



**UKRAINIAN
NATIONAL PLATFORM**

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Position of Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF "The post-war Reconstruction of Ukraine must be Green"

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The post-war reconstruction of Ukraine must be green

This position paper has been developed within the framework of the Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum with the aim of conveying to the Ukrainian authorities and international partners the need of the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine to be built on sustainability principles. The document outlines the main tasks for the reconstruction after the country's devastation caused by large-scale russian aggression, identifies potential risks and suggests ways of recovery and further development of the country.

Introduction

The full-scale russian military offense against Ukraine, launched by the putin regime on February 24, 2022, changed the life of every Ukrainian, the Ukrainian civil society in general, and the Ukrainian national platform of EaP CSF in particular. While prior to the full-scale russian invasion of Ukraine, the priorities for the Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF focused on the European integration and corresponding reforms in the target areas, as well as on the future of the Eastern Partnership, which were considered through the prism of Ukraine joining the European Green Deal and post COVID-19 recovery, after February 24, the focus has shifted to the impact of the war to Ukraine - its society, its environment, and its European future.

The war forced to redirect the efforts of CSOs to emergency relief efforts, such as helping people in the war affected/occupied areas, support nature protected sites and nature reserves work, assistance to the territorial defense units and army, registering corresponding environmental damage from the war, ecocide occurrences, targeted destruction of Ukraine's critical civil infrastructure. However, just after a few months of the war and the russians' retreat from the occupied north of Ukraine, we were also able to cover more strategically important issues, such as environmental impact caused by russian aggression, damages and threats to energy security, and, perhaps most importantly, prospects for Ukraine's green recovery in the post-war period. The EU candidacy status, that Ukraine has gained in June 2022 has brought a new and deeper meaning to the green post-war reconstruction of Ukraine – such green recovery became the key to building a successful, competitive country to join climate-neutral Europe in the future. Therefore, from that point onwards, both - the government and the civil society - have been focusing their efforts on these challenges.



At the same time, green reconstruction is impossible in conditions when environmental issues are removed from the first positions of state policy, which is not surprising for wartime conditions.

1. Green recovery: benefits and opportunities

The green recovery is a systematic rebuilding of the country, using a new model of the infrastructure and economy based on the principles of sustainability and minimizing existing and future risks, taking into account the environmental and climate as a cross-cutting component.

Risks

On the path of green development, society will have to face numerous risks, such as consequences of extreme weather events and ecosystem degradation as the result of the global climate crisis; risks associated with disrupted logistics chains and access to global markets for various resources and products (due to possible military, political or economic crises); irreversible and hardly renewable losses of natural capital and associated with them environmental pollution and health risks (deforestation, air and water pollution, water resources depletion, biodiversity loss due to ecosystems' fragmentation, soil degradation, etc.).

Risks, associated with climate change, environmental degradation and natural resources depletion, are further intensified and greatly escalated by Russia's military actions and aggression.

The goal of the new development model is the sustainable long-term functioning of the country even under crisis conditions.

Benefits

Green recovery should be considered as an economic necessity for the future development of Ukraine. The green transition will ensure greater economic efficiency and competitiveness of Ukraine in the European and global markets. Green Recovery offers an opportunity for Ukraine to shift to greener technologies, riddance of fossil fuels dependence, and strive for a zero-emissions economy. Paradoxically, large-scale destruction provides unique opportunities to bridge the gap in technology and development models—compared to EU countries—by rebuilding the economy and infrastructure from scratch.

In the long term perspective, the process of post-war economic development must bring a fundamental shift to a new, green and clean economy in Ukraine. The post war rebuilding should not reproduce the pre-war economy, which was based on fossil fuels, energy and pollution intensive. The priority in the state policy should be reforming the economy through the construction of more energy-efficient and less energy-consuming industrial and transport systems, communal facilities and housing, as well as the use of low-carbon materials and the development of nature-positive and low-carbon agriculture. It is important to define and articulate the goals of breaking the dependency on fossil fuels and making the green transition



and sustainability a key element to all aspects of post-war economic development. This should apply not only to the territories most affected by the war, but also to all territories of Ukraine.

