

A DECADE AFTER THE ESCALATION OF THE CRISIS: HOW PROBABLE IS THE MEMBERSHIP OF UKRAINE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION?*

Abstract

At the last day of February 2022, Ukraine applied for membership in the European Union. This happened eight years after Russia has taken over Crimea, while engaging in the military support of the pro-Russian forces in Donbas region seceding from Ukraine. The country under military intervention was granted the European Union candidate status in June 2022, along with Moldova and Georgia, four months after the beginning of the Russian attack. Today, eight more countries are in the process of accession to the European Union, none of them being victim of an intervention.

Two decades after the so-called Orange Revolution, and ten years after the initial Russian intervention, Ukraine has been stepping forward the European Union membership status. Exactly ten years have passed since the last enlargement of the bloc (in 2013, Croatia joined the Union), potentially signaling the most expressive period of the enlargement fatigue. In the era during which the skepticism for the enlargement is gaining momentum, it is of importance to explore whether Ukraine's membership is truly acceptable, bearing in mind that the country is the victim of an ongoing intervention, being the first candidate country at war.

Keywords: Ukraine membership status, European Union, Russian intervention, European Union membership conditions.

I Introduction

Almost eight decades have passed since the adoption of the Treaty of Rome. In accordance with its provisions, the European Coal and Steel Community

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– the forerunner of the European Union (the EU) – was established. Founded by its six first members, the future EU has grown more than fourfold. Never, however, during the history of EU, was there a country whose candidate status was accorded while the country was at war. A precedent was created with Ukraine in 2022.

Ten years ago, the Russian military intervention resulted in setting a foothold in a part of the Ukrainian territory, including Crimea and parts of Donetsk-Lugansk region.¹ While denying its military presence in Crimea, official Russian Federation (Russia) representatives conducted referendum according to which almost all of the population expressed their wish to join Russia.² Eight years later, as a strategic defensive response to another military intervention on Ukrainian soil, on 28 February 2022, Ukraine applied for the EU membership, followed soon by Georgia and Moldova. Representing a significant shift undergoing the EU enlargement process, the European Council granted candidate status to Ukraine in June 2022. Namely, the European Commission (the EC) recommended that the three Eastern European countries should be granted the status of the EU candidate states. The EC concluded that “Ukraine is a European State which has given ample proof of its adherence to the values on which the [EU] is founded [and] therefore recommend[ed] to the [European] Council that Ukraine should be given the perspective to become a member of the [EU]”.³ More than two years later (on June 25, 2024), the EU opened negotiations on Ukraine’s accession to the bloc.

In the first part of the paper, the chronology of negotiations between the EU and Ukraine is exposed. The particular nature of Ukraine’s accession to the EU, in the context of its extraordinary nature, is analyzed in the second part. The third section is dedicated to exploring the somewhat absurd originality of Ukraine’s accession to the EU, while in the part preceding the conclusion of the article, potential problems of Ukraine’s fast-track admission are laid out.

¹ T. Akhvlediani, V. Movchan, The Impact of Ukraine’s Accession on the EU’s Economy: The Value Added of Ukraine, February 2024, 2, <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/the-impact-of-ukraines-accession-on-the-eus-economy/>, last visited 23. 6. 2024.

² K. Khalabazar, The Evolution of the EU’s Perception towards Ukraine, Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung / Center for European Integration Studies, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn, Bonn 2023, 18, <https://d-nb.info/1279173270/34>, last visited 19. 6. 2024.

³ R. Petrov, R. Bumpy Road of Ukraine Towards the EU Membership in Time of War: “Accession Through War” v “Gradual Integration”, *European Papers* 8(2023), 1058.

II History of negotiations between the European Union and Ukraine

The process of the EU enlargement has recently been suffering from an inadequate interest of the current member-states. Since 2016, the EU has lost one member (the United Kingdom [the UK]), while gaining not one single new member. Inheriting a complex load of the comprehensive 2004 expansion, this tendency can be ascribed to a sudden absorption of 13 new members over the period of 10 years.⁴ The so-called *Copenhagen criteria* for accession to the EU, included in Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) states, in its Paragraph 1, that “any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union”. This may be ascribed to “the rather complex and demanding requirements for the EU membership under Article 49 [of the TEU]”,⁵ but also to the lesser level of interest in incorporating new members.

