supported reforms of the Four-year Sejm and the 3rd May Constitution. The movement quickly spread to Polish and Lithuanian ethnic lands. The Ukrainians, however, did not support the rebels, as they did not see it in their interests to restore Polish rule. The same year, the uprising was crushed by joint efforts of Russian and Prussian troops. Moreover, during The Third Partition in 1795, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth disappeared from the political map of the world. At that time not only Ukrainians, but also Poles and Lithuanians lost their statehood. The Lithuanian lands were almost entirely part of Russia, as well as most of the Ukrainian, and the Polish territories were predominantly part of Austria and Prussia.

Until the end of the 18th century, Russia conquered the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, abolished the autonomy of The Cossack Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine and destroyed the Zaporozhian Sich. The absolute majority of Ukrainian peasants became serfs. The Crimean Khanate was also absorbed into the Russian Empire.

During the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, Poles seized the opportunity to restore their statehood in the form of the Duchy of Warsaw. Supporting France, a great number of Poles fought in the ranks of Napoleon's forces. After Napoleon's defeat and the Congress of Vienna, most of Polish lands (with Warsaw) were ceded to the Russian Empire in the form of the autonomous entity, the 'Kingdom of Poland'.

In 1830, a new Polish national uprising erupted and quickly engulfed the Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian lands. While Lithuanians and the local Catholic nobility supported the Polish uprising, the Ukrainian and Belarusian peasantry remained largely indifferent. The main idea of the uprising, namely to revive the Polish-Lithuanian state "from sea to sea", however, was stranger to the Ukrainians. After the defeat of the rebellion in 1831, most of the Polish autonomy was abolished. The uprising in 1863-1864, despite partial support from the Ukrainians and Belarussians, had the same result.

At the same time, in the 19th century some foundations for national revival and future mutual understanding between the peoples were laid. Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, underground Masonic lodges operated on the Right-Bank Ukraine, which later joined the Decembrist movement. Its members professed Slavophile views. For example, members of the "Society of United Slavs", the "Little Russian Society" and other similar groups proposed the creation of a common Slavic (con)federation to liberate the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe from the oppression of empires, primarily from the Russian one.

The most significant Ukrainian representatives of Slavophile ideas were the members of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius (1845-1847) – Taras Shevchenko, Panteleimon Kulish, Mykola Kostomarov and others. The Slavic federation and the Brotherhood were the first ones, who articulated the idea of Ukrainian independence.

Poles continued the tradition of the democratisation of the relations between the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. Beginning with the "Balagula" movement, they subsequently transformed into the "Khlopomanstvo" and moved to pro-Ukrainian positions (Tadeusz Rylski, Volodymyr Antonovych, etc.). Such representatives of the democratic Polish nobility of the western and Right-bank Ukrainian lands as Tymka Padura, Bogdan-Josef Zaleski, Seweryn Goszczynski, Michal Grabowski, Hippolyte Terlecki, Franciszek Duchinski, Ignacy Marchocki, Juliusz Slowacki and the others defended the Ukrainian right to self-determination, statehood and the idea of Polish-Ukrainian-Lithuanian reconciliation in their works and public political activities.

Polish-Ukrainian relations within the Austrian Empire were more complicated. Even during the Spring of Nations in 1848-1849, the Ukrainian and Polish liberation movements in Eastern Galicia remained rivals rather than allies. However, they were able to conduct their social and political activities legally within the framework of the constitutional Austro-Hungarian monarchy, unlike their "sworn brothers" in Russia.

Thus, the 19th century was characterised by statelessness for all three peoples. The Ukrainians, Poles and Lithuanians faced the same challenges. Moreover, all three nations followed more or less the same path. Despite being parts of big empires, Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian societies started taking their distinctive shape. All three peoples underwent industrialisation and modernisation. New social classes and strata emerged. Moreover, during the 19th century, the basic foundations for the formation of the three nations were formed, which later manifested during the First World War.

## THE BLOODY TWENTIETH CENTURY. THE STRUGGLE FOR STATEHOOD BETWEEN GERMANY AND RUSSIA. THE IDEA OF AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE INTERMARIUM

The First World War was a tragedy for all the peoples of Europe, but especially for the Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians. The three nations, having no states of their own, were forced to fight on the fronts of the empires that captured them. It was a really fratricidal war.

On the other hand, the war brought the crisis and the split of all three empires, which could not withstand the pressure of wartime. At the same time, movements for the independence of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine were rising. In 1916, Poles were given autonomous state organs within the Regency Kingdom of Poland, which included formerly Russian-controlled Polish territories that had been seized by the Central Powers' forces. After the beginning of the February Revolution in 1917 in the Russian Empire, the Central Council of Ukraine proclaimed the autonomous Ukrainian People's Republic. In the same year a representative body of the Lithuanians – the Lithuanian Taryba (The Council of Lithuania) – was formed in the Lithuanian territories of Russia invaded by Germany.

The first efforts at peaceful coexistence between Eastern European peoples took place in Ukraine in the context of The World War and the Russian Revolution. In September 1917, the Congress of the Enslaved Peoples of Russia was held in Kyiv on the initiative of the Central Council of Ukraine. It was attended by Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, Lithuanians, Moldovans, Crimean Tatars and others. The representatives of the nations decided to restructure the Russia on a democratically federative basis.

In the following year, the authorities' structures of all three nations declared independence and began to build their states. However, after a long period of foreign domination, it was a very complicated process. The cannons of World War I had not yet died down, but the Russian Empire was already being engulfed in a major civil war and Bolshevik expansion. Moreover, each country had its own vision of its borders, which did not usually coincide with one another. Therefore, in the end of 1918 the Polish-Ukrainian War for control of the Western Ukrainian lands began. In less than a year it ended in complete defeat for the West Ukrainian People's Republic. A similar situation was observed in Polish-Lithuanian relations: during the 1919-1920 war, the Poles seized Vilnius, the surrounding territories and other Lithuanian ethnic areas.

However, the common threat from Bolshevik Russia once again forced the parties to cooperate. Thus, in the beginning of 1919 Poles and Lithuanians fought together against the Red forces. In 1920, in the middle of the Polish-Bolshevik War, Poles and Ukrainians signed the Warsaw Pact, according to which the western Ukrainian lands (already under Polish rule) became part of the Second Polish Republic. Instead, the political and military part of the agreement created an alliance between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Polish state against Bolshevik Russia. In the same year, allied Polish-Ukrainian forces liberated Kyiv and, after the beginning of the Russian counter-offensive operation, defended Warsaw, inflicting a crushing defeat on the Bolsheviks and protecting Europe from the Communist invasion.



Thus, during the First World War, Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians attempted to create their independent states. The collapse of the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian empires revived the independence of the three nations. The Poles and Lithuanians managed to keep it. The Ukrainians were unable to do the same because of internal strife and Bolshevik aggression, so the Ukrainian lands were divided again – this time between communist Russia (USSR) and the newly formed Second Polish Republic, which also included a large part of the Lithuanian ethnic lands.

In the period between the two world wars, Ukrainians were in a difficult situation. The “Red Terror” repressions, “war communism”, the hunger in 1921-1923, trials of political opposition and Ukrainian intellectuals in the 1920s and early 1930s, dekulakization and collectivisation, the Holodomor in 1932-1933 and the “Great Terror” in 1934-1938 inflicted irreversible harm on the Ukrainian people. Fortunately for Poles and Lithuanians, they did not undergo such a stunningly bloody ordeal in the interwar period.

However, Ukrainians and Lithuanians, being a part of Poland, could not fully consider equal treatment from Poles. Lithuania did not recognise the annexation of Vilnius by Poland, which strained relations between the two states. Ukrainian Eastern Galicia and Western Volhynia were subjected to Polonisation and Catholicisation. The practices of “Pacification” and the “Osadnictwo” were intrinsically anti-Ukrainian. Nevertheless, the vast majority of Lithuanians and Ukrainians within the Polish borders sought peaceful coexistence with the Poles. Almost all the Ukrainian political parties and organisations (freely operating in pre-war Poland) supported the constitutional order of the Second Polish Republic. Only the pro-Moscow communists and Ukrainian nationalists were in opposition to the legal order of interwar Poland.

The idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Union (Intermarium), as well as other cohabitation projects among the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, above all Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians, were conceived and developed during the interwar period. The Union was supposed to contribute to the productive development of political, economic, social and cultural relations between nations.

The idea of the alliance of states “from Sea to Sea” was enunciated for the first time in the 19th century by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski and was supposed to secure Poland and Europe overall from Russian expansion. Later, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, Ukrainian political and public figures Yulian Bachynsky, Mykola Mikhnovsky and Stepan Rudnytsky tried to develop a Baltic-Black Sea geopolitical concept. During the existence of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, the Ukrainian historian and the head of the Central Council Mykhailo Hrushevsky outlined the idea of a Baltic-Black Sea alliance in his work “The Black Sea Orientation” (1918).

At the Fourth Conference of the Baltic States in Riga in August 1920, representatives of six states (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Poland and Ukraine) signed the Political Convention on the establishment of the Baltic-Black Sea Union – the political-military block to protect the newly gained independence of the signatory countries. The agreement contained provisions for the formation of a defence alliance, integration of economic systems, ensuring a free passage from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea etc. However, the realities of the civil war on the territory of the former Russian Empire prevented the project from being realised.

Józef Piłsudski, the head of the Polish state, supported Baltic-Black Sea Union initiatives. In the 1920s, he proposed the idea of a confederation of Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, which would revive the multiethnic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to avoid the domination of Central and Eastern Europe by Germany and/or Russia.

The idea of Intermarium continued to develop, particularly in the writings of the ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism, Yurii Lypa, who created the geopolitical “Black Sea Doctrine”. Lypa favoured the creation of the Baltic-Black Sea federation including Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. But with the rise of nationalist sentiments, the domination of the Realpolitik principle in international relations, the aggressive external course of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany aiming to take over Europe, the initiative of Intermarium failed.

## THE TRAGEDY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

On 23 August 1939, the USSR and the Third Reich concluded the “Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact”, which paved the way for a new world war. Based on the terms of the deal, the Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian peoples once again became the subject of “bargaining” between the great powers. On 1 September 1939, the Wehrmacht invaded the Second Polish Republic, thereby starting World War II. On 17 September, the Soviet Armed Forces attacked Poland from the east. By the end of the month, Polish resistance had been overcome, and the Polish state ceased to exist.

By the new German-Soviet “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Demarcation” signed on 28 September 1939, almost all of the ethnic Polish lands were given to Germany. In June 1940 USSR annexed Lithuania. Almost all Ukrainian lands became part of the USSR. Moreover, mass repression began immediately on the lands occupied by totalitarian regimes.

The outbreak of the Soviet-German war on 22 June 1941 did not improve the situation of the enslaved peoples either. Central and Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea turned into “Bloody Land” (according to T. Snyder).

Terrible events followed this period: The Holocaust, murders of Soviet prisoners, punitive actions by the Nazis and Soviet partisans, mutual ethnic cleansing between the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa), deportations, famine and other mass violence.

Despite severe struggle for liberation, the cooperation between three nations also took place. The Ukrainian insurgents tried to find mutual understanding with other peoples. Thus, the Conference of the enslaved peoples of Eastern Europe and Asia, which intended to unite and coordinate efforts in the struggle against Russian Bolshevism, was held in November 1943 at the initiative of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists on the Western Ukrainian lands.

As a result, the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN) was formed, which included representatives of Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Belorussians and many other enslaved nations in the USSR. Subsequently, in 1967, the ABN became one of the founders of the World Anti-Communist League.

During the Second World War, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians and Belarusians suffered enormous demographic and economic losses. Tens of millions died, millions were forcibly deported, and the independence of the Polish and Lithuanian states was destroyed. Similarly to Ukraine, they were seized by Stalin’s Empire. The decisions of The Yalta and Potsdam conferences in 1945 consolidated the accession of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia (the former eastern regions of the Second Polish Republic), Lithuania and the other Baltic states to the USSR.

The territorially diminished Poland, although recognised as an independent state, was de-facto transferred to the Soviet sphere of influence.

The dictatorial communist regime, fully controlled by the Kremlin, was imposed on the Polish People’s Republic. Like the Lithuanian Forest Brothers and The Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the anti-communist underground of the Armia Krajowa and other patriotic Polish organisations were quickly suppressed. Thus, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Poles lost their independence and once again shared a common historical destiny.

## UNDER THE COMMUNIST OCCUPATION. ON THE WAY TO UNDERSTANDING

The period of the Cold War between the socialist camp and the western world was characterised by the common problems of all three nations mentioned – the loss of their own legal personality, personal and political unfreedom and the construction of a socialist command economy.

However, many Poles, Ukrainians and Lithuanians were able to leave the socialist camp and continued to fight for the liberation of their countries against Bolshevik rule from abroad. One example of cooperation between them was the Captive Nations Week, held since 1953 in the United States of America.

Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians and other peoples who had lost their national independence due to the imperialist policies of Bolshevik Russia tried to raise public and political awareness in the USA during mass actions and other events.

It was not only emigrants who did not give up. The Poles, finding themselves under the rule of the occupying communist regime, were rebelling – in 1956, 1968, 1970-1971 and 1976. At the same time, The Dissident Movement emerged and developed in Lithuania and Ukraine.

Ukrainian and Lithuanian dissidents supported the Poles' aspiration to overthrow the occupation and gain real independence.

At the same time, organisations which insisted on the fulfilment of the terms of the 1975 Helsinki Pact by the communist regimes emerged in the territories of the three nations.

The Ukrainian and Lithuanian Helsinki Groups and the Polish Helsinki Committee worked together to ensure that the Polish and Soviet authorities respected human rights and freedoms.

The emergence of the "Solidarity" in the Polish People's Republic together with another mass protest in 1980 really "shook" communism in Poland for the first time.

To avoid the fate of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), in December 1981 Polish authorities imposed martial law in the republic. The uprising was crushed, but the most farsighted intellectuals realised that the fall of communism in the Polish People's Republic was only a matter of time.

Among them was Jerzy Giedroyc, a prominent Polish emigrant, publicist and social activist. In the 1940s–1980s, he closely cooperated with Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian and other Central and Eastern European nations' emigrants, who were oppressed by the Soviet Union.

In the pages of the magazine "Kultura" ("Culture"), Jerzy proposed a new model of relations between Ukrainians, Poles and Lithuanians: "Forgive and ask for forgiveness". This approach concerned both the times of the Commonwealth and the recent events – the "Pacification", the Volyn tragedy, Operation Vistula and the others. It was a new form of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence between the three nations.

The spread of Giedroyc's liberal-democratic views of Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus as independent states and equal partners for Poland ultimately played a decisive role in changing the attitudes of most Poles towards their eastern neighbours.

## SUBSECTION 2 MODERN HISTORY SINCE 1991: FORMATS OF INTERACTION, PROSPECTS, PECULIARITIES OF THE STATE OF THE COUNTRIES

### "PARADE OF SOVEREIGNTIES". RETURN TO EUROPE

In 1990-1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and countries of Central and Eastern Europe had a so-called "parade of sovereignties" – the proclamation of independence by the union and autonomous republics, as well as by satellites of the Soviet Union in the region. They all adopted declarations of sovereignty.

It is indicative that Poland and Lithuania were among the first to change their state system to a democratic one. Poland was the first country of the socialist bloc to carry out the peaceful dismantling of the socialist system. The democratic elections were held on 4 June 1989, followed by the formation of a new government. Lithuania declared sovereignty in 1989 and announced its secession from the USSR in April 1990. Ukraine repeated these steps a year later. Significantly, after the declaration of independence of Ukraine, Poland was the first country to recognise the independence of our state. Lithuania soon supported the sovereignty of Ukrainians as well – a day after Poland.

After the return of independence, Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine had an unstable transition period. The formation of basic political institutions, market mechanisms, a new social order and overcoming the consequences of the crisis of the socialist period required time. A radical transformation of political institutions and local government was an illustration of the process of transformations in social and political life. The centralised planned economy at that time was characterised by chaos and hyperinflation and was replaced by a market economy, which emerged in the conditions of political and economic crisis, disintegration of central and regional power institutions.

Embarking on the road of democratic development, Poland and Lithuania expressed their wish to join the process of European integration. On 17 January 1990, Jacques Delors, the President of the European Commission, proposed that the states of Central and Eastern Europe conclude an association agreement with the European Community. The agreements would provide "an institutional framework of joint political and economic actions and extend technical, cultural, scientific, commercial and financial cooperation". This initiative was the impetus for the beginning of negotiations. Yet, in order to deepen the dialogue in the eastern part of Central Europe, it was necessary to create a stable regional structure in civilisational kinship with the West. The Visegrad Group, created on 15 February 1991, was such an initiative; it became a platform for the cooperation of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The key spheres of interaction between the member states were economy, transport, environmental protection and scientific cooperation. At the same time, the need to remove barriers to trade between the countries was expressed. This objective was implemented by the end of 1992: on 20 December, in Krakow, the Hungarian and Polish economic ministers signed an agreement establishing the Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA).

