

KICK-OFF CONFERENCE

PATHWAYS to PROGRESS



Germany-Ukraine
Dialogues on Rule of Law
for EU Accession

17 JANUARY 2025

Venue

EU Commission – Representation in Germany
Europäisches Haus
Unter den Linden 78
10117 Berlin

#PathwaysToProgress
#GUDCon25

Supported by:



Background

As of June 2024, the EU has officially opened accession talks with Ukraine, following a decision by the European Council in December 2023. The negotiations are expected to be rigorous and first address Chapters 23 and 24, with an initial focus on key reforms in the judiciary, anti-corruption measures, and fundamental values. As the EU Commission's revised enlargement strategy highlights the critical importance of the rule of law principles, the pace of the negotiations with Ukraine will be affected by the progress in the fundamentals cluster. In this context, close cooperation with the EU and the exchange of experiences with member states like Germany, which is one of the EU's founding members and a strong rule of law promoter, are crucial. Germany is also one of the biggest supporters of Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression and has been a steadfast ally of Ukraine's pro-European reforms since 2014.

Aim of the conference

The conference brings together key stakeholders to explore how Ukraine can advance the rule of law and uphold fundamental values amidst martial law, with support from Germany and EU partners. Key discussions will focus on electoral democracy, judicial reform, and migration, while also identifying additional topics for future debates. It will try to give an answer to the key question: How to safeguard democratic processes in Ukraine and how to support the country more effectively on its EU integration journey.

About the project and partners

The conference marks the launch of the project "Pathways to Progress: Germany-Ukraine Dialogues on Rule of Law for EU Accession," a series of high-level political dialogue events over the next year. This initiative aims to foster exchange between Kyiv, Berlin, and Brussels on rule of law issues while strengthening the Ukrainian parliament and involving civil society to ensure progress on Ukraine's European path.

The project is being implemented in close cooperation with the Civil Network OPORA (Kyiv). It is funded through the project 'Strengthening Ukraine's EU Alignment in the Rule of Law' (3*E4U) of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office. 3*E4U is based on an agreement between the German and Ukrainian foreign ministers, underscoring the importance of this partnership.

Friday, 17 January 2025

08:30 – 09:00	Registration & Coffee
09:00 – 09:30	<p>Welcoming remarks</p> <p>Manica HAUPTMAN, Head of Political, Representation of the European Commission in Germany</p> <p>Robin WAGENER, MP, Chair of the German-Ukrainian Parliamentary Friendship Group of the German Bundestag</p> <p>Prof Dr Funda TEKIN, Director, Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP), Berlin</p> <p>Olga AIVAZOVSKA, Board Chair, Civil Network OPORA, Kyiv</p>
Lead Moderator	Laura CHRISTOPH , Research Associate, Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP), Berlin
09:30 – 11:00	<p>Opening Discussion – "Building a resilient rule of law framework in Ukraine with support by the EU and Germany"</p> <p>As Ukraine continues its journey towards EU membership, the rule of law stands as a cornerstone for successful integration. The principles of justice, accountability, and judicial independence are not merely technical requirements; they are essential to fostering trust in institutions and safeguarding human rights. However, it is not just about meeting benchmarks but about embedding the rule of law into the very fabric of its society. Ukraine has demonstrated its judicial system's capacity to function under extraordinary pressure and horizontal governance at the local level. However, the current martial law regime and the EU accession process underscore the need to secure and advance these democratic foundations.</p> <p>The opening discussion will explore the relevance of rule of law for Ukraine's EU accession, how Germany and the EU can assist Ukraine in improving its existing legal and institutional framework and what Ukraine can contribute to the EU's legal community.</p>
Keynote speaker	Olha STEFANISHYNA , Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Minister of Justice of Ukraine, Kyiv (Video)
Keynote speaker	Oleksii CHERNYSHOV , Deputy Prime Minister – Minister for National Unity of Ukraine
Discussants	<p>Anka FELDHUSEN, Commissioner for Civilian Crisis Prevention and Stabilisation, Federal Foreign Office</p> <p>Oleksandr KORNIYENKO, First Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine</p> <p>Wolfgang NOZAR, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Fundamentals, Rule of Law, Anti-Fraud and Financial Management, European Commission (online)</p>
Moderator	Ljudmyla MELNYK , Head of Ukraine Programme, Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP), Berlin
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Q&A</p> <p>Coffee Break</p>