When it comes to Ukraine, the origins of its accession to EU are clearly observable by following the relations of the EU and the member-states of the former Soviet Union (SU). Once the SU republics gained independence in the early 1990s, the programme of Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) was introduced by the EC in 1991, lasting until 1993. TACIS represented “the most significant aid at that time given to the former Soviet countries”, including Ukraine.⁶ In 1994, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) was signed between the EU and Ukraine (and some other former SU republics), which focused on economy and trade matters. Both of the documents were more of a *technical* rather than of political character, mainly because of the EU’s concerns about Russia’s potential response if the EU’s relationship with Ukraine were put into a more distinct strategic perspective. However, this perspective was put into motion in 1999, when the European Council adopted a *Common Strategy on Ukraine*.⁷

⁴ S. Schug, EU expansion: How close are the nine candidate states to membership?, <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/eu-expansion-how-close-are-the-nine-candidate-states-to-membership>, last visited 15. 6. 2024.

⁵ G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement after Ukraine’s EU membership application: Still fit for purpose, 14. 3. 2022, 5, <https://epc.eu/en/Publications/The-EU-Ukraine-Association-Agreement-after-Ukraines-EU-membership-application-46daac>, last visited 13. 6. 2024.

⁶ K. Khalabuzar, *op. cit.*, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

In 2014, the EU and Ukraine signed the Association Agreement (AA), and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), both of which came into force in September 2017. The DCFTA, representing “the pivotal component of the [AA]”,⁸ aimed at enhancing the trade and economic relations between the EU and Ukraine, establishing a free-trade area for a period of 10 years up to 2026. The AA “provided a comprehensive institutional set-up for bilateral dialogue and monitoring of the process of gradual approximation and implementation of Ukraine’s legislation” with the *acquis communautaire*,⁹ representing “a backbone of the Ukraine’s EU membership ambitions”.¹⁰

III The suddenness of the 2022 overturns in the admission process

The nearly traditional resistance to the EU enlargement has recently been submitted for a reconsideration of the EU’s strategic interests. The change of approach regarding the enlargement has a thing or more to do with the 2022 intervention in Ukraine.¹¹

The practical impossibility of enlargement was the EU’s mantra for more than a decade; Croatia’s accession in 2013 was the exception that confirmed the rule. Nowadays, the EU member-states “see enlargement in general as an appropriate way to respond to the new geopolitical reality”.¹² Even the traditionally enlargement-skeptical governments – such as Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden – have recently been changing their approach towards the future boundaries of the EU.¹³ The support for the EU enlargement particularly came from its eastern members.¹⁴

⁸ T. Akhvlediani, V. Movchan, *op. cit.*, 9.

⁹ I. M. Kopytsya, S. O. Tryzno, EU Candidate Membership Status of Ukraine: Prospects for the Development of Environmental Legislation, *Problems of legality* 159(2022), 55.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ For example, President of the European Council since 2019, Charles Michel (an influential Belgian politician) claimed, on the occasion of granting the candidate status to Ukraine, that this decision was “at once a message of unity and a message of geopolitical determination”, K. Khalabuzar, *op. cit.*, 1.

¹² P. Buras, E. Morina, Catch-27: The Contradictory Thinking About Enlargement in the EU, *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2023, 3, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/catch-27-the-contradictory-thinking-about-enlargement-in-the-eu/>, last visited 13. 6. 2024.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6; K. Nieczytor, Ukraine’s Integration with the EU in the context of the war, *EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy*, 2016, 3, <https://europeum.org/data/articles/>

However, it is truly a “meteoric decision of the EU institutions to grant candidate status” to Ukraine.¹⁵ This move represented a display of political solidarity with Ukraine and its territorial integrity and independence. When the EC President Ursula von der Leyen put the question of Ukraine’s prospective accession forward, “nobody wanted to appear insufficiently supportive of Ukraine by vetoing the idea”.¹⁶ The Member States reasoned that granting the candidate status to Ukraine was “an act of moral support”, aiming at boosting “the country’s resistance to the aggression” and adopting more “a (geo) political decision rather than a scrupulous legal application of the conditions related to [Article] 49 TEU”.¹⁷