The Visegrad Group played a positive stabilising role in the centre of Eastern Europe at a specific historical juncture. It contributed to the region's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures and exemplified the importance of consolidating the post-socialist countries to speed up the democratic transition in Eastern Europe. Thus, on 1 December 1991, Poland signed the European Treaty with the EEC and became one of the first Eastern European countries which declared the membership in the EU and NATO as its strategic goal.

However, at that time, Ukraine found itself in the situation of political uncertainty. The country chose the policy of “the third way”: between capitalism and socialism, between the East and the West. Because of this syncretism of ideas, Ukraine was not able to fully follow the course of European integration.

The first declarations of Ukraine’s desire to join the European integration processes were made in the resolution of the Parliament of Ukraine “On the Main Trends of Internal and Foreign Policy of Ukraine” dated 2 July 1993.

In 1994, Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and Ukraine was signed. It came into force in 1998 and remained valid until 2008. This document laid the foundation for the dialogue between the sides on political, economic, cultural and other issues.

However, insufficient involvement in the European integration processes and rather long economic, social and political crisis of the 1990s weakened the dialogue between Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland.

Having the potential to join efforts to overcome similar problems and become a leading force in the region in the context of large-scale transformations, similar to France and Germany in the postwar period, the three countries did not use this opportunity and focused on their ambitions and aspirations.

However, the joint efforts of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania would not only lay the foundation for solving similar problems, but would also form a unified policy of defending and protecting the identity of Eastern Europe: common interests, values, aspirations and economic growth.

By 2000, the domestic situation in the three post-socialist countries had relatively stabilised. During the same period, NATO announced its expansion to the East, and in 1999 Poland became a full member of the alliance. Lithuania joined NATO later, during the sixth enlargement in 2004.

It radically changed the geopolitical situation and relations of the states in the region, especially those with Russia. Considering such actions unfriendly and regarded as a threat to national security, Russia strongly opposed enlargement and insisted on Ukraine’s rejection of NATO membership. A conflict of interest between the alliance and Russia became inevitable.

In 2004, the European Union expanded and admitted Poland, Lithuania and several other countries of the region to its membership. Under these conditions, full-scale regional Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian cooperation became temporarily limited due to the impossibility of its development within the EU and NATO, and the potential of creating a regional centre of influence on the political processes in Central-Eastern Europe remained unrealised.

However, one of the effective ways for the three countries to interact is cooperation within the framework of the EU Neighborhood Policy, namely the Eastern Partnership. Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland use this platform to coordinate their actions to achieve common goals and strengthen good-neighbourly relations.

The idea to create a special format of cooperation with the neighbouring countries of the EU originated in the late 1990s. In 1998, Polish Foreign Minister Geremek suggested including the Eastern European direction in the agenda of the EU enlargement strategy, which could include differentiated policy towards Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia.

The centrepiece of the Polish strategy was Ukraine, with the prospect of its swift integration in the European Union.<sup>2</sup> But in the form of a full-scale initiative, the Eastern Partnership emerged only in 2009. Before that, cooperation took place in the format of narrowly focused initiatives, agreements, projects, etc.

## RUSSIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

On 20 February 2014, Russian aggression against Ukraine began. Taking advantage of the tragic events in Kyiv, Russian troops intensified the forceful phase of a special operation to seize the Crimean peninsula.

The formal “justification” of the annexation was a fictitious declaration of independence of the Republic of Crimea on 11 March and a fabricated referendum on the status of Crimea, which took place on 16 March. Based on the results of the “referendum”, the former Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol were incorporated into the Russian Federation two days later.

The international community did not recognise the annexation and condemned the Kremlin’s actions. Thus, on 27 March 2014, the UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine was adopted. The document was prepared by Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Canada and Costa Rica.

In the resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed its support for the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, encouraged all states to refuse and refrain from actions aimed at partial or complete violation of the national unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine, declared the illegality of the Crimean referendum and called on all states, international organisations and specialised institutions not to recognise the change of status of Crimea and Sevastopol.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, anti-Ukrainian demonstrations (the so-called “Russian Spring”) fueled by Russian propaganda, instructors and mercenaries, began in southern and eastern Ukraine.

In most cities, they were curbed, but in the first half of April 2014, pro-Russian forces managed to seize power in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Hostilities began and escalated into an armed conflict in eastern Ukraine that continues to this day.

Poland and Lithuania were among the first to stand up for Ukraine. The support of these countries, in particular, helped to bring the conflict to the international arena and provided the arrangement of help to Ukraine. Members of the European Union, the U.S., Canada and many other countries of the international community began to impose sanctions against the Russian Federation, first personal, and then sectoral.

The sanctions are still in effect today, they are constantly being renewed, and new ones are being introduced. Substantial military-technical assistance was provided to repel Russian aggression against Ukraine. Poland and Lithuania were among the first countries that helped with weapons, equipment and supplies for the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Russian aggression against Ukraine radically changed the international and political situation not only in Central and Eastern Europe, but also in the world as a whole. For the first time since World War II in Europe, a state officially annexed the territory of an independent country.

Russia began aggression not only against Ukraine — the Kremlin is waging a “hybrid war” against the entire Western world, in particular, using military methods and a propaganda and disinformation campaign. Therefore, a closer cooperation between Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania — states that have repeatedly suffered from Moscow’s expansionist course throughout history — is a task of paramount importance in order to protect Europe from aggression of the Russian Federation.

## INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY “UKRAINE-POLAND-LITHUANIA”

Since the beginning of the tragic events of Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the activity of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly “Ukraine-Lithuania-Poland”, created on 13 May 2005 and aimed at deepening of cooperation, European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine and development of economy and international trade, has significantly increased.

On 28-29 May 2015, at the VI session in Vilnius, the parties concluded a declaration<sup>4</sup> that reaffirmed the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine; condemned the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the military aggression in Eastern Ukraine by the Russian Federation; strongly supported Ukraine’s strategic aspiration for European integration.

On 27-28 March 2017, the VIII Session of the Assembly in Warsaw adopted the Final Document<sup>5</sup>, which emphasised the need to continue and further strengthen the European Union sanctions policy against the Russian Federation; supported the joint activities of the International Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LitPolUkrbrig) and welcomed Ukrainian initiatives of rapprochement with the EU and NATO.

The latest, X Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly was held on 7-8 June 2019 in Kyiv. It marked the 450th anniversary of the Union of Lublin and the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian statehoods in modern times.

At this session the Final Document<sup>6</sup> confirmed the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation between Ukraine, the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Poland in order to develop cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between the three states.

“The Inter-parliamentary Assembly of Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland is a good platform to coordinate our joint activities, including in the international arena” ... “When our deputies interact at the level of committees, within the Assembly, work out joint decisions – it is very positive, this experience will be used in the adoption of European laws”.<sup>7</sup>



*Volodymyr Groysman,  
Chairman of the Parliament (2014-2016),  
Prime Minister of Ukraine (2016-2019)*

## RELATIONS OF UKRAINE, POLAND AND LITHUANIA WITHIN THE EU/NATO FRAMEWORK

The cooperation of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania within the largest alliances on the European continent is the primary and decisive component for the general characteristic of relations of the three countries and the region as a whole. Poland and Lithuania, have consistently supported Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration since they acceded the EU and NATO.

On 16 September 2014, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the European Parliament simultaneously ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU. From 1 November 2014, it was applied provisionally and came fully into force on 1 September 2017.<sup>8</sup> In 2014, 76 of 76 representatives of the Polish Senate<sup>9</sup>, 427 of 428 representatives of the Polish Sejm<sup>10</sup> and 87 of 88 representatives of the Lithuanian parliament<sup>11</sup> voted for the adoption of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union.

On 31 July 2014, the European Union imposed sanctions against Russia for one year in response to Russia’s destabilising actions in Ukraine. Lithuania and Poland unconditionally supported this initiative and continued to defend Ukraine’s position on the EU and NATO negotiating platforms.

On 12-13 July 2017, the Ukraine-EU Summit<sup>12</sup> was held in Kyiv. One of the EU representatives was Donald Tusk – President of the European Council and former Prime Minister of Poland. The leaders discussed:

- 1 the importance of implementing Ukraine’s ambitious reform plan, especially on combating corruption;
- 2 the conflict in eastern Ukraine and Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, as well as the implementation of the Minsk agreements;
- 3 ways to maximise the benefits and realise the potential of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

“This Summit is a good moment to celebrate the strong and deepening friendship between the European Union and Ukraine”.<sup>13</sup>



*Donald Tusk, President of the European  
Council (2014 – 2019), former Prime Minister of Poland,  
now President of the European People’s Party*

On 31 October 2019, the Ukraine-NATO Commission held a meeting in Kyiv, which resulted in the adoption of a joint statement of the North Atlantic Council on Crimea.<sup>14</sup>

Poland insisted on support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty without any alternative. An essential step in deepening the Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian dialogue was the introduction of a visa-free regime in 2017, but the path to this achievement had started much earlier.

Back on 28 March 1995, an agreement on the mutual abolition of a visa regime for citizens of both countries who have diplomatic or service passports was signed between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.<sup>15</sup>

The events of the Revolution of Dignity raised the question of border-crossing facilitation between the countries, and in 2016 the entire processes of establishing a visa-free regime began.

On 7 December 2016, the decision of the European Union institutions on the common vision of the mechanism for the suspension of the visa regime in certain cases was adopted.

Ambassadors of EU member states approved the relevant decision, and on 8 December, they were joined by the profile committee of the European Parliament.

During this period, Poland and Lithuania provided significant support to Ukraine concerning the implementation of a visa-free regime. In December 2016, during a briefing held by the then presidents of Lithuania and Ukraine, Grybauskaitė expressed support for Kyiv regarding granting Ukraine a visa-free regime.<sup>16</sup>

On 6 April 2017, the European Parliament voted to grant visa-free travel to the EU for Ukrainian citizens.<sup>17</sup> On 26 April of the same year, the ambassadors of the European Union member states in Brussels supported this decision<sup>18</sup>, and on 11 June 2017, the regime began to operate.

Visa-free regime significantly strengthened and expanded the development of economic, cultural and social relations of the countries and, of course, contributed to the development of migration processes of Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland.

According to the Association of Ukrainians in Poland, as of 2019, the number of Ukrainians living in Poland was 250-500 thousand, and the number of workers – about 1,4 million.<sup>19</sup>

Regarding the migration situation in Lithuania, Ukrainians have become the biggest foreign community in the state: in 2019, the number of Ukrainians in Lithuania was 17 thousand, which is 42% more than the corresponding figure in 2018.

The ability to freely visit Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland has increased the potential for economic and cross-cultural ties between the three states. It has brought cooperation between the nations to a new level.

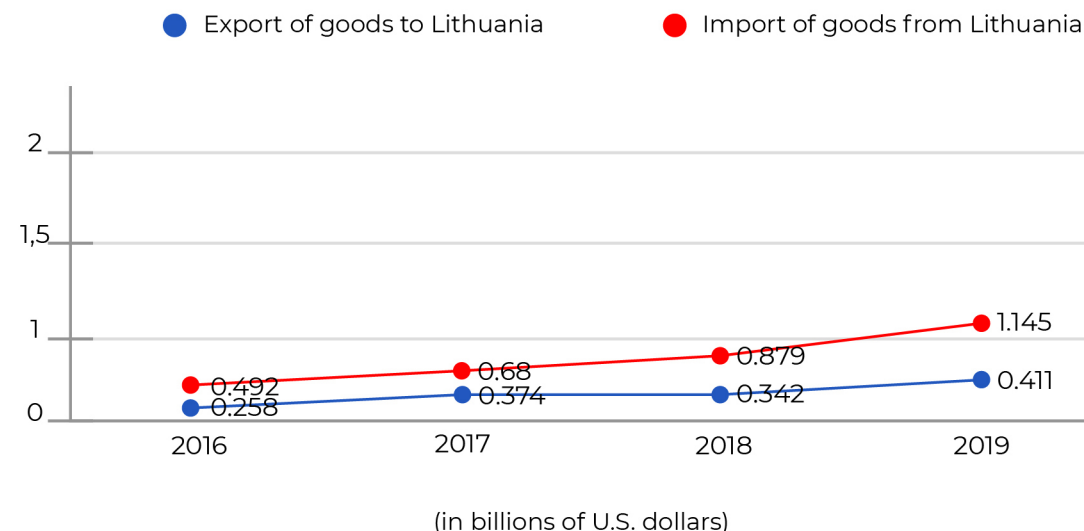
## A SUCCESSFUL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Of course, a strong coalition of states is formed not only by shared history and similar political views. It is worth mentioning that deepening Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian economic cooperation is reasonable due to sharing similar geo-economic interests and strategic goals.

At the present stage, economic cooperation between the three countries is developing quite rapidly and has significant prospects. It is testified by the organisation of various economic forums, meetings on the highest level, signing agreements and treaties on economic cooperation.

## LITHUANIA

### The state of Ukrainian-Lithuanian trade and economic cooperation<sup>20</sup>



Lithuania is Ukraine's largest trade partner among the countries of the Baltic region. During 2000-2019, the volume of bilateral trade in goods increased more than six times and in 2019 reached its record level.

More than 50 enterprises with Lithuanian capital operate in the territory of Ukraine within the framework of the implementation of investment projects, in particular, BT Invest, BOD Group, Traidenis, Pontem, Baltijos Paslaugu Group and Ramedas, Respect Group Ltd. and Modus Group Ltd.<sup>21</sup>

An important initiative in the framework of economic interaction between the two countries is the Ukrainian-Lithuanian Economic Forum<sup>22</sup>, which was held annually from 2015 to 2020. The parties discussed the prospects of international business cooperation, as well as problematic issues, advantages and disadvantages of doing business in the markets of Ukraine and Lithuania.

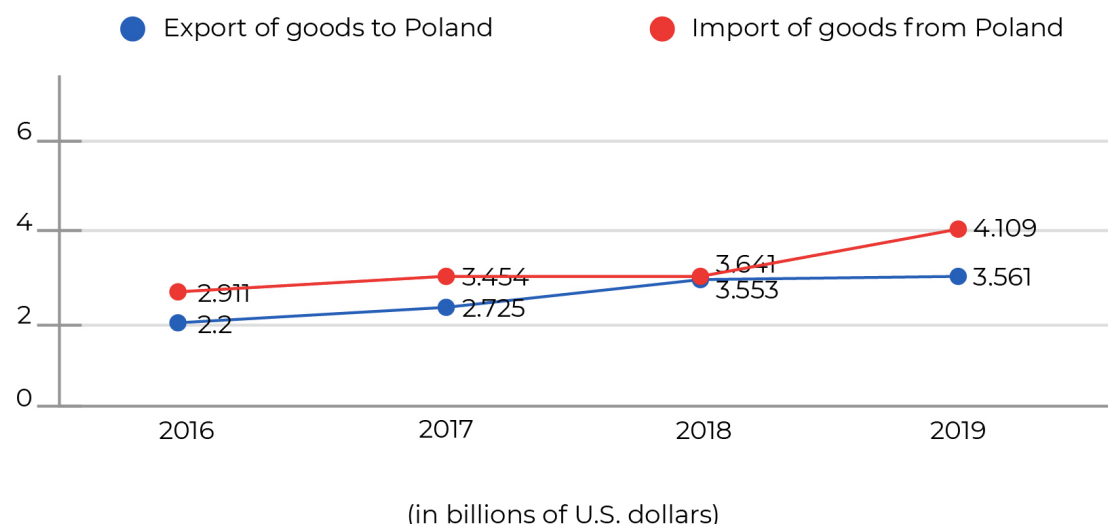
In addition, a joint meeting of Ukrainian-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian business councils was held recently. On 17 September 2020, representatives of the countries discussed economic and business problems in Ukraine and Lithuania in the context of the current epidemiological situation.

Special attention was paid to the issue of holding Ukrainian-Lithuanian video-conferences on the development of green technologies in energy, in particular solar energy, biotechnology, automation of production and Industry 4.0.

Based on the cultural, mental, historical and territorial closeness, we can claim the great potential for expanding cooperation and generating more significant benefits for both nations. Successful examples of economic cooperation prove that the economies of both countries can and even already successfully cooperate.

## POLAND

### The state of Ukrainian-Polish trade and economic cooperation<sup>23</sup>



An essential element of Ukrainian-Polish economic interaction is the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce<sup>24</sup>, working since 1992 to improve the development of economic and social relations between the two countries. The activity of the Chamber provides effective support for Ukrainian enterprises at the national and regional levels, as well as support in starting or expanding business cooperation with Poland; participation in exhibitions, trainings, meetings with key officials of both countries and promotion of communication with Polish authorities and economic organisations.

With Poland's accession to the European Union, investment cooperation between the two countries has intensified significantly. Every year, the turnover of goods and the volume of investments between Ukraine and Poland grow. During 2013-2015, given the sharp deterioration of the investment climate, the volume of Polish investments in Ukraine decreased rapidly. However, already on 21 April 2017, Ukraine and Poland resumed their "economic dialogue" during the 6th meeting of the Ukrainian-Polish Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation.<sup>25</sup> The members of the Commission emphasised the need for cooperation in boosting entrepreneurship, as well as in regulatory policy, customs and taxation, intellectual property rights protection, interregional and cross-border cooperation. The participants discussed the possibility of creating a permanent Ukrainian-Polish consultative mechanism on industrial development to identify potential mutually beneficial projects in the sphere of industrial cooperation. It was the impetus for further development of Polish-Ukrainian relations.