2. Why it should be planned now and what happens if we leave the environmental component for later

The need to restore Ukraine after Russia's full-scale military offense arose immediately after the de-occupation of the northern regions of Ukraine - we all saw the terrible consequences of the Russian occupation and had to react immediately and adequately. Immediately, several different communities and numerous experts offered their proposals, on the basis of which the development of the national recovery plan of Ukraine began.

Questions on green recovery were raised from the very beginning. Soon environmental organizations and experts came together to discuss the topic and to monitor the process of the plan preparation trying to become a part of various working groups affiliated with the official process. At the beginning of May, a joint position was developed, which was made public in the form of the [main principles of green recovery](#). However, the reaction to these proposals was rather weak and they were mostly ignored in the final official documents.

The post-war reconstruction plan of Ukraine published on the government website does not have a general vision and specific goals based on green recovery framework, climate and environmental issues has no cross-cutting application throughout the plan.

Repeating the statements of the European partners about the need to rebuild on the basis of sustainability, taking into account global climate challenge, the government, unfortunately, does not foresee specific ways of embedding these principles in the developed projects or gives them only a secondary priority in the plans for the distant future.

Therefore, the risks that we talked about at the beginning, may not just increase, but become catastrophic even before the greening of the post-war economy or the implementation of the European Green Deal starts.

Today, we cannot yet determine the scale of destruction and calculate the needs of post-war reconstruction. But we can outline the main limitations and define at the national level what cannot be done in the recovery process. These framework guidelines should be implemented at the regional and local levels applied on specific local conditions.

The longer we delay environmental reforms, the more expensive they will become. Thus, in the 90s, the implementation of the EU's environmental acquis for the new EU members from the CEE cost about 1K Euro per capita [1], which for Ukraine would have amounted to approximately 46 billion Euros in total. Today, this amount would reach about 76 billion just due to inflation (without taking into account military operations) [2]. And it will continue to grow. This is primarily about investments in proper water purification facilities, pollution prevention installations for industrial discharges, sewage and air pollutants emissions, and ensuring the proper functioning of the waste management infrastructure.



3. The basis of green recovery is the implementation of environmental and climate reforms required for the EU membership

Independence came to Ukraine relatively easily, without a hard struggle. Therefore, after 30 years, the Ukrainian people are paying the highest price for being independent. If EU membership is "gifted" to Ukraine in the event of its victory over Russia, without proper fulfillment of the tasks of full democratic transformation and European integration, it will still have to be done later, but at a much higher price. The same applies to the timely consideration/non-consideration of possible losses of natural capital or the consequences of climate change.

Politicians and the government must publicly acknowledge that environmental protection and climate change are a priority, not secondary component. Ensuring the cross-cutting application of this priority will solve Ukraine's problem of lagging behind in the adaptation and implementation of EU environmental legislation and full participation in the European Green Deal.

The European Green Deal is not only about climate and environment. This is a program of ambitious transformation, "greening" of almost all aspects of social life. The European Green Deal sets specific objectives in nine areas, namely: climate, energy, industrial strategy for the circular economy, sustainable and smart mobility, green agricultural policy, biodiversity conservation, zero pollution, finance and the EU as a global leader [3]. Likewise, during the formation of the recovery program and its measures, the greening of all sectors of the Ukrainian economy to be restored must take place [3].

It is worth mentioning that before Russia's large-scale attack on Ukraine, experts assessed the progress in the implementation of the environmental section of the Association Agreement as unsatisfactory. Most of the laws on the harmonization of environmental regulations and legislation to EU requirements remained unadopted, and the implementation of already adopted ones faced serious problems.

War is a terrible calamity, but the highest national legislative body continues its work during these times as well as the profiled committee of the Ukrainian Parliament. The preparation and adoption of European laws is the front lines for the parliamentarians now. It is not normal that the parliament finds time for legislative initiatives to limit or cancel environmental assessments for the deployment of new businesses, but not for the adoption of laws on environmental monitoring or environmental control. The absence of only these two laws impedes environmental accounting and access to state-of-environment information for informed decision making, as well as monitoring and control systems functioning.