The EU reaction to Ukraine’s application for membership was an act of solidarity with a country subjected to foreign intervention. Therefore, “there can be no doubt that the war alone led the EU to open up the perspective of membership to Ukraine so quickly”,¹⁸ and the decision of the European Council to grant the candidate status to Ukraine „would probably not have happened in pre-war circumstances”.¹⁹ Ukraine’s “aspirations to join the EU have been clear for some time”, but its application for membership “was not seriously contemplated (...) before the Russian invasion”.²⁰ Many researchers recognize that this “accession through war” approach²¹ represents an extraordinary model. It is not precisely known whether a country under attack and with no defined borders can be a member of the EU. Offering the candidate’s status

krzysztof-nieczypor.pdf, last visited 22. 6. 2024; T. Żornaczuk, Demand the impossible: How Ukraine became a candidate for EU membership, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, 2016, 3, <https://europeum.org/data/articles/pism-intempl-final-1.pdf>, last visited 20. 6. 2024.

¹⁵ R. Petrov, *op. cit.*, 1059.

¹⁶ S. Biscop, From Buffer to Frontier: Ukraine and the EU, Egmont Policy Brief 298, Royal Institute for International Relations, February 2023, 2, https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2023/02/Sven-Biscop_Policy_Brief_298.pdf?type=pdf, last visited 17. 6. 2024.

¹⁷ R. Petrov, *op. cit.*, 1059.

¹⁸ K. Nieczypor, *op. cit.*, 5.

¹⁹ R. Petrov, O. Holovko-Havrysheva, Contemporary Cooperation between the EU and Ukraine: On the Road to EU Membership, Jean Monnet Network VISTA Policy Papers 07/2023, June 2023, 7, <http://fasos-research.nl/vista-jmn/files/2023/06/VISTA-Policy-Paper-07-2023.pdf>, last visited 19. 6. 2024.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

is, thus, “a historic token of support for Ukraine in its self-defence” against military intervention.²² Only a year ago, in 2021, “obtaining the status of a candidate for EU membership could only be the expectation of the greatest optimist”,²³ and security threats” arising from the intervention unavoidably triggered a discernible change in the EU’s approach towards Ukraine”.²⁴ As opposed to Ukraine, other association agreements, such as those signed with Turkey or the countries of the Western Balkans “are more explicit and do include specific membership commitments”.²⁵

The said *moral support* represented a response influenced by the public opinion in EU member states, with its appeal to avoid piecemeal decisions in a situation when a sovereign country in the EU’s neighborhood was under immense attack. Therefore, “the European public, who, on a wave of sympathy, supported Ukraine’s European aspirations, in the face of which politicians could not remain indifferent”.²⁶ Essentially, the decision to accord candidate status to Ukraine “was driven by emotions and perceptions rather than strategy”.²⁷ The emotional basis of the move can also be traced back to the fact that in an extraordinary session of the European Parliament, held on March 1, 2022 (less than a week after the commencement of the intervention), Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine, “made an emotional plea directly to EU lawmakers and leaders”, “speaking from a bunker in Kyiv”.²⁸

Potential membership of Ukraine in the EU can also be put in the perspective of strengthening the latter’s foreign and security policy. Thus, absorbing Ukraine would signify the arrival of an emboldened EU, which acquired status of a more important factor in international relations than before. This is particularly important because the EU has previously “faced criticism for often weak and limited responses, particularly in military crisis management”.²⁹ The intervention made the EU Council activate the procedure provided by

²² G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, *op. cit.*, 3.

²³ K. Niecypor, *op. cit.*, 6.

²⁴ K. Khalabuzar, *op. cit.*, 1-2.

²⁵ G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, *op. cit.*, 7.

²⁶ K. Niecypor, *op. cit.*, 6.

²⁷ S. Biscop, *op. cit.*, 2.

²⁸ G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, *op. cit.*, 4.

²⁹ H. Maurer, R. G. Whitman, N. Wright, The EU and the invasion of Ukraine: A collective responsibility to act? *International Affairs* 99(2023)1, 219.