The 5th International Forum "Polish Business Day"<sup>26</sup>, organised by the Trade and Investment Promotion Department of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Ukraine, took place on 24 November 2017. And on 18 June 2019, the first RAU Investment Forum was held in Kyiv, bringing together key players of the development and retail market, investors and government representatives. Such events expose the prospects for the development of Ukrainian-Polish economic relations.

## JOINT ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Multilateral cooperation between Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland has also developed in recent years. To build economic ties, Ukraine joined the Via Carpatia<sup>27</sup> project in March 2016, the main goal of which was to create a transport corridor from northern Europe to the south through Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece.

The implementation of the project not only improved Ukraine's ties with the countries of the region, but also increased the mobility of NATO forces on the eastern flank. Besides, the implementation of Via Carpatia contributed to another Ukrainian project, the Go Highway<sup>28</sup>, which will allow the transfer of Ukrainian and counter cargo between the three seas and will be an incentive to modernise the western and southern roads.

Also, it is a quite common practice to organise joint forums to deepen knowledge in the economic sphere through the study of partners' experience and analysis of the current situation in this area.

Thus, on 4 June 2018, the 4th National Export Forum was held at the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>29</sup> Among the leading topics of the event were the challenges of Ukrainian exports, assessment of the results of the National Export Strategy implementation, new opportunities in foreign markets for the agricultural industry. Particular attention was paid to the development of transport and logistics infrastructure for international trade.

On 1 October 2020, a large-scale project of the National Bank of Ukraine in partnership with the National Bank of Poland and the Bank of Lithuania was launched within the framework of the Twinning project "Strengthening Institutional and Regulatory Capacity of the National Bank of Ukraine for the Implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU" with the financing of 1 million euro.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the ongoing processes of liberalisation of trade between the EU and Ukraine and harmonisation of standards will have a positive effect in multi- and bilateral trade, investment relations and in the economy of Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland.

## LITPOLUKRBRIG<sup>31</sup>

Work on the creation of a joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian military unit began in 2007, when the heads of military departments of Ukraine, Poland and the Republic of Lithuania signed a Letter of Intent for the creation of a Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian peacekeeping battalion.

In 2009, as a result of intergovernmental negotiations, the Polish side came up with an initiative to strengthen the format of cooperation and offered to form a Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade.

That same year in Brussels, the heads of defence ministries of the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Poland and Ukraine signed a Letter of Intent to form a joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade.<sup>32</sup>

During the 2014 NATO summit in Wales<sup>33</sup>, decisions were made to support the Ukrainian side in the conflict with the Russian Federation. It was an important step towards signing an agreement on the creation of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade.

On 24 July 2015, a signing ceremony took place in Lviv for an agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the governments of Lithuania and Poland on the creation of a joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade.<sup>34</sup>

## The creation of the “LitPolUkrBrig” provides for the following:

- 1 increasing the level of mutual trust and cooperation between the countries, as well as improving the security situation in the region;
- 2 strengthening military cooperation between the states to master advance operational standards of troop training and achieve interoperability;
- 3 involvement of a certain set of forces and means of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in joint staff training, drills, exercises to increase the level of operational capability;
- 4 implementation of modern approaches to planning, provision and use of troops in the general training system of the Armed Forces of Ukraine;
- 5 providing national contribution to multinational military formations of high readiness (UN Standby Arrangements, EU Combat Tactical Groups, NATO Response Force), as well as to international peacekeeping and security operations under the auspices of the UN, EU, NATO and other international security associations based on the UN Security Council mandate and in case of parliamentary approval of participating countries.

On 25 January 2016, the headquarters of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LitPolUkrbrig) was inaugurated in Lublin.<sup>35</sup>

From 7 to 17 June 2016, the LitPolUkrbrig “Anakonda-2016”<sup>36</sup> training took place, and on 11 December 2016, the international certification training “Common Challenge – 16” began. It provided ample opportunity to deepen cooperation between the partner nations, enhance training and strengthen mutual understanding between the military personnel of the three countries.

The brigade is a model of coordinated cooperation between the nations. On 24 August 2016, soldiers of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade took part in a parade in honour of Ukraine’s Independence Day.



*LitPolUkrbrig's participation in the Ukrainian Independence Day Parade*

“LitPolUkrbrig is way of cooperation with Ukraine, our big neighbour, which intends to become a NATO member. The Lithuanian president and I emphasised that Ukrainian soldiers serve in this brigade together with our military and improve their combat capabilities together. By doing so, the Ukrainian soldiers improve themselves in NATO programs and strengthen the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO”.<sup>37</sup>



*Andrzej Duda,  
Polish President*

## UKRAINE-POLISH-LITHUANIAN DIALOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENERGY SPACE

In the meantime, the constant goal has been the full integration of the energy markets of Ukraine and the EU, taking into account the interests of consumers and the need to mutually strengthen the security of energy supply and environmental protection.

For the three countries, a critical task is to meet the requirements of the Third Energy Package, which includes introduction of centralised planning for the development of the European energy network in the EU countries. However, the implementation process in the context of Ukraine is quite complicated and lengthy because of the still existing “civilisational distance” from the EU and the negative impact of the events of early 2014.

All the above has led to the need for Ukraine to deepen its energy dialogue with neighbouring countries, including Lithuania and Poland. An essential role in the development of Ukraine’s energy potential is played by an independent non-profit organisation, the European-Ukrainian Energy Agency (EUEA)<sup>38</sup>, which promotes the development of energy technologies and effective dialogue between all stakeholders in this field.

Among the members of the organisation are Ukrainian companies DTEK, Elementum Energy, “Thermosystems” Scientific Production Association LLC, IMEPOWER etc., Polish companies Electrum and Helios Strategia Polska and Lithuanian company Green Genius.

On 8 December 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding regarding strategic cooperation in the energy sector was signed between the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry of Ukraine and the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania.<sup>39</sup>

Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine advocate a balanced policy on energy supplies from Russia and do not allow the manipulating European countries by the Russian Federation. It is worth underlining the importance of deepening the Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian dialogue for the joint development of energy security, energy efficiency and full integration of the energy markets of Ukraine and the EU.

## THE THREE SEAS INITIATIVE AND THE IMPACT ON UKRAINE

In 2014, American analytical centre “Atlantic Council” drew attention to the uneven development of the continent in its report “Trusting Europe”. It inspired the then leaders of the two countries – Croatian President Grabar-Kitarovic and Polish President Andrzej Duda – to start a new format of cooperation. This initiative continues to attract an increasing number of high-ranking figures and leading players from business and politics. In 2016, the Three Seas Initiative, or “Trimarium”<sup>40,41</sup>, was launched. It unites 12 Central and Eastern European states, among which Poland and Lithuania play a significant role.

The guidelines of the “Trimarium” are economic growth, energy security, geopolitical development, climate preservation and a smart approach to new investments to maximise regional expertise and potential for digital solutions. However, the main goal of the Three Seas Initiative remains mutual support and uniting efforts to better promote their interests within the EU, in particular regarding joint transport projects on the North-South axis, energy and telecommunications. That is why, as Jacek Chaputowicz<sup>42</sup> said, full-fledged participation of Ukraine in the Initiative is impossible at the moment, because its members are only those states that have already joined the European Union. At that time, the parties discussed the transit potential of the possible project member states, the perspectives of common economic space and also a particularly urgent topic — joint security and defence strategies.

The processes of European and Euro-Atlantic integration require Ukraine to develop comprehensive cooperation with neighbouring countries, which are members of the EU and NATO. Besides, the importance of such cooperation has increased significantly in the face of Russian military aggression.

A new geopolitical situation appeared in the world, primarily related to quite successful attempts to destroy the stable system of international relations and international law. In this context, the search for opportunities for the practical implementation of the concept of “Inter-Sea” – the creation of a powerful Baltic-Black Sea Union of Central and Eastern European countries (including Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and others) – becomes even more urgent.

Returning to the “Trimarium” project, it is worth to note the deepening of the dialogue between the participants of the initiative (especially with the assistance of Poland) and Ukraine in the context of discussing the prospects of cooperation. Thus, on 9 October 2020, 230 Ukrainian deputies created a new parliamentary group called “Trimarium”.

The creation of the new format was an important step towards deepening the dialogue between Ukraine and the Three Seas Initiative.<sup>43</sup> Tim Beichelt, a professor at the European University of Viadrina, suggested that the idea<sup>44</sup> of the Three Seas Initiative could become an excellent basis for an informal association of several EU countries that do not have sufficient military capabilities for reliable defence, but are in a dangerous zone of Russian influence, which provokes crises everywhere around it – for example, in the Ukrainian Donbas or in Belarus.

A significant point in deepening the dialogue was the support from Andrzej Duda. He raised the issue of cooperation with Ukraine at the regular summit of the “Three Seas Initiative” on 19-20 October 2020 in Estonia.<sup>45</sup> The “Trimarium” Initiative, covering quite a large part of the territory and human capital of Central-Eastern Europe, has the potential to deepen the cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between the nations in the region substantially, primarily within the framework of integration into European processes. “Trimarium” demonstrates the desire of most of the leading countries of Central and Eastern Europe to expand the formats of interaction, to find new ways of cooperation and to strengthen the influence of this region on the processes of the entire European continent very clearly and unambiguously.

## LUBLIN TRIANGLE

On 28 July 2020, representatives of the three countries held a press conference in the city of Lublin. They announced the creation of the Lublin Triangle – a new format for cooperation between Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania. This new trilateral format is based on the traditions and historical ties of the three countries, which go back centuries.

It is intended to become an important mechanism for strengthening Central Europe and promoting the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine.



*Meeting of representatives of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine within the framework of the Lublin Triangle<sup>46</sup>*

The members of the initiative agreed to coordinate actions to defend international law in the context of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine both in trilateral coordination and in international associations such as NATO, the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania declared that they do not recognise Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea at the moment and will not recognise it in the future under any circumstances. They urged Russia to withdraw its troops from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The countries of the Lublin Triangle support the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and call for an end to Russian aggression against Ukraine. They also support granting Ukraine the status of a partner with enhanced NATO capabilities and claim that granting Ukraine a Membership Action Plan is the next necessary step in this direction.

The development of trade, investment and infrastructure projects will be one of the essential building blocks of the Lublin Triangle. Participants stress the importance of intensifying interaction between the European Union, the North Atlantic Alliance and the Eastern Partnership and pay special attention to developing the Three Seas Initiative. The countries of the format support Ukraine's cooperation with the Trimarium and other regional forms of interaction.

In order to implement these goals, the ministers of the three countries created a platform of political, economic and social interaction between the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Lithuania and Ukraine.



“This is indeed a historic event in many ways. However, its goals are not only symbolic, but also very pragmatic. The Lublin Triangle is a political choice and a union of like-minded people. Two of its three parties are members of the EU and NATO; the third is on its way to the membership. The Lublin Triangle is a civilisational choice and the restoration of historical justice. These are our friends and brothers: Lithuanians, Poles and other nations of Central Europe, similar to us in culture, traditions, a model of society and, most importantly, the choice of a free future”.



*Dmytro Kuleba,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine*

“Lublin. Lithuanian Square. To commemorate the legacy of the Union of Lublin: 451 years ago, Poland and Lithuania concluded the Union of Lublin and formed the largest state in Europe. The negotiations in Lublin [in 1569] paved the way for the future statehood of Ukraine”.<sup>47</sup>



*Linas Linkevičius,  
Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs*

On 17 September 2020, the first meeting (via videoconference) of national coordinators of the Lublin Triangle was held.<sup>48</sup> Deputy foreign ministers of the three countries: Vasyl Bodnar (Ukraine), Marcin Przydacz (Poland) and Dalius Čekuolis (Lithuania) were appointed as coordinators of this tripartite cooperation mechanism.

The parties discussed preparations for the next meeting of the foreign ministers of the Lublin Triangle countries, which is to be held in Kyiv on the initiative of Minister Dmytro Kuleba. The national coordinators defined the main areas of the Lublin Triangle activities and agreed to ensure constant interaction of the initiative at various working levels. During the meeting, they agreed on the main principles of the Lublin Triangle activities and outlined plans for the near future collaboration.

One of the main tasks is to coordinate the activities of the three states in counteracting current challenges and threats to collective security effectively. Among the priority topics in cooperation is the countering hybrid threats from Russia, in particular fighting against disinformation. The parties highlighted the importance of supporting close cooperation within the framework of international associations. The co-ordinators paid much attention to the situation in Belarus and other countries of the region.

## THE VALUES OF EUROPE'S YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

The change of generations in the countries of the region raises the question of the need to take into account the changing values and identity of the younger generation. Therefore, it is necessary to find new forms and principles of interaction as a basis for strengthening cooperation and integration among youth (within the EU, NATO, regional structures).

Youth is an integral part of European society. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union emphasises the importance of encouraging youth to participate in the democratic life of Europe. This aspect of the treaty is explicitly expressed in one of the two main objectives of the EU Youth Strategy – to encourage young people to participate in society actively.

In 2017, with participation of the European Commission, a survey<sup>49</sup> among European youth regarding their views on civic and social issues, as well as their priorities for activism was conducted.

An overwhelming majority of those surveyed consider it a priority to address education and skills (53%), environmental protection and climate change (50%), employment (42%), management of migration flows and integration of refugees (40%). These areas can be the benchmarks, spheres and forms of interaction, around which the process of youth integration can not only accelerate, but also firmly establish a trend towards a general course of development. However, these are general data concerning youth from all EU countries.

The values and aspirations of young people in Central and Eastern Europe are somewhat different from those in the rest of Europe. Respondents in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Hungary believe that security, defence and freedom should be no less of a priority.

Hence, the region's identity and the desire of young people to preserve and protect it show that, although society's development priorities are changing quite dynamically in the modern world, traditional issues of identity, security and freedom remain no less important for young people in Eastern Europe.

In the common history of the existence of the three states – Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania – many negative aspects took place: wars, enslavement, internal conflicts, discord, hatred and blood. Yet, based on the historical overview, examples of successful and mutually beneficial cooperation are also evident.

There is cultural affinity and, to a certain extent, similar mentality of the peoples. Territorial proximity, cultural similarities and the joint defence of national independence and identity encourage Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians to deepen cooperation, because, according to history, common goals, priorities, and aspirations are the guarantees of strong cooperation.

In the new age of the 21st century, considering dynamic development and changes, one of the leading driving forces in the development of society and state is youth. Non-indifferent attitude to the events surrounding, firm and resolute position on socially essential issues has become a crucial trend in the development of youth.

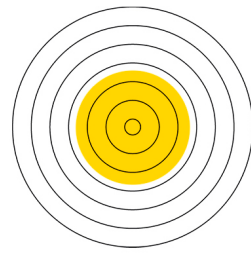
In the context of enhancement and improvement of interaction between Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania, the youth can become the uniting factor, which will provide the necessary impulse in the development of strong and friendly relations of three peoples and will put the reliable base for the future coordinated coexistence.

An important role in this process is played by the orientation of the states on cooperation with youth and the youth policy of the countries.