The path to the compliance with our international environmental and climate obligations will not be short and simple, since there are already about 200 normative legal acts with which Ukraine needs to bring its own legislation into line. And we can not get away with merely cosmetic changes in the legislation: Ukraine must really be ready for the practical implementation of all EU legislation and policy.



Given the importance of climate in the context of the European Green Deal in the EU and Ukraine's intention to become part of this ambitious European initiative, the issue of climate change will be important in the context of Ukraine's fulfillment of all conditions for full EU membership. Given the recent trends in the EU to integrate climate into all policies, climate commitments will most likely be part of the requirements not only of the environmental chapter during the negotiation process, but also of such fields as energy, transport, agriculture, trade, etc.

It is necessary to take into account the previous experience of harmonization in the fields of environment and climate change, which Ukraine acquired in the process of implementing the Association Agreement. Doing so will speed up the progress of the implementation of EU legislative requirements and policy in this area of work and provide conditions for supporting the negotiation process and full integration of Ukraine into the EU.

The implementation of the Association Agreement, as well as the Copenhagen criteria for joining the EU in terms of environmental protection and climate change, is not a parallel process to the Recovery Plan of Ukraine, but an integral and mandatory part of it (it would be better if it were a prerequisite for a successful recovery). Of course, large investments will come only under the security guarantees that only joining NATO can provide. However, joining NATO is impossible without the completion of major reforms.

Without these reforms, it will be impossible to move to a modern model of environmental management – the model of Good Environmental Governance.

4. Green recovery of Ukraine and its impact on Eastern Partnership countries

The war pointed out and aggravated problems that we, Ukrainian society, have put aside for years. At the same time, the war showed various examples of survival thanks to self-sufficiency and self-organization of individuals, communities and civil society in general.

However, it is not enough to draw conclusions from the lessons of war. **It is necessary to determine the priorities of further development, to answer the question: what exactly do we want to build while rebuilding.** The path to full EU membership is going through consciousness of the goals and tools to achieve them in accordance with Ukraine's international obligations.

The systemic rebuilding of the country and its economy based on the principles of environmental sustainability with the minimization of existing and future risks, the introduction of decentralization and self-organization of communities - these Ukraine's experiences should become part of the future policy of the Eastern Partnership.

The special purpose of cooperation and support within the framework of the Eastern Partnership is the fulfillment of the main political goals, particularly the Paris Agreement (on climate change) and the UN Agenda until 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals[4]. Under the conditions of green reconstruction, Ukraine can become the regional leader lighting the path for Moldova



and Georgia, as well as other countries of the Eastern Partnership, contributing to their further European integration and strengthening future enlarged Europe.

Recommendations:

It is necessary to determine the priorities of further development, to answer the question - what exactly do we want to build while rebuilding. A common vision and shared goals are needed, with a green recovery as the basis.

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

- to agree and adopt European integration laws in accordance with the Association Agreement and the European Green Deal (EGD). This will be the foundation of the green transformation.

Government of Ukraine

- to ensure the cross-cutting application of the environment and climate component in all recovery plans and government initiatives in accordance with the EGD, which is an integral part of the EU development policy;

- to ensure full integration into the EGD, and introduction of the best available technologies and practices, friendly to the environment and climate;

- to involve in all processes of formation of government initiatives on restoration of Ukraine a wide representation of environmental civil society organizations, guided by the principles of Good Environmental Governance.

The EU and, in particular, the EU Delegation to Ukraine

- to provide support and follow up for the integrating processes between the implementation of the Association Agreement, environmental reforms and the recovery program.

Civil society, in particular the Ukrainian national platform of EaP CSF and the Ukrainian side of the Ukraine-EU civil society platform, will continue to monitor the process of the post-war recovery of Ukraine on the basis of sustainable development principles and green transformation, and take an active part in the sustainable economic recovery of Ukraine.

[1] <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/enlarg/pdf/compco.pdf>

[2] <https://www.in2013dollars.com/europe/inflation/1996?amount=100>

[3] http://eap-csf.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ECR_2021_web_final.pdf

[4] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/109099_en