Article 49 of the TEU and invite the EC to issue the Opinion on Ukraine's application bid.³⁰

The possibility of watering down the accession conditions for Ukraine may represent a watershed moment. The trade-off between strictly respecting the conditions for membership and providing security guarantees for the bloc would hardly represent a desirable outcome, either for the EU or for Ukraine. In addition, the sudden decision to accord a candidate status to Ukraine brings risks of undermining the EU's credibility in the Western Balkans, the region in which not all the countries have reached the same status despite the region being covered by the EU enlargement policy for roughly two decades.³¹ Thus, granting an extraordinary candidate status for Ukraine would potentially hurt the enlargement policy of the EU, in case other aspirant countries assume that acquiring fast-track membership procedure requires nothing less than being subject of a foreign military intervention, and thus, belittling those countries' performance in the process of accession. And this is only one of the worries that the unanticipated candidate status of Ukraine brings, as a typical eyebrow-raising deal.

IV Concerns about the accelerated procedure of Ukrainian membership in the bloc

Besides Ukraine, eight states are currently candidates for the membership in the EU: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey. None of them is a country at war, nor have any of them been in such a status at the moment of acquiring the status of the candidate for membership. Thus, Ukraine "is the first case in history of EU integration when a candidate country that fights for its sovereignty and existence is endeavoring to meet strict conditions of the EU membership" and is also "the first and only one candidate country in history of European integration that embarked upon meticulous accession process while an exhausting war effort threatens its existence as independent state".³²

However, the accession of Ukraine imposes many questions regarding the future of the EU enlargement. Thus, the ambitious enlargement would necessarily invite a crucial constitutional reform of the EU, "and, as a consequence, a

³⁰ R. Petrov, O. Holovko-Havrysheva, *op. cit.*, 4.

³¹ T. Żornaczuk, *op. cit.*, 5-6.

³² R. Petrov, *op. cit.*, 1057, 1065.

new founding treaty".³³ It is not secure whether the leading EU member states are ready for such a reform. In most member states, the interest in enlargement is outweighed by concerns about the transformation that institutional reforms could bring about. Possible changes in the EU's balance of power, the unresolved issue of the protection of the rule of law, and bilateral conflicts are major obstacles.³⁴ A non-conventional way of attaining new member-states may be challenged by the *dubious* EU absorption capacity. It looks like the Union is making only glacial progress towards its enlargement. And, particularly, "despite all the recent rhetoric about a potential 'special' or 'fast-track' procedure, the reality is that such a procedure does not exist under the EU treaties".³⁵

Can the EU absorb Ukraine? The European Council first set out the absorption capacity criterion at the 1993 Copenhagen summit, but the EU has never actually defined it, representing the set of precise requirements. Unlike the conditions for the candidate countries, the EU absorption capacity is not a *measurable criterion*.³⁶ At the same time, "several member states have concerns about Ukraine's readiness and eligibility for the pre-accession process, the EU's absorption capacity, and the geopolitical consequences of the Union's further eastward enlargement".³⁷

Internal political concerns in EU member states are similarly not to be disregarded. One should take account of the tendencies of *illiberal populism*, on rise in some member states of the EU, whilst "the more countries embrace illiberal rules that undermine the foundations of the EU, the more general opposition there will be to accepting new countries".³⁸ In addition, as was the case with some earlier examples of member countries blocking accession of candidate states (Slovenia against Croatia, Greece against North Macedonia, Greece against Albania, Bulgaria against North Macedonia), some concerns exist regarding Hungary potentially conditioning Ukraine's progressing to the membership status over ethnic minority issues. Hungary has already threatened to use its veto power against Ukraine in the process, exactly over the minority protection issue.³⁹

³³ *Ibid.*, 1062.

³⁴ P. Buras, E. Morina, *op. cit.*, 1.

³⁵ G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege *op. cit.*, 5.

³⁶ P. Buras, E. Morina, *op. cit.*, 3.

³⁷ G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, *op. cit.*, 3.