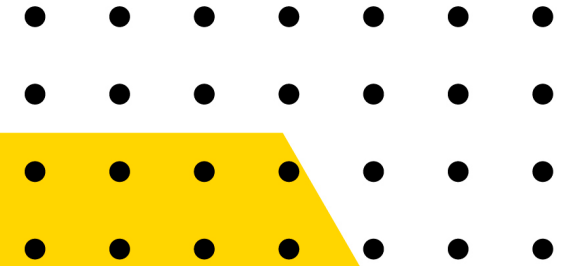
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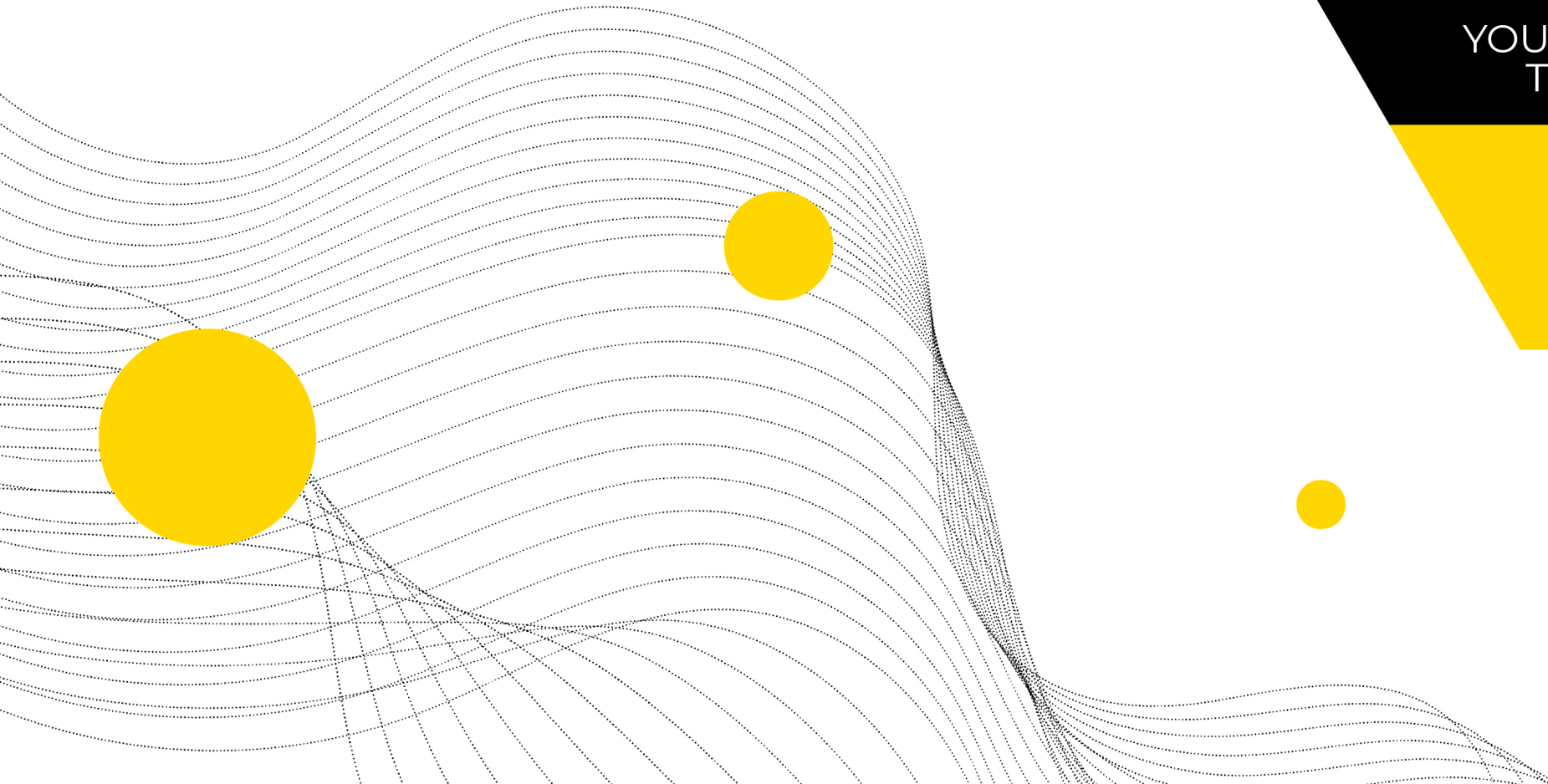


- 2.1** YOUTH POLICY IN LITHUANIA
- 2.2** YOUTH POLICY IN POLAND
- 2.3** YOUTH POLICY IN UKRAINE
- 2.4** YOUTH POLICY AND COOPERATION PROSPECTS



# SECTION 2

YOUTH POLICY IN STATES OF  
THE LUBLIN TRIANGLE



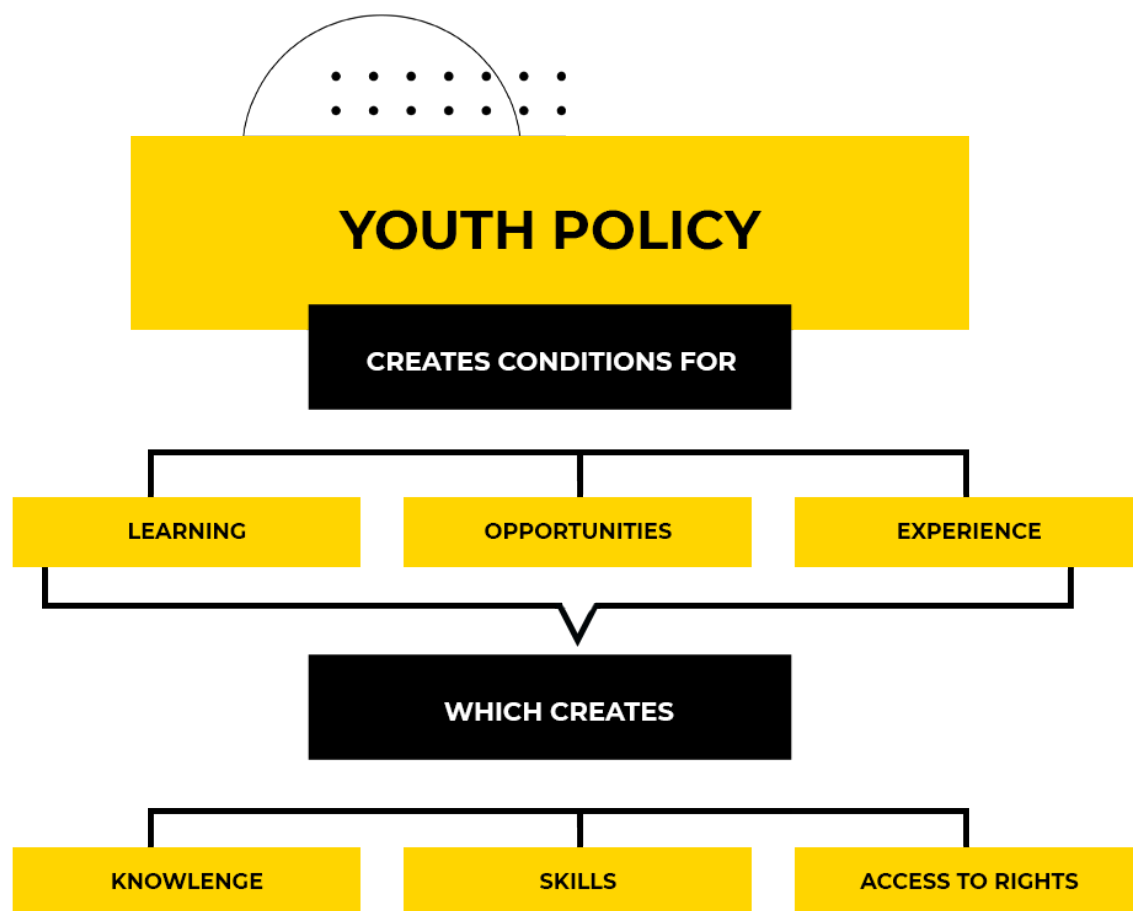
## SECTION 2

### Youth policy in states of the Lublin Triangle

Along with economic and security fields, the countries of the Lublin Triangle have indicated their readiness to cooperate on some other important issues, in particular, “strengthening people-to-people contacts and cooperation between civil societies”.<sup>1</sup>

Such an ambitious goal can be achieved through joint actions in the field of youth policy, especially by increasing the level of youth activity, their involvement in intergovernmental projects and initiatives.

According to one of the Council of Europe’s definitions, youth policy is “a strategy implemented by public authorities to provide young people with opportunities and experiences that support their successful integration into society and enable them to be active and responsible members of society and agents of change”.<sup>2,3</sup> A number of recommendations to governments on youth policy standards have been adopted by international organisations and associations (the UN, the EU, Council of Europe, etc.). However, each of the states of the Lublin Triangle has its own peculiarities of the implementation of legal provisions in this area. This section presents an overview of the current state of youth policy in Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, policy documents and regulations on youth policy, its institutional structure, as well as opportunities for interstate cooperation in this area.



Council of Europe infographics on the definition of youth policy<sup>4</sup>

## SUBSECTION 2.1

### Youth policy in Lithuania

Youth policy, according to Lithuanian legal acts, is defined as a purposeful activity intended to resolve youth issues and to create favourable conditions for the formation of the personality of young people and their integration into social life.

Lithuanian youth policy is targeted at young people (aged 14–29) who presently make up more than 495,000 (18 per cent) of the country’s population.<sup>5</sup> It is governed by the Law on youth policy framework (2003)<sup>6</sup>, which defines the features of the formation and implementation of youth policy, the competence of youth organisations and organisations working with youth.

The main principles of youth policy implementation in Lithuania are:

- parity and subsidiarity
- participation and information
- self-government, independence and voluntariness
- interinstitutional coordination, communication and cooperation<sup>7</sup>

At the national level, a number of institutions was established to form and ensure the organisation and management of youth policy, which is an important part of the Law:<sup>8,9,10</sup>

NAME OF THE AUTHORITY	FUNCTIONS
Commission for Youth and Sports Affairs of the Lithuanian parliament	Protects the rights of young people and carries out parliamentary control over institutions and authorities that implement youth policy
The Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Establishes youth policy, organises, coordinates and controls its implementation
The Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Coordinates and implements government programs and activities, analyses the activities and state of development of youth and youth organisations
The Lithuanian Youth Council	Supplies propositions to the government and municipalities on issues of youth policy, its implementation, cooperation with foreign youth organisations
Council of Lithuanian youth organisations	Mobilises youth organisations to resolve current issues; develops international relations and international cooperation between youth organisations of Lithuania and other countries, organises relevant events.
Agency for International Cooperation with Youth	Initiates, organises and implements long-term bilateral and multilateral cooperation between governmental and non-governmental institutions, organisations; supports the strengthening of youth cooperation at the municipal level; collects, systematises and provides the public with information related to international cooperation and its opportunities.

In Lithuania, youth policy is implemented not only at the national level. Some administrative-territorial units can create their strategies and plans.

Regional policy is coordinated through 'roundtables'.<sup>11</sup> At the regional level, youth policy lies within the competence of deputy mayors, who are usually responsible for youth affairs, hence, local authorities play the role of policy coordinators, including some elements of youth policy. For example, this is evidenced by the following documents<sup>12</sup>: Palanga Strategic Development Plan until 2020 (approved by the Decision of the Palanga City Municipal Council of 18 February 2011) in the field of development "Quality of life and social security improvement", which aims to promote positive attitude to initiative activities, socialization of children and youth<sup>13</sup>; Vilnius Youth Policy Strategy<sup>14</sup>, which guarantees the security of youth infrastructure, the integration of youth policy into self-government processes, and also the ongoing evaluation of youth policy; the program of implementation of youth policy of Akmen district municipality for 2019-2021<sup>15</sup>, which provides the promotion of dialogue between the municipality and youth, strengthening interdepartmental cooperation in the field of youth policy, raising and solving key issues of youth.

In order to create appropriate conditions for the active participation of young people in an open and democratic society, programs aimed at involving non-governmental youth organisations in the formation of youth policy are being implemented. In addition, relations between NGOs, state and municipal institutions have been strengthened, support from EU structural funds and program funding have been provided.<sup>16</sup> Since 2013, the activities of non-governmental organisations in Lithuania have been regulated in accordance with the Law "On the Development of Non-Governmental Organisations".<sup>17,18</sup>

**Regarding aspects of NGO funding, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania notes:**

**"As for the broad definition of NGOs and their legal forms under national law, Lithuania doesn't currently have accurate data on some aspects of NGO activities, namely their funding etc., but it is determined that about 33 thousand subjects are registered in the state and about 16 thousand of them are active. In the field of social policy, NGOs can apply for national grants by their activity field (youth, inclusion, human rights, volunteering, NGO development, etc.). The Ministry of Social Security and Labour provides grants for NGOs as institutional support programs for a total – 1.5 mln EUR. The Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour – around one mln EUR. The Department for the Affairs of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour – 1.5 mln EUR".<sup>19</sup>**

At the national level there is a Council of Lithuanian youth organisations - LiJOT.<sup>20</sup> It includes 70 organisations (national NGOs). It serves as an 'umbrella' for youth NGOs across the country: national, regional etc.

**The main activities of LiJOT are:**

- development of civic education
- support of youth initiatives and development of youth organisations
- European activities

LiJOT receives ongoing support from the EU's "Youth in Action" Program, supported by the European Commission and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.<sup>21,22</sup> Foreign NGOs in Lithuania receive 30% of funding from the government of Lithuania and 70% from international donors.<sup>23</sup>

**For example, LiJOT Vice President Urte Pertrulite about NGO funding in Lithuania and international cooperation of Lithuanian youth policy in the EU and abroad noted the following:**

**"If not counting private fund, then a lot of funding comes from governmental bodies by applying projects to a specific grant fund. Also, the Erasmus+ program is a popular financial source. From our youth affairs department side, I know that we do have a project financed by our government for youth-related projects with Ukraine, Poland and if I am not mistaken even with Georgia. From LiJOT's side, we do cooperate with the Ukrainian Youth Council, Belarusian youth council RADA and a little bit less, but we keep a connection with Georgian Youth Council. If we are talking outside the EU, then we also closely cooperate with LNU (National Norwegian youth council)".<sup>24</sup>**



Urte Pertrulite

One of the main means of implementing all the programs of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania is the development of a long-term youth policy strategy, which defines the goals, objectives, tools and results of youth policy implementation.

The National Action Plan for Youth Policy 2020<sup>25</sup> has recently been developed. Its main objectives, according to the plan, are:

- 1 to promote the development of a social security system that meets the various needs of young people;
- 2 to develop the conscious, civic and cultural personality of a young person;
- 3 to develop the infrastructure of youth employment;
- 4 to promote consistent and high-quality activities of youth and youth work organisations to increase the involvement of young people in organised events;
- 5 to ensure cooperation between the public, private and non-governmental sectors in the development of a coherent youth policy based on evidence and knowledge;
- 6 to develop cooperation between the public, private and non-governmental sectors at the local, national and international levels.

In general, this document is aimed at intensifying the implementation of youth policy at the national level and ensuring interagency cooperation.

In addition to national legislation, Lithuania is also guided by international standards and recommendations on youth policy, and the EU has a leading role to play in cooperation at this level. For example, Lithuania implements international programs and strategies, such as:

EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027, based on the EU Council Resolution of 26 November 2018.<sup>26,27</sup> Particular attention is paid to the following areas of activity:

- 1 promoting the participation of young people in public and democratic life;
- 2 encouraging young people inside and outside the European Union to take part in volunteering and learning mobility, showing solidarity and intercultural understanding;
- 3 supporting the empowerment of young people by improving the quality of youth work, introducing innovations and encouraging youth activities.<sup>28</sup>

Lithuania also implements Erasmus+<sup>29</sup> and the European Solidarity Corps<sup>30,31</sup> (EU programs to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe).<sup>32</sup> The functions of the National Erasmus+ Agency and the European Solidarity Corps in Lithuania are delegated to the Agency for International Youth Cooperation.<sup>33</sup> The main goal of the Agency is to ensure the development of international cooperation among young people and the successful participation of Lithuanian youth in European Union youth programs.

The Agency holds a number of successful events, including Europe Goes Local<sup>34</sup>, European Academy of Youth Work<sup>34</sup>, Cross over<sup>36,37</sup>, Keep it Real<sup>38</sup> etc. One of the most successful events implemented in 2019 is the 4th Eastern Partnership Youth Forum, which took place in June 2019.<sup>39,40</sup> The topic of the Forum was “Critical thinking through media literacy and active participation”. It was attended by youth workers and those who work with youth in one of the thematic areas of the Forum.



