

Security and Defense Sector Reform in Ukraine

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Security and Defense Sector Reform is now one of the key tasks for Ukraine. To complete this task, all available national potential both at the state and at community levels, as well as international experience are being used, along with direct involvement of skilled foreign experts and advisors from the EU Member States and NATO.

In this context, the recent public presentation of the updated draft National Security Strategy of Ukraine could be regarded as the first practical result of fruitful interaction between all above players. The revised content of this particular document substantially differs from the previous rather raw one, which was proposed for open expert debates at the beginning of this year.

The National Security Strategy of Ukraine based on main provisions of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and the Strategy for Sustainable Development “Ukraine – 2020” outlines national security policy priorities to be implemented by the year 2020. According to editors, the draft is the first one that contains a detailed program of actions in terms of maintaining the National Security Strategy and provides a clear mechanism for its implementation by all public authorities responsible for security governance issues.

Given the current security threats, the primary focus of the Strategy is placed on comprehensive reform of the National Security Support System and establishing effective Security and Defense Sector. To this end, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine created an Interagency Working Group headed by the First Deputy Prime Minister to conduct a comprehensive review of the Security and Defense Sector.

A set of measures for executing the Strategic Review of the Security and Defense Sector is being currently implemented. Nowadays, in addition to the said draft National Security Strategy, groups of experts have already developed other founding draft documents on security and defense planning issues, namely the Concept of Security and Defense Sector Development, the Military Doctrine, etc. The elaboration of the State Target Defense Program for Optimizing and Reforming of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the years 2015 -2017 is approaching its final stage now. The State Program for Development of Weapons and Military Equipment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is also set out for further elaboration. In February this year, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine prepared the Strategic Defense Bulletin. The work on the Program for Reforming Law Enforcement System and Program for Reforming and Developing of Defense Industry of Ukraine by the year 2020 is going to proceed further as well. Thus, in the current year, according to the Budget of Ukraine, around 44.6 billion UAH (\approx 2.1 billion USD) will be provided to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine as military expenditure. More than 14 billion UAH (\approx 650 million USD) from this sum will be allocated for modernizing and procurement of weapons and military equipment, about 1.9 billion UAH (\approx 90 million USD) – for personal training, and over 28 billion UAH (\approx 1.3 billion USD) – for maintaining the Armed Forces activities.

At the same time, due attention is paid to Civil Security Sector Reform to ensure sustainability of the State Security System and strengthening the Rule of Law, increasing its legitimacy and raising public confidence based on Human Rights and according to the process of Consti-

tutional Reform. The European Union Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform in Ukraine (EUAM) provides valuable assistance in the process of reorganization and restructuring public prosecution, courts, law enforcement and state security bodies for the benefit of all Ukrainians throughout the country.

All in all, the beginning of the process of reforming the Security and Defense Sector in terms of regulatory support may generally be considered as quite successful one. However, the experience of recent years has shown that all carefully developed plans and programs in this area would often remain only on paper not being fully implemented.

The process of reforming the Security and Defense Sector in Ukraine is characterized by own special features related to obtaining practical experience, both positive and negative, to counter current threats to the national security. In particular, this applies to annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol City by the Russian Federation and Russian military aggression unleashed in Eastern Ukraine. The above experience requires urgent consideration in the practice of the Security and Defense Sector Reform, including in other Eastern European countries being in the area of immediate interests of the Kremlin.

Among above-mentioned special features are the following:

- Developing partnership relations with NATO in getting assistance for protection of state sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- Extensive using the potential of volunteer and paramilitary units, which are essential subjects of modern hybrid warfare;
- Broad distribution of volunteer movement that largely compensated for the shortcomings of existing public procurement system, and contributed to the establishment of democratic civilian control over the Armed Forces, other military formations, and law enforcement agencies.

The list of main issues affecting the Ukrainian Security and Defense Sector Reform includes the following:

- Predominant political influence on both the course of reforms and the practical aspects of the targeted use of defense and security potentials;
- Lack of appropriate national institution that would be authorized to advocate on strategic level all issues

arising between relevant ministries and agencies, including on the distribution of required resources and providing general coordination within the reform;

- An urgent need for qualified personnel and representatives of new law enforcement and military elite;
- Low level of publicity, etc.

According to the Strategy for Sustainable Development “Ukraine - 2020”, the following main indicators to assess the progress of the Security and Defense Sector Reform have been determined:

- The level of the expenditure for maintaining the National Defense and Security System will comprise at least 3% of Gross Domestic Product (according to the updated draft National Security Strategy – at least 5% of GDP);
- The number of professional soldiers per 1000 people will increase from 2.8 to 5.6 persons;
- Public trust in law enforcement will be at 70%;
- Updating the staff of public officials in law enforcement, courts and other government agencies by 70%.

Given the complexity of declared tasks to be completed in the course of the Security and Defense Sector Reform, provided above list of provisional indicators seems to be quite ambitious and requires appropriate adjustment.

In general, the following issues would deserve additional attention during the implementation of the Security and Defense Sector Reform in Ukraine, namely:

- Ensuring the appropriate openness of all governmental structures for due acceptance of provided international experience and best practices as well as their practical implementation;
- Overcoming ambiguity in defining next urgent steps for strengthening national security on the backdrop of current rejection of a non-block status, including the development of new forms of combined regional defense and security cooperation;
- Focusing on the creation of a powerful army, maintaining new personnel policy in the field of security and defense, establishing new professional core of Ukrainian army based on new military elite that emerged during the armed conflict with Russia;

- Strengthening control and accountability in Security and Defense Sector;
- Applying an integrated approach to the reform process in terms of effectively addressing external and internal threats to national security;
- Establishing closer integration of public institutions with civil society, which demonstrated its efficiency in crisis management issues, with particular attention to the European experience of authoritarian regimes transformation;
- Executing the Constitutional reform, in which, in addition to the decentralization and local government issues, to decide on the need for constitutional recognition of Ukraine's course towards integration into European political, economic and legal system, and the Euro-Atlantic security area as well;
- Giving priority attention to the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, especially those provisions related to the Common EU Security and Defense Policy;
- Developing mechanisms for effective public control, transparent use of allocated resources and taking public oversight on personnel policy in state security and law enforcement agencies;
- Ensuring adequate social protection of servicemen and their families, including those participated in the anti-terrorist operation.

In general, the abolition of Ukraine's non-block status and declaring the course towards Euro-Atlantic integration will have no substantial impact in the medium term on fostering defense and security capability of Ukraine. To strengthen national security and defense potential prior to granting a long-awaited NATO membership or receiving the U.S. strategic partnership security guarantees, if any, Ukraine has to rely solely on its own defense and security capacities, timely reforming and efficient governance of which should be of a primary goal.

East European Security Research Initiative (EESRI) is an informal discussion, analytical and information-sharing international platform aimed at uniting efforts of the experts and researchers from various countries to find effective ways for strengthening security in the Eastern Europe as the most vulnerable region of the contemporary Europe.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the EESRI.

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