³⁸ P. Buras, E. Morina, *op. cit.*, 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

Domestic political concerns within the EU make the prospect of Ukraine's accession even more complex. Given its size, Ukraine would be, in the demographical sense of the word, the fifth-largest country in the EU (after Germany, France, Italy, and Spain), with more inhabitants than all the current Western Balkan candidate countries combined.⁴⁰ In addition, the EU has not absorbed a larger member state in more than half a century, since the UK joined the European Community in 1973. Therefore, there exist certain worries about probably very influential economic and political impact of absorbing a new member state with a population of about 40 million people.⁴¹ In this case, the European Council, the voting power of other countries would decrease, and Poland and Ukraine would have a greater numerical weight than Germany.⁴² Given that Ukraine's closest partners for the membership in the EU are several countries of Central and Eastern Europe, "the gravity of the [EU] would be shifted eastward".⁴³ Finally, in the process of rushing Ukraine's membership in the EU one must not minimize the reality of extraordinary economic damages created in the country by the fact of the Russian intervention.

Besides several Central and Eastern European member states, which expressed their support for Ukraine's membership in the EU, some influential members, including Germany, France, and the Benelux countries, appear to be more reluctant. They have had "concerns about Ukraine's readiness and eligibility for the pre-accession process, the EU's absorption capacity, and the long-term geopolitical consequences".⁴⁴ The EU must also be careful not to "overpromise" or "create unrealistic expectations in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia".⁴⁵ The Western Balkans' state accession process provides an example of how "an excessive delay" in the membership attaining procedure "can lead to disappointment, frustration and, eventually, Euroscepticism in

⁴⁰ G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, *op. cit.*, 6.

⁴¹ „Even if more pessimistic estimates of Ukraine's current population are accepted (e.g., Ella Libanova, Director of the Institute of Demography and Social Research, estimates that Ukraine's population was less than 32 million at the beginning of 2023), Ukraine's population would still be among the largest of the comparison countries" (T. Akhvediani, V. Movchan, *op. cit.*, 2).

⁴² K. Nieczypor, *op. cit.*, 9.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, *op. cit.*, 6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

the applicant country”, because the accession process must be “credible and realistic”.⁴⁶

The inclusion of Ukraine in the EU would activate a security guarantee between the member states. Thus, the EU would face a long and potentially war-prone border with Russia. A collective defence guarantee is unmistakably enshrined in the wording of Article 42 Paragraph 7 of the TEU. Namely, “if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter”, while “this shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States” – the latter sentence most probably being composed with bearing in mind the division between the EU members who *are* members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (23 of them) and the ones who *are not* (Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, and Malta). Resounding the meaning, if not the wording of the ‘collective defence clause’ contained in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s Washington Treaty of 1949, this provision provides a possibility for a future possible *direct* confrontation between Russia and the EU.

The EU would also have a very trying period in reconciling mutual good mood for association and Ukraine’s *own* capacity to join the Union. Acquiring the status of candidate for the membership in the EU, “amid the ongoing war (...) is a great challenge for Ukraine”.⁴⁷ This appears to be particularly important in the context of the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War.⁴⁸ Ukraine, too, has been facing important challenges in the field of rule of law and respect for democratic procedures. Thus, according to an unofficial recommendation, the enabling of Ukraine to successfully fulfill the requirements for the EU membership “should include internships for the young political professionals and bureaucrats in the EU’s governments and parliaments”. Additionally, “in the advanced phase, the institutional capacities should be massively promoted so that the central government would be able to adapt the country to the EU principles of rule of law, democratic governance, and economic management”.⁴⁹ Finally, “the war has shown the decision-making

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁷ I. M. Kopytsya, S. O. Tryzno, *op. cit.*, 52.

⁴⁸ T. Żornaczuk, *op. cit.*, 3.