The 4th Eastern Partnership Youth Forum<sup>41</sup>

**“From 2021, we should launch a partnership with National Agencies in other countries, that will focus on strengthening regional cooperation with the EU’s neighbours. It will be coordinated by SALTO regional centres, and the Eastern Partnership will be coordinated by the SALTO EEA in Poland — the Polish National Agency. The focus will be mainly aimed at organisational communication and partnership building”, — notes the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.<sup>42</sup>**

## SUBSECTION 2.2

### Youth policy in Poland

**There is currently no legislation in Poland related both to the implementation of youth policy and its main principles.**

So far, the only consolidated attempt of the government to lay the foundations for youth policy is represented by the State Strategy for Youth for 2003-2012 (Strategia Państwa dla Młodzieży na lata 2003-2012, hereinafter referred to as the 'Strategy').<sup>43</sup>

As stated in the document itself<sup>44</sup>, its provisions were inspired by the process of Poland's accession to the EU and the related implementation of the youth rights protection standards, as well as consultations on the European Commission White Paper "A new impetus for European youth" published in 2001<sup>45</sup> and Resolution 98 (6) on the youth policy of the Council of Europe.<sup>46</sup>

According to the Strategy, youth policy is defined as 'an interdepartmental integrated policy on youth arising from its needs', and its main goal is to ensure 'equal opportunities for the development of the younger generation'.<sup>47</sup> Here, young people are referred to as persons aged 15 to 25 years. There is currently no other generalised definition of this social group in Poland. This category includes both urban and rural populations, persons of different social and financial status. State statistics for the 1st quarter of 2020 indicate that young people make up about 10% of the total population of Poland (38.4 million people)<sup>48,49</sup> — almost twice as many as lived in Poland when the Strategy was adopted in 2003.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, to implement certain governmental and local youth programs, the age category of 25-29 years<sup>51,52,53</sup> is 'added' to the definition of youth. Together with the previous group, it comprises 16.3% of the Polish population (approximately 6 million people).<sup>54</sup>

In order to implement the Strategy, six goals and a plan for their implementation were identified for the state:

- 1 creating and providing equal opportunities for youth development and self-realization;
- 2 creating opportunities for the development of the young generation's activities;
- 3 combating the marginalization of the young generation;
- 4 development of international youth cooperation;
- 5 creating an information system for young people;
- 6 education and professional development of adults working with youth.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to the Strategy, Poland currently has some other national programs, where the youth policy provisions are mentioned. These programs include, for example, the documents "Long-term National Development Strategy. Poland 2030. The Third Wave of Modernity"<sup>56</sup> and "Social Capital Development Strategy 2020".<sup>57</sup> In the absence of other similar acts, Poland uses the legislation containing provisions on youth rights and guarantees for their protection. These include articles of the Polish Constitution, the Family and Guardianship Code, the Labor Code, laws and regulations related to education, employment,<sup>58</sup> and relevant EU legislation on youth.<sup>59</sup>

**Poland does not have a single central institutional system that deals with the issues of youth policy. Therefore, these tasks are performed by competent state and regional authorities,<sup>60</sup> as well as NGOs.<sup>61</sup>**

At the state level, certain authorities related to youth policy belong to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy of Poland and some other structures. Also, special commissions on youth policy can be set up within public authorities (for example, the Commission on Education, Science and Youth in the Polish Sejm).<sup>62</sup>

**Youth policy is most actively developed in the regions of Poland with the assistance of local governments and NGOs.**

At the level of voivodeships, powiats, gminas and even cities, separate policy documents determining its development and implementation are often created.<sup>63</sup> For example, in Warsaw, there is a program named "Young Warsaw. City with a Climate for Youth 2016-2020", set to improve the living conditions of young people (persons aged 13-26) and encourage them to participate in the city affairs. The program includes provisions on several youth-related areas, such as education, employment, culture, health, security, youth participation in decision-making, etc.<sup>64</sup> The success of the program prompted local authorities to consider developing a new strategy for young people already this year.<sup>65</sup>

Another example here is the experience of Świętokrzyskie (Holy Cross) Voivodeship, where the development of youth policy in the region is facilitated by the recommendation "Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. Areas of support for social activity of young people in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship for 2017-2020".<sup>66</sup> The document presents the results of a study of the region and the state initiatives to increase the level of youth activity (15-30 years old) and also provides recommendations for further development of youth policy in the region and coordination of relevant structures in youth affairs.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to policy documents, there are regional authorities established for the youth policy coordination in some regions, as well as special youth-related projects developed at the level of certain administrative-territorial units in Poland. For example, in Zachodniopomorskie (West Pomeranian) Voivodeship, a Secretariat for Youth Affairs, established in 2005, provides content for youth (people under the age of 35), assists NGOs in implementing their projects and fundraising, implements EU projects for young people (EVS, Eurodesk, Europe Direct, etc.) and international cooperation projects (with partners from Germany, France, Norway, etc.) and performs other functions.<sup>68</sup> In order to implement EU standards and state documents on youth policy more effectively, the Voivodeship Youth Council and 17 active local youth councils have been functioning in the voivodeship since 2005.<sup>69,70</sup>



In Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesian) Voivodeship, there is a Youth Sejmik of the Voivodeship, which functions include organisation of youth events on ecology protection, civic engagement and resolving youth problems in the region.

As an outcome of these activities, the Youth Sejmik prepares resolutions, which are submitted to the local government bodies of Dolnośląskie Voivodeship.<sup>71</sup>

A similar body has existed in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship since 2018, where it has a “proactive, propositional and advisory role for local governmental bodies of Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship” and aims to increase the proactive attitude of young people and educate their representatives on the basics of local self-government.<sup>72</sup>

Besides, the Office of the Marshal of the Voivodeship established a position of Youth Ombudsman in 2014.

The functions of the Youth Ombudsman include initiating and supporting decision-making at the regional level aimed at increasing social activism of young people, supporting youth activities in the region and promoting relations between the Marshall Office and youth.<sup>73</sup>

NGOs also play an important role in the institutional structure of Poland’s youth policy. For example, the Alliance of Independent Organisations and the Polish Youth Council (an advisory body to the government, later — to the Ministry of National Education) were established in the 1990s but were later reorganised.<sup>74</sup>

Currently, the most credible NGO on youth policy is “Polska Rada organizacji Młodzieżowych (PROM)”, which has been operating since 2011. It is the only NGO in Poland which has the status of a National Youth Council in accordance with European legislation and international agreements. PROM represents the interests of 36 organisations and more than 250,000 young people throughout Poland.<sup>75</sup>

Special attention should be paid to the international aspect of Poland’s youth policy. Due to the country’s membership in the EU, Polish youth has access to many European Union programs, such as ERASMUS+ exchanges, EVS, European Solidarity Corps. In order to inform Polish youth about European opportunities, there are divisions of Europe Direct, Eurodesk and a number of others.<sup>76</sup> Besides, Poland has signed agreements on cooperation and youth exchanges with individual countries. For example, the international organisation Polish-German Youth Cooperation (Polsko-Niemiecka Współpraca Młodzieży — PNWM) was established in 1991 as a result of bilateral agreements between Poland and Germany. It is funded by state governments and is aimed at developing cooperation in education, science, school exchanges and other areas.<sup>77</sup>

As for the cooperation with the states of the Lublin Triangle, Poland signed agreements with Ukraine (2015) and Lithuania (2007) on the establishment of intergovernmental structures on bilateral youth exchanges.<sup>78</sup>

## SUBSECTION 2.3

### Youth Policy in Ukraine

The foundation of youth policy in Ukraine was laid back in the early 1990s. The current legislation defines the state youth policy as the activity of the state in relation to youth to create conditions and guarantees for “vital self-determination, intellectual, moral, physical development of youth, a realisation of its creative potential both in individual interests and in the interests of Ukraine”.<sup>79</sup>

In contrast to the European approach, Ukraine has a legal age category for young people established in the frames of 14 to 35 years<sup>80</sup>, which as of 01.01.2020 is 27.7% of the population of Ukraine (11.6 million people).<sup>81</sup> However, the recently approved National Strategy of State Youth Policy until 2030 (hereinafter — the National Strategy 2030) has changed the age definition of youth.<sup>82</sup> According to the provisions of this document, young people are persons aged 14 to 29, which is 17% of the Ukrainian population (7 million people).<sup>83</sup>

The main documents establishing the youth policy principles include the Law of Ukraine “On General Principles of State Youth Policy in Ukraine”, the Law of Ukraine “On Promoting Social Formation and Development of Youth in Ukraine” and a number of other regulations governing state policy on youth organisations, youth exchanges, development of youth centres, etc.<sup>84</sup>

One such document was the draft law No. 3621 “On Youth”<sup>85,86</sup>, which was replaced by the draft legislation No. 3718 “On Basic Principles of Youth Policy”<sup>87</sup> (adopted in the first reading on 21 July 2020). The bill aims to update the basic concepts of youth policy, create a new system of distribution of public authorities functions in this area and to introduce new mechanisms and guarantees for the needs of youth.<sup>88,89</sup>

In addition, there are national programs and strategies for youth policy developed in Ukraine.

Currently, the Strategy for the Development of State Youth Policy until 2020 and the State Targeted Social Program of the Cabinet of Ministers “Youth of Ukraine” for 2016-2020 are in force.<sup>90</sup>

The first document is aimed at solving a number of youth-related problems (education, employment, health care, etc.) and the implementation of state youth policy.<sup>91</sup>

The State Targeted Social Program “Youth of Ukraine” aims to “create favourable conditions for the development and self-realization of Ukrainian youth, the formation of their civic position and national-patriotic consciousness”.<sup>92</sup>

**As most of the acts on youth policy were adopted in the 1990s without further changes, there are discussions held on adapting the legislation to the current needs of young people, as well as to fulfil the obligations under the Association Agreement with the EU.**

The project identifies the following priorities, as well as a number of government programs to support their implementation:

- 1 healthy lifestyle of young people;
- 2 development of non-formal education;
- 3 housing for young people;
- 4 formation of civic position and national-patriotic education;
- 5 youth employment (provision of primary and secondary employment and youth self-employment);
- 6 providing financial support to youth and children's NGOs;
- 7 partnership support for young people living in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and for internally displaced persons;
- 8 ensuring international youth cooperation.<sup>93</sup>

Currently, there are discussions on updating state strategies in the field of youth policy and adapting them to modern challenges.

For example, the government recently approved the National Strategy of State Youth Policy until 2030.<sup>94</sup> The goal of the National Strategy 2030 is "to create opportunities for young people living in Ukraine to be competitive and [...] contribute to the further development of Ukrainian society".<sup>95</sup>

The National Strategy 2030 proposes to achieve this goal by joint efforts of young people, public authorities and international partners.

The priorities mentioned in the National Strategy 2030 are security, health care, increasing the level of youth involvement in public life, as well as its integration into Ukrainian society and the world.<sup>96</sup>

Among the innovations envisaged to achieve the goals of the National Strategy 2030, there are the state's responsibilities to ensure gender equality, increase the participation of young people in climate planning and management processes, promote awareness of reproductive and sexual health and a number of other measures to implement the priorities of this document successfully.<sup>97</sup>

In addition, the discussion of the draft Concept of the State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine" 2021-2025 was recently completed.

The document identifies the following problems in the field of youth activities, which should be targeted by the provisions of the State Targeted Social Program 2021-2025:

- 1 low level of youth participation in public life and in the activities of civil society institutions;
- 2 low level of awareness of young people about their rights, responsibilities and opportunities for self-development;
- 3 low participation level of youth in the political life of the country;
- 4 insufficient level of youth mobility;
- 5 low level of preparation of young people for family life and lack of a responsible attitude from young people to family planning;
- 6 low level of competencies needed by young people for a conscious choice of profession and career development, entrepreneurial activity, implementation of leadership qualities, etc.<sup>98</sup>

The document aims to "create opportunities for self-realisation and development of youth potential in Ukraine".<sup>99</sup> The priorities of the State Targeted Social Program 2021-2025 are:

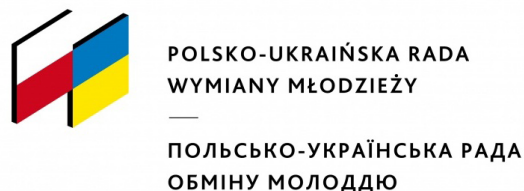
- 1 formation of youth civic position;
- 2 promotion of a healthy lifestyle among young people;
- 3 competence development and youth capacity building;
- 4 support for socially vulnerable youth.<sup>100</sup>

The implementation of youth policy in Ukraine takes place both at the central and the regional level. The central body in the system of youth policy of Ukraine is the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, which functions include advocacy of youth issues and development of relevant legislation to support youth.<sup>101</sup> In addition, a number of other structures in the system of central executive bodies are also dealing with youth policy matters, such as the All-Ukrainian Youth Center<sup>102</sup> and the State Institute for Family and Youth Policy.<sup>103</sup> Ukraine's youth policy is cross-sectoral, so certain functions related to the development and implementation of youth policy are performed by various public administration bodies at the national and regional levels.<sup>104</sup> Regional youth affairs administration has developed significantly due to the decentralisation reform and introduction of the Model for the implementation of youth policy in the context of decentralisation.<sup>105</sup> At the regional level, a well-developed system is established to involve young people in the management processes, for example, by supporting the activities of youth councils and NGOs.

Along with the state institutions, civil society organisations also participate in the development of youth policy in Ukraine. One of the most authoritative is the National Youth Council of Ukraine (hereinafter - the NYCU), founded in 2015. The aim of the NYCU is to “consolidate and develop democratic youth organisations of Ukraine to protect and represent the interests of youth at the local, regional, national and international levels”.<sup>106</sup> NYCU is the only national platform recognised at the international level, which cooperates with more than fifty National Youth Councils in Europe and the world to achieve its goals.<sup>107</sup> For example, the NYCU has established partnerships with the aforementioned PROM in Poland and LiJOT in Lithuania, as well as with the OSCE, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, and other organisations.<sup>108</sup> The tasks of the NYCU, in particular, aim to improve the legislation on youth policy and youth rights; to create conditions for the consolidation of youth organisations; to provide assistance to NYCU member organisations; to develop cooperation with NGOs, mass media, public authorities and international partners; to conduct research in the field of youth policy; to create and develop the professional sphere of youth policy activity, and a number of other tasks under the NYCU Charter.<sup>109</sup> For example, in the 2019 Yearly Report, the organisation mentioned the following achievements: publication of ten positional documents (on youth and ecology, security, culture, etc.); the accession of 54 new organisations to the NYCU network; holding more than 100 events for youth organisations; and contributing more than 470,000 UAH for advocacy of the member organisations.<sup>110</sup>

Along with Lithuania and Poland, Ukraine is actively developing cooperation in the field of youth policy with international partners. Financial programs from the governments of Canada, Germany, the US, the UNFPA, and EU initiatives (e.g., Erasmus+, European Voluntary Service) aimed at supporting youth initiatives play an important role.<sup>111</sup> It is also worth noting that in 2015 and 2016 Ukraine signed relevant agreements on youth exchanges with the states of the Lublin Triangle.<sup>112</sup> To implement the provisions of these documents, the parties established the Ukrainian-Polish Youth Exchange Council<sup>113</sup> and the Youth Exchange Council of Ukraine and Lithuania.<sup>114</sup>

### Ukrainian-Polish Youth Exchange Council:<sup>115</sup>



### Youth Exchange Council of Ukraine and Lithuania:



The functions and principles of both bodies are similar. Youth exchanges under the agreements are carried out through “youth participation in projects implemented by non-profit civil society institutions, educational institutions and public utilities working with youth, which are determined in accordance with the results of the competition”<sup>116</sup> held by the Ukrainian-Polish Youth Exchange Council or the Youth Exchange Council of Ukraine and Lithuania.

## SUBSECTION 2.4 Youth policy and cooperation prospects

Given the ambitious cooperation program of the Lublin Triangle states, especially concerning the development of civil society and common features in the youth policy of the states, it is possible to distinguish the already existing principles for tripartite regulation of youth cooperation between Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine. The common approach to the implementation of the youth policy provisions can be seen in the policy documents and the institutional framework for youth affairs among the states of the Lublin Triangle. Thus, all three countries have identified similar youth-related problems that need to be addressed by the state. For instance, the Polish State Strategy for Youth 2003-2012 identifies education, employment, participation in public life, culture and healthcare as key issues that need to be targeted to strengthen the position of young people in society. Similar problems have been identified in the newly designed Ukrainian documents on youth policy, as well as in Lithuanian youth policy research. The issues of improving the quality of educational services, developing youth infrastructure, youth health care, increasing social activity of youth and designing more effective provisions to guarantee youth employment are common to the states of the Lublin Triangle. Along with the functioning of state mechanisms responsible for the implementation of youth policy measures, Lublin Triangle states repeatedly emphasize the need for international cooperation to overcome the challenges in youth affairs. The active participation of all three countries in EU-sponsored projects (Erasmus +, European Voluntary Service, etc.) as well as in the bilateral cooperation programs is remarkable. As mentioned earlier, the parties signed the relevant agreements on youth exchanges in 2007 (Poland-Lithuania),<sup>117</sup> 2015 (Ukraine-Lithuania) and 2016 (Ukraine-Poland).

The mechanism of implementation and the basic principles of such exchanges are similar. For example, in the agreements mentioned, bilateral youth exchange councils have been established. According to the texts of the agreements, these bodies have similar functions and principles of activity.

### Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund:<sup>118</sup>



The level of cooperation between the states is also impressive. According to the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine information sheet for 2019, a total of 14 projects were implemented within the framework of Ukrainian-Lithuanian youth exchanges, where about 386 people took part (four projects worth 993,432 UAH were implemented by the Ukrainian side; another ten projects - by the Lithuanian side). Regarding exchanges with Poland in 2019, 83 projects were implemented, in which 2693 people took part (the Ukrainian side implemented 15 projects worth 3.358 million UAH, and the Polish — 68 projects).<sup>119</sup> The above facts prove the relevance of creating a separate structure within the Lublin Triangle, which would be responsible for tripartite contact on the development of youth politics.

**The common vision, similar youth-related problems and approach to their solution, as well as the interest of states in international cooperation on youth affairs, emphasize the need to further establish ties between states in this area, in particular for the development of cooperation within the Lublin Triangle.**

The next section examines public opinion on the creation of such an institutional structure. It also defines the concepts of its design and further operation.

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**3.1** THE CURRENT STATE OF TRILATERAL  
YOUTH COOPERATION

**3.2** THE YOUTH WING OF THE  
LUBLIN TRIANGLE AND PROSPECTS  
FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT

**3.3** THE OVERALL CONCEPT AND  
COOPERATION MECHANISMS OF THE  
YOUTH LUBLIN TRIANGLE

**3.4** THE YOUTH LUBLIN TRIANGLE:  
WHAT'S NEXT?

# SECTION 3

THE ROLE OF YOUTH COOPERATION  
IN RELATIONS BETWEEN  
UKRAINE, LITHUANIA AND POLAND

## SECTION 3

### The role of youth cooperation in relations between Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland

Youth activism in the public and political sectors is an integral part of the development of a single country and its international connections with other states. The success in this area is massively defined by those who take an active part in social processes and influence them directly.

This necessitates the active participation of young people and their civic engagement in different undertakings, as well as demonstrates the importance of state support for both national and international youth initiatives.

Youth diplomacy is a powerful tool for developing strong and amicable relations between countries, establishing cultural ties, conducting international research and implementing innovative solutions, forming a positive image of their homeland abroad and building a civil society. Currently, youth diplomacy coexists with professional diplomacy as its harmonious complement. It is also of particular importance for the promotion of the national brand in the international arena, which is a top priority of public diplomacy.

The Lublin Triangle, which aims to expand political, economic, cultural and social cooperation between Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, as well as to support Ukraine's integration into the EU, can also become a platform for the development of youth diplomacy. There are currently no trilateral initiatives for the development of the youth policy of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, but youth cooperation at the level of the Lublin Triangle countries has the potential to become an auxiliary mechanism in achieving the common goal of the platform.

With the support of national youth councils, we aim to create a youth wing of the Lublin Triangle to multiply the opportunities available for young people and help them to become the driving force of youth diplomacy and promote youth ideas alongside government initiatives on the international level.

## SUBSECTION 3.1

### The current state of trilateral youth cooperation

At the current stage, cooperation between young people from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania takes place mainly through their participation in educational exchanges in accordance with the Agreement between the government of Ukraine and the governments of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Poland on the Youth Exchange of Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland. In addition, similar exchanges and joint projects take place under the Erasmus+ program, where Ukraine is one of 150 partner countries participating in exchange programs with 27 EU Member States, including Lithuania and Poland.

The current situation demonstrates the lack of a single consolidating platform that could unite young people of the three countries who want to take part in the development of youth diplomacy, which, in its turn, would ensure the successful implementation of the foreign policy goals of these states.

It is the Lublin Triangle that has the potential to become the foundation for building an extensive youth network in the framework of trilateral cooperation, which can help improve relations to achieve common goals set by the governments of the three countries, in particular regarding Ukraine's European integration.

In order to determine the opinion of young people on the current state of youth cooperation between the countries of the Lublin Triangle, as well as the prospects for creating the Youth Lublin Triangle, we have conducted an online survey\*, involving 403 people from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania aged 14-35. For this purpose, we have developed a special questionnaire which has been distributed to our target audience with the help of partner NGOs and national youth councils of Ukraine and Lithuania.

In order to reduce the percentage of errors due to misinterpretation of the questions, the survey was conducted in two languages — Ukrainian for young people from Ukraine and English for young people from Poland and Lithuania.

The questionnaire had been divided into five blocks. The first block contained one question regarding the country of representation, where the respondent could choose one of the three options proposed.

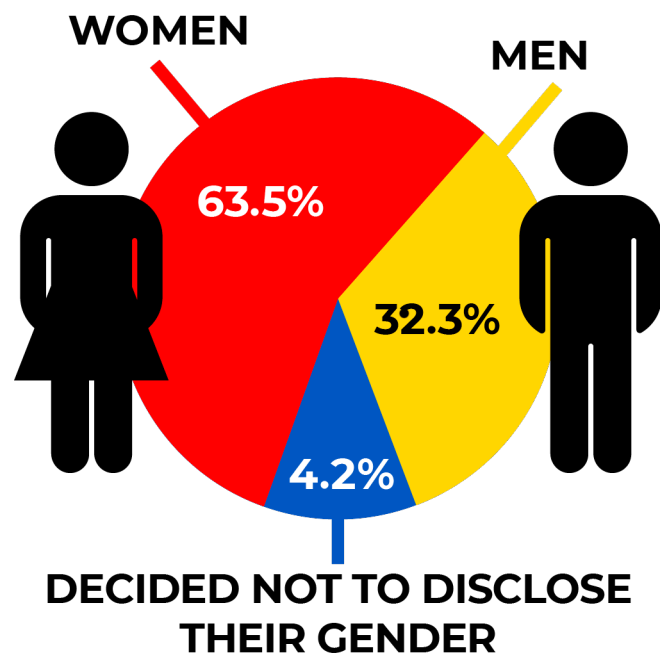
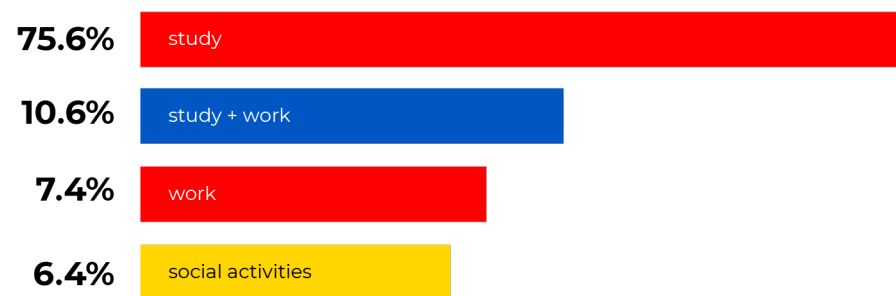
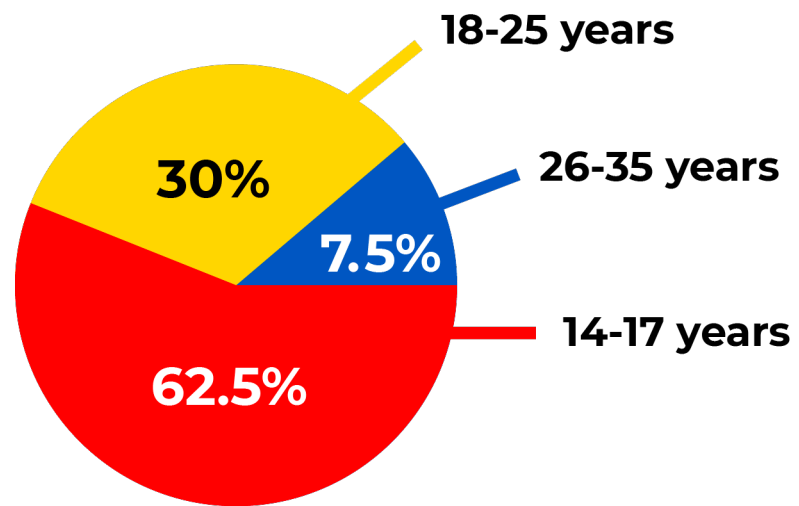
After answering this question, the respondent was automatically offered questions attached to his group of representation. Thus, the questions for the three groups of young people, according to their countries of representation, were not fundamentally different but were specifically adapted to each group.

The second block was focused on basic information about the respondent for the purpose of analysis of the contingent of respondents. The following blocks were directly related to the prospects of creating a youth wing of the Lublin Triangle, possible activities in its framework, and the current state of cooperation at the level of young people of the three countries.

There were four types of questions: multiple choice questions with one possible answer; multiple choice questions with many possible answers; open questions; combined questions. The poll was completely anonymous.

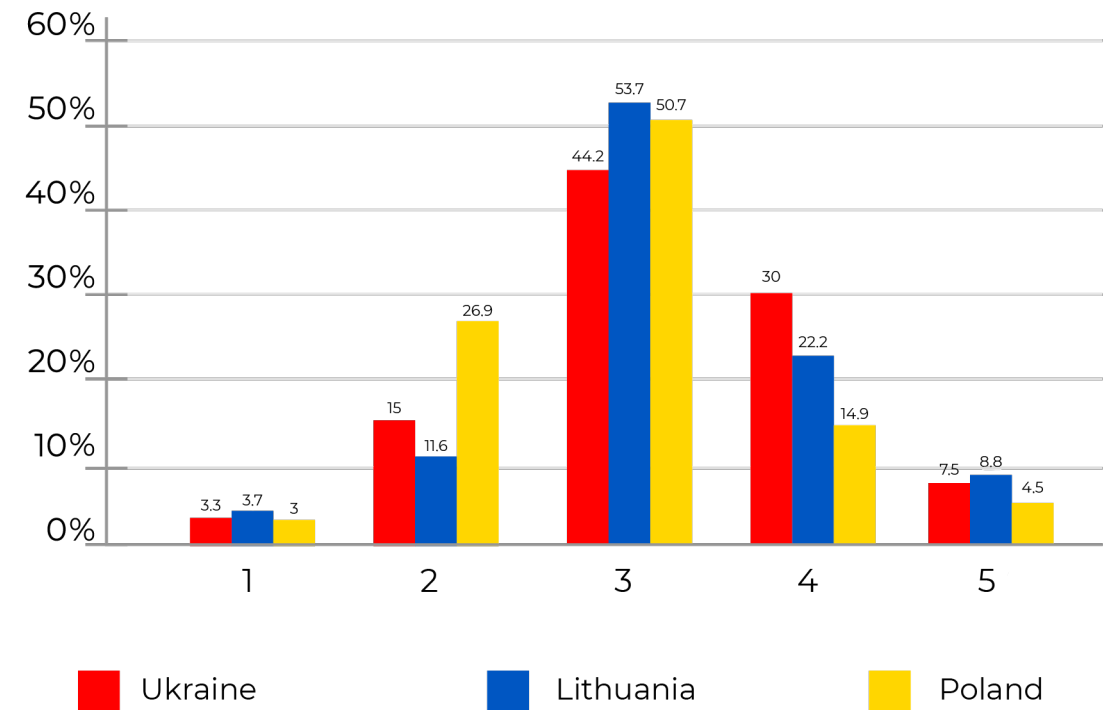
In terms of the gender dimension of the survey, 63.5% of respondents were female, 32.3% were male, and another 4.2% preferred not to disclose their gender.

Regarding the field of the professional activity of young people who took part in the survey, more than half of them (75.6%) study in schools and universities, while 10.6% combine studying with work, 7.4% of the respondents work, and 6.4% are engaged in civic activities.

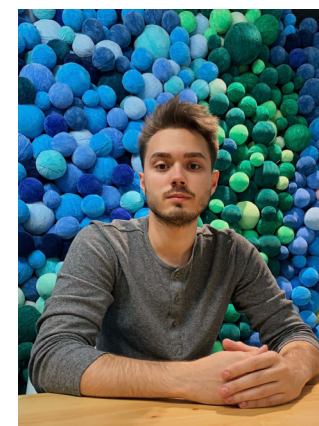


Characteristics of the survey participants about the state of youth cooperation between Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania and the prospects of creating the Youth Lublin Triangle

Due to the survey and processing of its results, we have achieved the goal of our research and analysed young people's opinion on the necessity of the Youth Lublin Triangle creation, its prospects, possible ways of functioning and problems that exist at the present stage of youth cooperation. The majority of Ukrainian respondents (44.2%) rated the general state of youth cooperation between the three countries on 3 points out of 5 possible. Young people from Poland (50.7%) and Lithuania (53.7%) share this opinion.



Assessment of the general state of youth cooperation between the three countries on a scale from 1 to 5 points



Julian Kritsak,  
Chairman of the National Youth  
Council of Ukraine  
(hereinafter – NYCU)

“It should be noted that the cooperation exists in the form of Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Lithuanian youth exchanges. There aren't many of them, but in general, they have already become an effective tool of cultural exchange for promoting cooperation between young people. Poland and Lithuania are our neighbours who can really help us with economic growth and Euro-Atlantic integration. We need to deepen our cooperation in the economic, environmental, military and humanitarian spheres. That is why I would consider the current state of cooperation unsatisfactory. However, the creation of the Lublin Triangle gives us hope that we will increase cooperation between our countries to a sufficient level”.

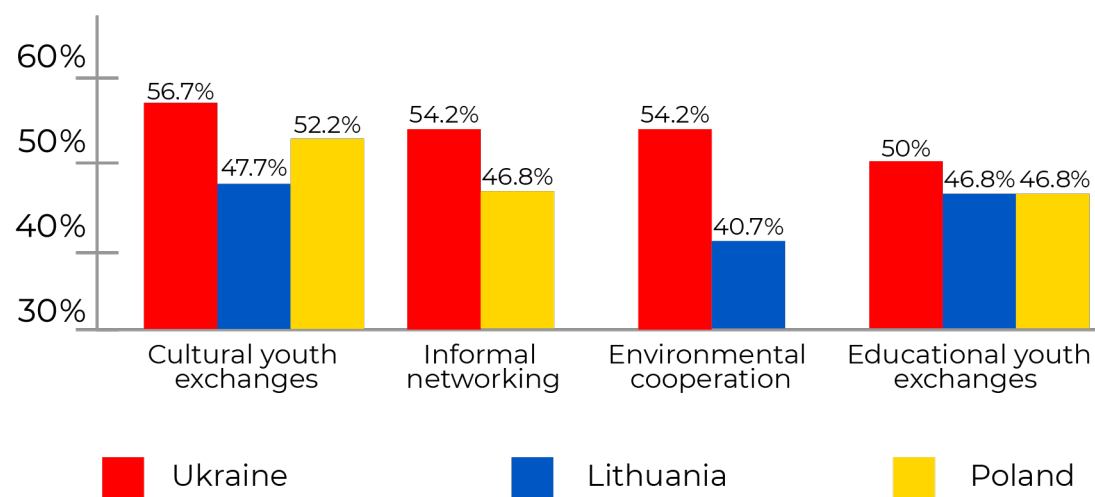


According to Ukrainian youth, the areas of youth cooperation that are least developed and need to be improved are cultural youth exchange (56.7%), non-formal networking (54.2%), ecological cooperation (54.2%) and educational exchanges between young people (50%). Young people from Lithuania share the opinion that the greatest attention should be paid to the cultural (47.7%), educational (46.8%) and ecological spheres (40.7%). Young Poles believe that the least developed area of cooperation that needs to be improved is the area of cultural youth exchanges (52.2%). The second place in terms of votes from Polish youth was shared by the spheres of educational exchanges and non-formal youth networking (46.8% of votes each).

**“Speaking of youth cooperation between our countries, one of the most problematic points is the fact that Ukraine is not a member of the European Union. However, we can promote students’ exchanges between the universities of the three countries and support Ukraine on its path to EU accession”.**



Weronika Łukaszyńska,  
Chairwoman of the Mobility Team of the Student Council of the Jagiellonian University



The spheres of cooperation that are the least developed and need to be improved

In addition, we asked young people from three countries to list at least three associations with the countries of the Lublin Triangle. The most frequent associations with Ukraine in the responses of Polish and Lithuanian youth are related to the words “war”, “corruption”, “poverty”, “Revolution of Dignity”, “borsch”, “EU”. About 35% of respondents did not have any associations with Ukraine which means that young people are not sufficiently aware of the cultural and social features of Ukraine and areas of international cooperation or are only guided by news stories and stereotypes.

Associations with Poland, which are most common in the responses of Ukrainian and Lithuanian youth, are connected to the words “workers”, “violation of women’s rights”, “common history”, “Warsaw”.

Associations with Lithuania are related to the following words: “Baltics”, “Vilnius”, “Europe”, “sea”. These associations show that respondents were mostly guided by the information broadcasted by the media, along with well-known facts. Analysing the state of cooperation based on exchange programs between Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian youth, in particular projects funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ program, we collected official statistics of 2014-2020 on the number of projects in which young people from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania participated together.

**Erasmus+ Learning Mobility of Individuals (KA1)** is a program that supports academic mobility in education and the youth sector and aims to bring long-term benefits to participants and organisations involved.

It covers short-term exchange programs: credit mobility for study (3-12 months) and internships (2-12 months) for Ukrainian students; academic mobility for teaching / advanced training/internships (from 5 days to 2 months) for teachers and employees of higher education institutions.<sup>2</sup>

In 2014, out of 15,808 projects implemented under this program, only 28 projects involved young people of the three Lublin Triangle states participating together. In 2015-2016, the total number of projects of the program increased (16,685 and 17,197 projects, respectively) and the number of joint initiatives of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania (25 and 24 projects) decreased. 2017 brought positive changes to the youth cooperation of the three countries and amounted to 18,232 projects, of which 32 were joint.

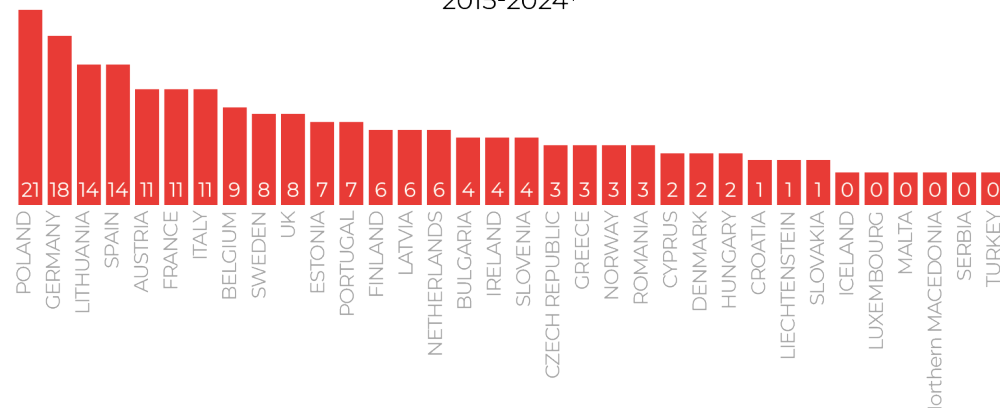
The following year, the number of joint projects increased to 42 from a total of 18,621. And in 2019, there were already 45 Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian projects out of 19,651 possible. 2020 has made its adjustments in all spheres of public life, and youth cooperation is no exception.