⁴⁹ T. Prodaniuk, A. Koldomasov, The EU’s Mission to Rebuild Ukraine: Problems and Priorities, 6. 8. 2022, 4-5, <https://www.iir.cz/the-eu-s-mission-to-rebuild-ukraine-problems-and-priorities>, last visited 20. 6. 2024.

resilience of the Ukrainian central government but also the ongoing problems with mismanagement and corruption”, bearing in mind that in 2021, only a year before the intervention on its soil, Ukraine had the second worst corruption level in Europe, with main media owned by or related to the oligarchs.⁵⁰ Even before the full-scale Russian invasion, Ukraine was “the poorest among EU Member States and EU candidate and potential candidate countries”.⁵¹ In its 2023 Report, the EC has claimed that Ukraine needed to assume further steps in the field of the rule of law, “including strengthening the independence of the judiciary, fighting corruption, deoligarchisation, and increasing media freedom”.⁵² The state of Ukraine reflected “inadequacies in the rule of law resulting in the poor protection of property rights are likely the most important as they have truncated investments and innovations, undermining growth potential for years”.⁵³

No country well prepared for fulfilling the conditions of membership of the EU should need any *massive* promotion of strengthening of its institutional capacities for democracy and rule of law, fight against the poverty, protection of individual property, the suppression of corruption, or liberalization of media.

V Conclusion

No warring country has ever been granted the candidate status before Ukraine’s precedent in 2022. Soon after the military intervention of the Russian Federation on Ukrainian soil, Ukraine applied for the membership in the EU, and was soon given the candidate status, together with Georgia and Moldova. In a time when the process of the EU enlargement has been suffering from an inadequate interest of the current 27 member-states, any further enlargement remains an open-ended process, particularly when it involves the possibility of engaging the member states of the EU in confrontation with Russia.

In the Union losing more members than acquiring new ones, Ukraine can hardly find its solidified place, especially with a lowered standard of accession. After absorbing 13 new members during the period from 2004 to 2013, the EU is only partially prepared for new enlargements. After signing the

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 2-3.

⁵¹ T. Akhvlediani, V. Movchan, *op. cit.*, 2.

⁵² T. Żornaczuk, *op. cit.*, 7.

⁵³ T. Akhvlediani, V. Movchan, *op. cit.*, 3.

Association Agreement in 2014, and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which came into force in 2017, Ukraine expressed its definitive will to join the EU. This move has led to the reconsideration of the EU's strategic interests, particularly in the context of the practical impossibility of the EU enlargement in the last decade. Even the traditionally enlargement-skeptical states have been changing their approach towards the future boundaries of the EU, including Ukraine.

Inviting Ukraine to the political and economic bloc of European countries represents a display of solidarity with a country under attack. The EU member states decided not to resort to legal application of the provisions of the Treaty on European Union, but to explore the possibilities of extraordinary membership-acquiring procedures. The accession of Ukraine through war may represent a precedent, and a dangerous procedure, which could put an entire EU enlargement process in question. Any EU enlargement which involves a fast-track procedure approach endangers the credibility of the EU itself.

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10 godina nakon eskalacije krize: koliko je verovatno članstvo Ukrajine u Evropskoj uniji?

Sažetak

Poslednjeg dana februara 2022. godine, Ukrajina je podnela zahtev za članstvo u Evropskoj uniji. Ovaj zahtev upućen je osam godina po otpočinjanju rata u kojem je Rusija zauzela Krim. Evropska unija je Ukrajini, kao i Moldaviji i Gruziji, dodelila status kandidata u junu 2022. godine, četiri meseca nakon početka ruske intervencije u Ukrajini. Danas, još je osam država u postupku pristupanja Evropskoj uniji, ali nijedna od njih nije predmet strane vojne intervencije.

Dve decenije nakon takozvane Narandžaste revolucije, a 10 godina od početne vojne intervencije, Ukrajina je u postupku pristupanja punom članstvu u Evropskoj uniji. Decenija je prošla od poslednjeg proširenja Evropske unije (u 2014. godini, Uniji se pridružila Hrvatska), što upućuje značajnu poruku o „zamoru od proširenja“. U vremenu u kojem skepticizam prema proširenju dostiže osobit zamah, a Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo napušta članstvo u Evropskoj

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uniji, važno je ispitati da li Ukrajina može da očekuje da je njeno članstvo uistinu prihvatljivo. Ovo je naročito važno jer je po prvi put reč o kandidatu za članstvo na čijem tlu se odvijaju ratna dejstva.

Ključne reči: članstvo Ukrajine u Evropskoj uniji, Evropska unija, ruska intervencija, uslovi za članstvo u Evropskoj uniji.

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