As of November of this year, 14,620 Erasmus+ Learning Mobility of Individuals (KA1) projects were implemented, of which only 28 were jointly attended by representatives of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania, demonstrating the decline in the number of joint projects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Erasmus+ Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices (KA2)** is an Erasmus+ program that enables organisations from different participating countries to collaborate, develop, exchange and transfer best practices and innovative approaches in the field of education and youth cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

The review and analysis of this program showed that during the period of 2014-2020, 19,818 projects were implemented, and Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania cooperated together only in 8 cases.

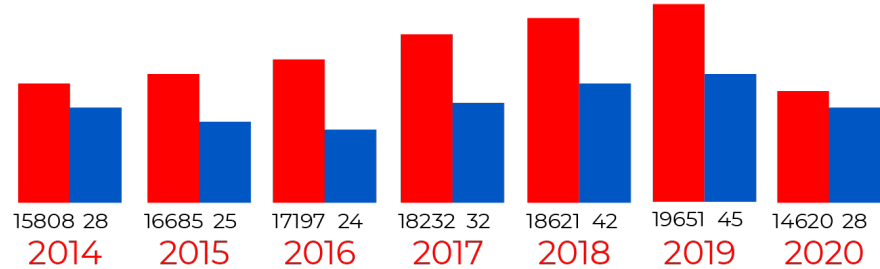
PROGRAMME COUNTRIES MEMBERSHIP WITH UKRAINE 2015-2024<sup>4</sup>



**Erasmus+ Support for policy reform (KA3)** is an Erasmus+ program that provides grants for various activities aimed at implementing innovation policy, creating dialogue and exchanging knowledge in the field of education and youth cooperation.<sup>5</sup> In 2014-2020, 1,907 projects were implemented within the initiative, from which Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland acted simultaneously as participating countries in 22 cases.

**Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Projects** is an Erasmus+ program supports innovation, knowledge sharing and discussions on European studies.<sup>6</sup> Over the last six years of the program's existence, 1,709 projects have been implemented, but Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania have not cooperated together in any of them. Instead, bilateral scientific relations have developed: 1 joint project was realised between Poland and Lithuania and two projects between Ukraine and Poland.<sup>7</sup>

Erasmus+ Learning Mobility of Individuals (KA1):



Erasmus+ Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices (KA2):



Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Projects Overview:



Erasmus+ Support for policy reform (KA3) Projects Overview:



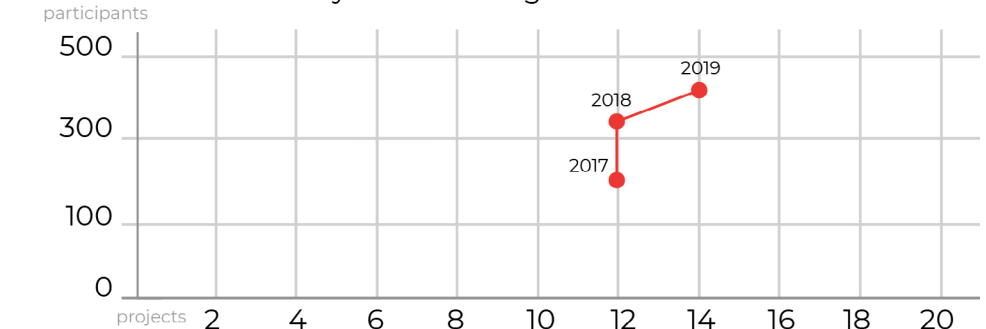
● General projects ● Joint projects

Official statistics on the number of Erasmus+ projects in which Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania participated together in 2014-2020

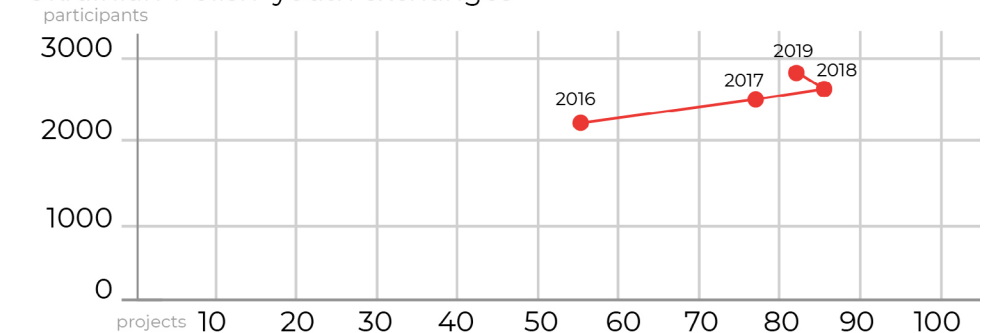
According to the information brochure of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine on Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Lithuanian youth exchanges dated 21.12.2019, youth exchanges are carried out in accordance with the agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Poland on the Ukrainian-Polish Youth Exchange Council, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 9 December 2015 № 1017 and the agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the Council of Youth Exchanges of Ukraine and Lithuania, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 9 December 2015 № 1016 to support cooperation between Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian youth, as well as to develop friendly relations between people of these countries.

In the framework of Ukrainian-Polish youth exchanges in the period of 2016-2019, a total of 302 projects were conducted, in which 10,026 people took part. As a part of the Ukrainian-Lithuanian youth exchanges, a total of 38 projects were implemented, 953 people took part.<sup>8</sup>

Ukrainian-Lithuanian youth exchanges



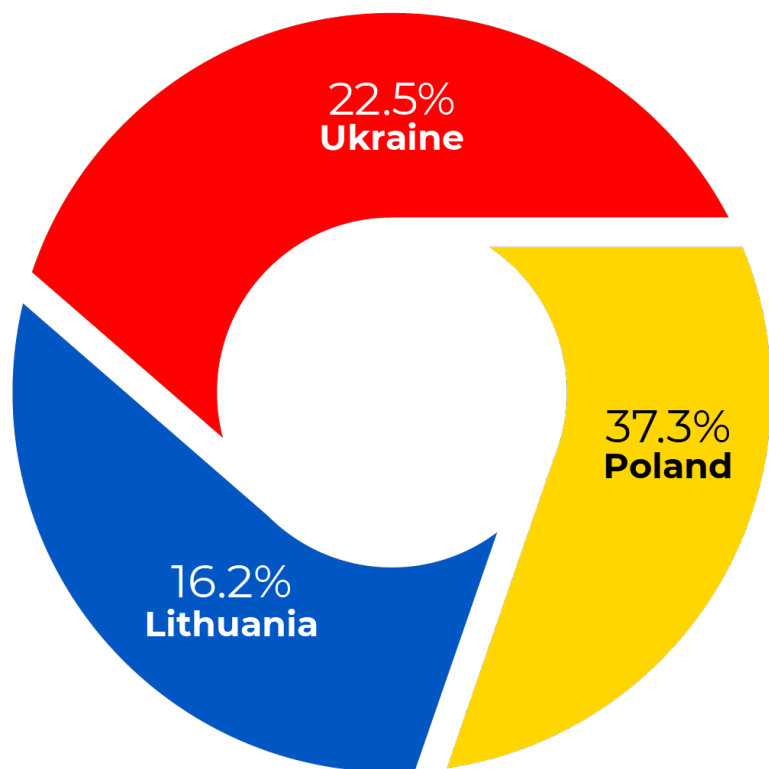
Ukrainian-Polish youth exchanges



Official statistics on the implementation of Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Lithuanian youth exchanges in 2016-2019

According to the survey, young people believe that the number of joint exchange programs should be increased. Thus, only 22.5% of Ukrainian youth had an experience of participation in youth exchange programs in Poland and Lithuania. 66.7% of them participated in study visits to the countries of the Lublin Triangle, 43.3% attended conferences and trainings, 36.7% studied in Poland and Lithuania in the framework of the Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus programs, and other 23.3% volunteered in the above countries. Among the respondents, 16.2% of young people from Lithuania and 37.3% from Poland participated in educational exchanges. Young people from both countries have the greatest experience of participating in Erasmus+ / Erasmus Mundus programs.

Although respondents who participated in cultural and educational exchanges rated their experience mostly positively (3.5-4 points out of 5 possible), the vast majority are unaware of the existence of such opportunities and initiatives.



*Experience of participation in youth exchange programs among the respondents from the countries of the Lublin Triangle*

### SUBSECTION 3.2

The youth wing of the Lublin Triangle and prospects for its development

The Youth Lublin Triangle is a potential networking platform for young people from Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland aimed at expanding overall cooperation, strengthening cultural, social and educational relations and exchanging experience in order to create projects together.

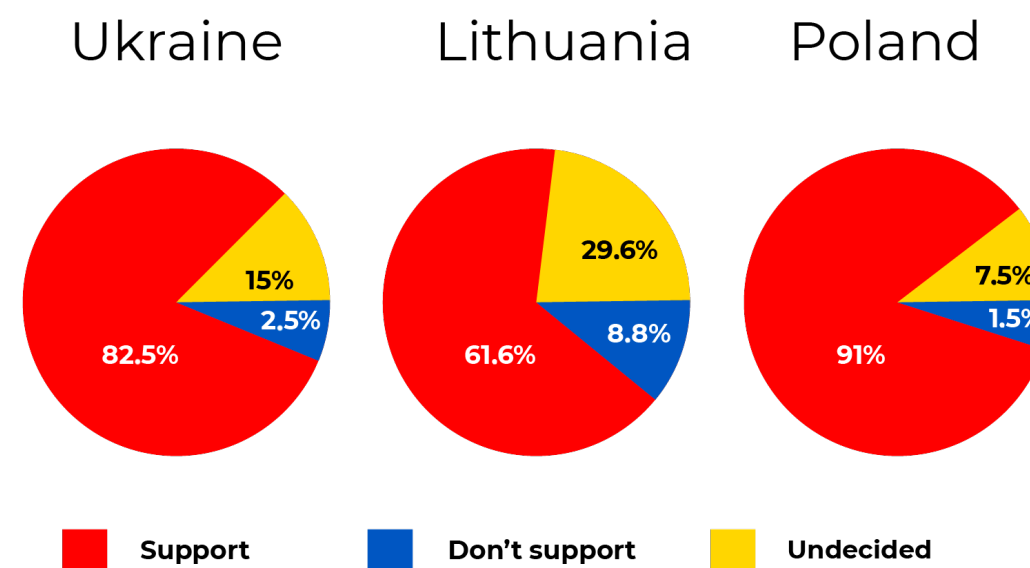
The main task of the Youth Lublin Triangle will be to create conditions for consolidation and development of democratic youth organisations in Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania to represent and protect the interests of young people at the regional and international levels, as well as to ensure their active participation in socially important decision-making processes.

**“The challenge might be that we only cooperate with each other separately, even though the problems are in some ways similar. The potential prospects of the Youth Lublin Triangle must be the cooperation between youth organisations on different topics as well as good practice sharing. It could also be a way of strengthening these countries’ positions youth policy-wise in the different formats where we all are already participating. One of the challenges could also be to create a sustainable system that would imply responsibilities equally engaging in further cooperation”.**



*Urtė Pertrulytė,  
Vice-President of Lithuanian Council of Youth Organisations (hereinafter – LiJOT)*

According to the survey, young people believe that there is an urgent need to create a platform that would be a solid foundation for solving problems in the field of youth cooperation between Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania. For example, 82.5% of Ukrainian youth surveyed supported the creation of the youth wing of the Lublin Triangle, and another 15% were undecided. Regarding the answers of young people from Lithuania, 61.6% support this idea and about 29.6% were undecided, and in Poland 91% of young people surveyed voted for the creation of this platform, 7.5% were undecided. Thus, we can conclude that more than 78% of young people from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania believe that there is a need to create a youth wing of the Lublin Triangle.



*Prospects for the creation of the Youth Lublin Triangle*

**"In 2020, the political and social landscape has changed so much that young people are no longer the leaders of tomorrow, as they have long been perceived — they are the leaders of today. We, young people, have something to learn from each other — that is why the Lublin Youth Triangle should become such a necessary platform to share insights, experiences and workable scenarios for creating youth-friendly cities, countries and societies".**



*The Board of Vilnius Youth Organisations' Confederation "Round Table"*

The Youth Lublin Triangle has the potential to meet the needs of youth in social and political activity, as according to the results of the U-Report social monitoring, 94% of respondents said that young people's opinions should be taken into account in the decision-making process.<sup>9</sup>



*Polish NGO "Ostra Zielen"*

**"We consider the Lublin Youth Triangle as the largest platform for future discussion and cooperation between NGOs from Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland. We're enjoying this project, and we see huge potential in this initiative!"**

Such an initiative will encourage young people to take an active part in state-building processes, which is important for building an open, democratic, solidary and prosperous society.

**"Lithuanian School Students' Union's interests are not only Lithuanian but of all pupils' well-being, inclusion and involvement into society, civic processes. Students are a vital element in order to raise a democratic, civil, educated society. We believe that youth organisations and non-formal education is a key to this vision. We hope and believe that the "Youth Lublin Triangle" initiative will be a large step for all three countries towards reaching such goals".**



*Sara Aškinytė,  
President of Lithuanian  
School Students' Union*

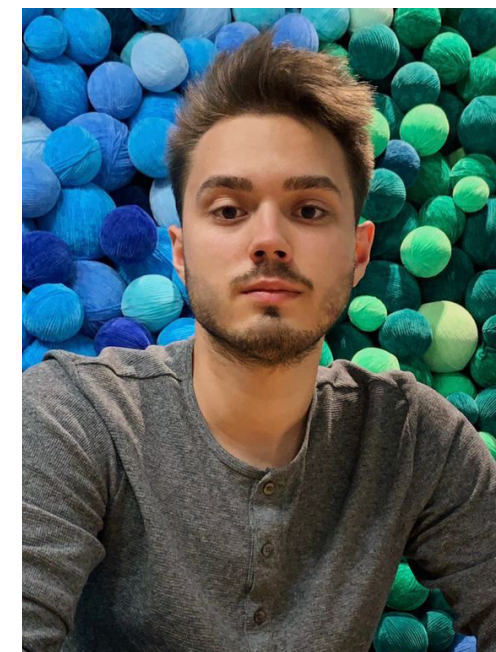
According to the survey, 71% of respondents said that in five years, the Youth Lublin Triangle would be a developed and progressive platform, fully integrated into the needs and realities of the three countries.

It will be considered as a centre of regular meetings of NGOs, consolidated actions to protect civil society, democracy, human rights and freedoms in the three participating countries and will also strengthen cultural, political and economic relations.

According to young people from Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland, the Youth Lublin Triangle should cover various forms of activity: participation in political discussions at the national and international levels, cooperation in solving environmental problems, expanding educational initiatives, implementing a developed system of youth exchanges and cooperation with the governments of the Lublin Triangle countries.

Young people also consider the Youth Lublin Triangle as a solid platform for networking, where each member will have the opportunity to offer their ideas for further cooperation between the states through the youth ambassadors initiative.

**"I see the Youth Lublin Triangle as a popular, recognisable and powerful network throughout Europe in five years. It can become a new impulse for the development of diplomacy in Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania, as well as for the improvement of knowledge and skills of young diplomats. It is possible to create a strong and sustainable institution of youth partnership between the Lublin Triangle countries".**



*Julian Kritsak,  
Chairman of the NYCU*

According to one of the respondents: "The youth wing of the Lublin Triangle will be one of the leading mechanisms for decision-making and cooperation, where the voice of young people will be heard on a par with ministers, politicians and diplomats.

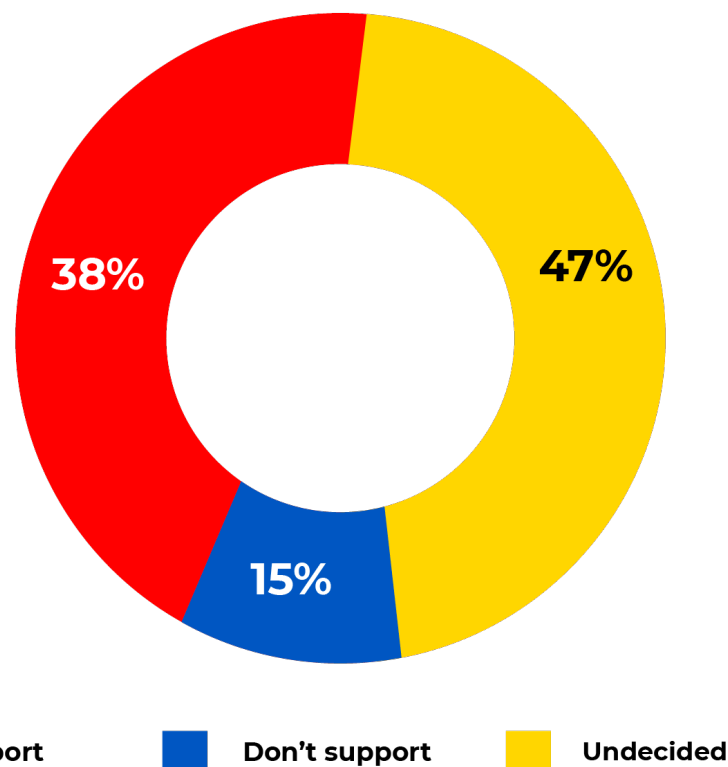
It is a place where young people can build a sustainable civil society and create a strong pro-European future".

**“We are impressed by the initiative of creating the Youth Lublin Triangle. As “Young Democrats” we believe that good diplomatic relations between our three countries are extremely important. We will be able to share our experience in the framework of the initiative that will allow us to make fewer mistakes and succeed in reaching our goals. The Youth Lublin Triangle will allow young people to express their own position on the prospects of cooperation between our countries. The future of our countries depends on us”.**



*Włodzimierz Niemirowski, a member of the “Young Democrats” youth organisation and the Wrocław Youth Council’s International Cooperation Commission*

In addition, 38% of respondents consider the possibility of expanding the Lublin Triangle, including the youth dimension, to cooperation with Belarus. Among the people surveyed, 45% of Ukrainians, 40% of Poles and 33% of Lithuanians support Belarus’ entry into the Lublin Triangle. Another 47% of the total number of respondents were undecided on this issue (40% of young people surveyed from Ukraine, 34% from Poland and 54% from Lithuania).



*Belarus joining the Lublin Triangle*

### SUBSECTION 3.3

#### The overall concept and cooperation mechanisms of the Youth Lublin Triangle

Analysing the experience of international youth organisations and the initiatives created by them, we can note the effectiveness of many mechanisms of youth cooperation. In particular, Erasmus+, SALTO Resource Center for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, EU4Youth, European Solidarity Corps, Munich Young Leaders Forum, European Youth Parliament, Young European Ambassadors Initiative, “Youth Delegate of Ukraine to the UN” programs are among the successful cases in support of international youth cooperation.

These youth platforms are characterised by a variety of forms of youth interaction, each of which is designed to increase the importance of young people’s opinions on the international arena, but provides different ways to achieve a common goal. The Youth Lublin Triangle, created to establish a strong platform for cooperation, will bring together Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian NGOs, national, local and regional youth councils, student governments and youth research centres.

Candidate organisations for membership in the Youth Lublin Triangle must meet the following criteria: implement activities in the field of youth policy; implement at least five long-term projects in the period of 1 calendar year; have democratic goals and democratic structure of governing bodies and other units; be a non-profit organisation; have a governing body controlled by young people.

The first stage in the formation of the youth wing of the Lublin Triangle will be the search, analysis and selection of potential member organisations, as well as the establishment of communication through accessible communication channels.

The next stage will be the preparation and signing of cooperation agreements to share experiences, the generation of joint projects, establishing large-scale structural cooperation, creation of systematic cooperation programs (visits to partners, coworking, networking etc.).

The peculiarity of the preliminary analysis of the potential members will include the identification of activity areas in which cooperation will be carried out, for example, youth policy, environmental, cultural, educational spheres, non-formal youth networking. Specific conditions of cooperation will ensure equality of all member organisations, create a platform for active participation of members in the formation and implementation of regional and international youth policy, promote participation in forums, conferences, seminars, trainings, and official meetings of the Lublin Triangle, making proposals to public authorities, influencing the formation of a positive image of three countries through public diplomacy. Within the Youth Lublin Triangle, there will be a specific system of agreements that will determine the appropriate terms of cooperation at the various levels.

Three national youth councils — the National Youth Council of Ukraine, the Polish Council of Youth Organisations and the Lithuanian Council of Youth Organisations — will mediate inter-organizational cooperation, and their member organisations will be represented in the Youth Lublin Triangle subject to an additional agreement.

Taking into account the experience of our colleagues, we selected the four most optimal forms of cooperation of the future youth wing of the Lublin Triangle and offered them for consideration to the respondents of our survey:

### **Cooperation between youth public organisations.**

This form of cooperation involves interaction between individual Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Polish youth NGOs according to their areas of activity, target audience and goals. This form has its advantages at the local level, but is characterised by a high level of independence of such coalitions and associations from each other. It will be established in the form of a memorandum and joint projects between three or more organisations, which means that such a mechanism does not allow to coordinate the work of all subjects of cooperation. Cooperation agreements will be signed separately between the relevant entities, which will represent certain areas of activity. Members of coalitions and associations of organisations will directly cooperate with each other in the process of creating and implementing projects according to their relevant areas of activity (culture, environment, youth policy, etc.). Furthermore, affiliates will develop cross-sectoral cooperation through three national youth councils that will coordinate communication between associations. Potential forms of cooperation will include the exchange of experience (consultations, workshops, webinars, lectures, etc.), official (forums) and informal visits (cultural exchanges), creation and implementation of joint projects, development of common strategies and programs of a long-term partnership.

### **Establishment of a coordination council that will guide all member organisations.**

The peculiarity of this mechanism of youth cooperation will include the centralised activity of national youth organisations under consolidated management. The governing bodies of the coordination centre will be General Assembly, Executive Council, President, Control and Revision Commission. The General Assembly will be the highest governing body of the Youth Lublin Triangle, which will be convened at least three times a year to make decisions (including on the accession of new organisations), approve key activities, budget for the next year, as well as elect the President. The Executive Council will be a permanent elected collegial body of the Youth Lublin Triangle, which governs it between the General Assemblies and consists of commissions according to the areas of cooperation. The President will be the elected head of the coordination council, which will be re-elected every four months as a part of the transfer of chairmanship between the three countries. This will ensure equal representation of all organisations, as well as board members by ensuring equality in the geographical dimension, gender parity etc. The Control and Revision Commission will monitor the implementation of decisions of governing bodies.

### **Annual Youth Lublin Triangle Forum.**

The annual forum will be a key platform for young people to participate in general discussions regarding youth policy and challenges that young people face, as well as possible solutions to solve them. The Forum will be held annually in Lublin with the participation and equal representation of proactive young people from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania, who will be delegated to the Forum by relevant youth NGOs, associations, unions, youth councils, etc. The Forum will result in a recommendation letter for improving the youth policy of the three countries on behalf of all delegates, which will be sent to the highest governing bodies of the member states. At this stage, the national youth councils will take on the role of mediators between the participants of the Forum, will support and improve the quality of communication, will look for ways to expand it, acting as a centre of cooperation.

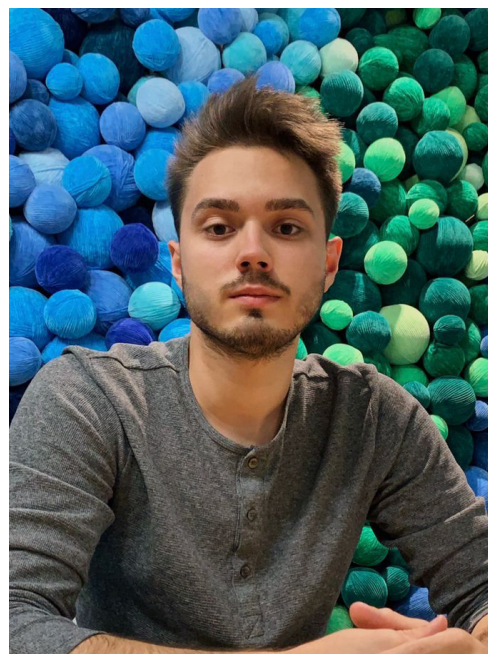
### **Young ambassadors of the Lublin Triangle.**

It should be a network of proactive young people aged 14-35 aimed at promoting the interests of the youth of the three countries, establishing a dialogue between the official bodies and young people of the Lublin Triangle countries, increasing the level of youth participation in various activities, including youth forums, conferences and seminars in Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and other EU member states. The principles of functioning of the network of young ambassadors of the Lublin Triangle will be enshrined in the statute of this initiative. The selection, appointment and coordination of youth ambassadors will be carried out by a special governing body – the Trilateral Council, which will ensure an equal number of youth ambassadors from each state and guarantee democracy and transparency of their appointment by voting once a year. For its part, the Trilateral Council will consist of representatives of youth organisations from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania. The result of such an initiative should be the development of international dialogue among young people, addressing issues related to education, science, culture in the three countries, strengthening Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian relations through public diplomacy and dissemination of knowledge about cultures of the three countries by participating in the formation of public opinion through public speaking activities etc.

According to the survey, the thoughts of Ukrainian youth were almost evenly distributed among the four proposed options for the functioning of the Lublin Youth Triangle. Approximately 22.5% preferred cooperation between NGOs, 31% considered it necessary to create a single coordination council that will guide the work of all organisations, 17% supported the creation of an annual forum for networking and discussion of important issues, and other 25% voted for creating a network of young ambassadors of the Lublin Triangle.

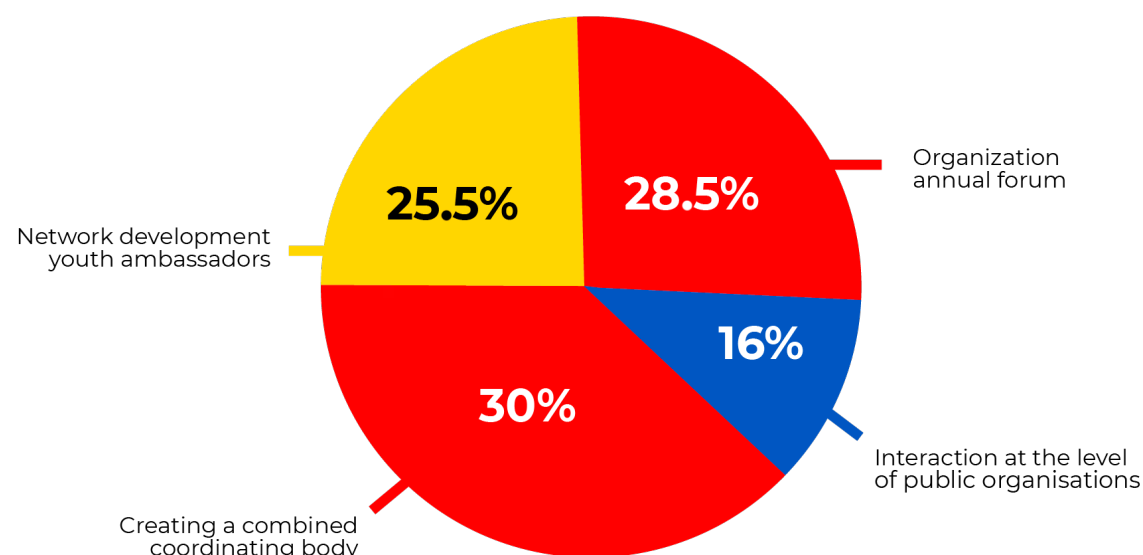
The respondents from Poland preferred the annual forum as a form of cooperation (37%), while young people from Lithuania gave second place to such a mechanism of cooperation (32%), favoring the creation of a single coordination council (33%). Regarding other forms of cooperation, the opinions of young Poles were divided almost equally (16-17% each) with a slight preference for creating an initiative of young ambassadors of the Youth Lublin Triangle (19.5%). Youth from Lithuania also sympathise with this idea (18%), preferring it to cooperation at the level of public organisations (12%).

**“The Youth Lublin Triangle will be an effective tool for youth participation and involvement in the decision-making process. Our future and our present depends on young people. That is why I am sure that the participation of proactive youth in the Lublin Triangle will have a positive impact on the cooperation process. The most optimal mechanism of functioning may be the coordination council, which will consist of the National Youth Councils of the three countries, representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as youth organisations”.**



*Julian Kritsak,  
Chairman of the NYCU*

Summarising the obtained results, we came to the conclusion that cooperation between NGOs is preferred by 16% of the Ukrainian, Poland and Lithuanian youth; 30% support the creation of a joint coordination council; 28.5% of young respondents support the organisation of an annual forum, and other 25.5% voted for the development of a network of young ambassadors.



*The most optimal mechanism of functioning of the Youth Lublin Triangle*

After analysing the results of the survey and evaluating potential forms of cooperation, we concluded that the best option would be a combination of the above-mentioned forms of cooperation.

Thus, the creation of a single coordination council that will guide the work of all organisations will form the basis of the network and will be complemented by other alternative formats of cooperation, including the annual forum of all member organisations and the initiative of young ambassadors of the Lublin Triangle.

**“It is very good that the governments have signed an agreement on the Lublin Triangle, but we need to be very mindful about how we put this framework for youth cooperation. In my opinion, we could try to meet several times at the level of the National Youth Councils and then see how we can move forward with engaging our member organisations”.**



*Urtė Pertrulytė,  
Vice-President of the LIJOT*

To sum up, the development of cooperation and amicable relations is a priority for countries that have a common history, which can become a solid foundation for building the future.

The current stage of trilateral cooperation proves that Poland and Lithuania are reliable partners of Ukraine on the international arena, supporting Ukraine’s aspirations on its path to the European Union and NATO, giving their votes in favour of Ukraine in the United Nations General Assembly on the Crimea and Donbas issues that ensure compliance with the established course to resist Russian aggression. That is why the creation of the Lublin Triangle is a new stage in the expansion of fruitful cooperation between friendly states.

The youth of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania should become an engine of the Lublin Triangle initiative and start a qualitatively new level of trilateral cooperation. This will create opportunities for the development of proactive youth and strengthening the relations between the three states at the same time. Thus, the Youth Lublin Triangle will complement the state initiative, which will contribute to achieving the common goals set by the governments of the three countries. As a result, it will establish a strong platform for dialogue between young Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Poles, as well as government officials in order for youth voice to be heard at the international level.

## SECTION 3.4

### The Youth Lublin Triangle: what's next?

Thank you for being able to pay attention to our research. However, it is only the beginning of our great joint project. The purpose of this study was to prove that the youth of the three countries of the Lublin Triangle should intensify and strengthen cooperation. There are all necessary preconditions for this: the historical background, the need to address common issues of youth policy and similar views on the future of our countries.

We, Public Diplomacy Platform, together with our partners would like to establish the first youth platform, which will operate under the auspices of the Lublin Triangle. The purpose of the initiative is to prove that young people are the first and foremost driving force in the development of international relations. We call on representatives of the public sector, politicians, diplomats and active citizens from Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine to join our initiative. We want to work together to build fruitful cooperation and create a new powerful tool to achieve the goals of young people. In 2021 we plan to conduct two Youth Lublin Triangle forums, where together we will be able to develop the format of our joint initiative. We want to ask you the main question: "How exactly should the youth of the three countries work together for this cooperation to be of great benefit?" Finding the answer to this question will be the main goal for us in 2021. We want the Lublin Triangle to go beyond the political-diplomatic union. We want the Lublin Triangle to become a large-scale common platform where the three participating states help each other and consider all issues as common.

## FINANCING

It is also important to understand that a strong youth association will have to attract funding to develop its own projects and activities. The Visegrad Foundation is an ideal example of how the Youth Lublin Triangle can be financed. Together with youth organisations from the three countries, we plan to launch an advocacy campaign among government officials to call on the governments of the three countries to establish the Lublin Foundation. This Foundation will be aimed at funding active youth and their projects, helping to share experiences and enabling young people from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania to launch joint initiatives.

We consider the above-mentioned to be the most favorable option for further development of the potential of youth cooperation in the format of the Lublin Triangle. These steps can be decisive in the development of the three countries because our future is determined by young people. We encourage each of you to join the discussion and gladly invite you to cooperate with us.

Дякуємо! Dziękujemy! Асії!

## NOTES

- \* An online survey for young people from Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania on the current state of youth cooperation between the countries of the Lublin Triangle, as well as the prospects of creating the Lublin Youth Triangle is not representative, but it should be emphasized that its results are informative, as respondents' selection criteria were matched by age (14-35 years), geography (youth of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania) and social groups (pupils, students, public activists, etc.). To ensure compliance with the above-mentioned criteria, the online survey was disseminated through social networks and internal communication channels of partner organisations whose target audience best meets the age of respondents, their country of representation, the field of activity, interest or involvement in civic service. Among the informational partners who contributed to the dissemination of the survey were National Youth Council of Ukraine, Lithuanian Council of Youth Organisations, Vilnius Youth Organisations' Confederation "Round Table", Lithuanian School Students' Union, NGO "Ostra Zieleń", and "Young Democrats" youth organisation.

- 1) <https://bit.ly/38Sm5v0>
- 2) <https://bit.ly/3ipVwk1>
- 3) <https://bit.ly/2LHJ7fr>
- 4) <https://bit.ly/2KuElkW>
- 5) <https://bit.ly/3suK2jQ>
- 6) <https://bit.ly/3sxVLOG>
- 7) <https://bit.ly/2N5lf5E>
- 8) <https://bit.ly/38SDKTh>
- 9) <https://bit.ly/3qADgrd>



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