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

11:30 – 13:00

1st Discussion "Safeguarding Ukraine's electoral democracy: navigating martial and rule of law on the path to the EU"

As holding elections under martial law is legally incompatible with Ukraine's constitution, it is crucial to explore how electoral democracy can be re-established and safeguarded under the rule of law in the context of a future transition to a post-war democratic society. The process must ensure that free and fair elections are conducted, despite the numerous challenges posed by Russian aggression, including displaced citizens and destroyed infrastructure. The 2024 EU Commission enlargement report highlights the need to continue election reform to address outstanding recommendations and prepare for the post-war elections. Public opinion in Ukraine has shown a shift in favor of democratic institutions, signaling the importance of this reform as Ukraine moves forward.

What legal reforms are most urgent to ensure the integrity and fairness of elections in Ukraine during the post-war period? How to ensure the participation of military personnel, IDPs and citizens abroad? How can democratic governance be strengthened at the local level?

[Input presentation:](#)

Olga AIVAZOVSKA, Board Chair, Civil Network OPORA, Kyiv

[Panelists:](#)

Oleksandr KORNIYENKO, First Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Vitalii PLUKAR, Deputy Chairman, Central Election Commission

Wilfried JILGE, Advisor for Ukraine and the Black Sea region for the Stabilisation Platform & Associate Fellow, Center for Order and Governance in Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Berlin

Dr Oleksandra KEUDEL, Associate Professor at the Department of Public Policy and Governance at Kyiv School of Economics

[Moderator:](#)

Rebecca HARMS, Former Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

Q&A

13:00 – 14:15

Lunch Break

14:15 – 15:30

2nd Discussion "Migration challenges: legal pathways for securing Ukraine's human capital"

The current displacement crisis, with more than 6 million Ukrainian refugees in the EU and millions of IDPs within Ukraine's borders, calls for robust structures for access to justice, legal protection and support, as well as transparent mechanisms for their return and reintegration. For Ukraine, this means adapting legislation that not only aligns with EU standards but also addresses the needs of its displaced population and future workforce critical for Ukraine's recovery. Moreover, Ukraine's law enforcement agencies and other relevant bodies must attain the necessary standards of professionalism, reliability and efficiency to successfully implement regulations. These steps are vital for meeting EU expectations and supporting Ukraine's long-term stability and development.

What specific legal and procedural reforms are needed in Ukraine to align with the EU's migration policy and improve law enforcement? How can institutional cooperation and coordination between Ukraine and EU member states be improved with regards to migration, border control and organised crime? How can the EU and Germany support Ukraine with developing a legal framework for the effective reintegration of refugees addressing the country's future human capital needs for economic recovery?

[Input presentation:](#)

Inna VOLOSEVYCH, KIU Research Fellow at the European University Viadrina; Deputy Director, Info Sapiens, Kyiv

[Panelists:](#)

Olena KONDRATIUK, Deputy Chair of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (online)

Bohdan MATVIYCHUK, Director General of the Directorate for Targeted Support of the Population, Ministry of Social Policy, Kyiv

Ralph GENETZKE, Director/Head of Brussels Mission, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Nataliya PRYHORNYSKA, Chair of Open Platform e.V./ Vice-Chair Alliance of Ukrainian Organisations

[Moderator:](#)

Iryna SHVETS, Lviv Office Director, Civil Network OPORA

Q&A

15:30 – 16:00

Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:45

3rd Discussion "Advancing judicial reform in Ukraine: modernisation and strengthening accountability"

As Ukraine progresses towards EU integration, judicial reform remains a critical pillar of ensuring adherence to the rule of law. The EU Commission's assessment that Ukraine has reached "some level of preparation" in the judiciary underscores the need for deeper reforms. Key priorities include establishing a robust system for the disciplinary responsibility of judges, relaunching the selection process to ensure transparency and meritocracy, and modernizing IT systems to increase efficiency and accessibility. Strengthening Ukraine's judiciary is essential for fostering public trust and aligning the country with EU standards.

What mechanisms can be introduced to ensure full disciplinary accountability of judges in Ukraine? How can Ukraine revamp its judicial selection process to promote fairness, transparency, and independence? How can public trust in Ukraine's judiciary be built and improved?

Input presentation:

Karyna ASLANYAN, Judicial Reform Project Lead, Agency for Legislative Ideas, presenting their report on judiciary reform

Panelists:

Liudmyla SUHAK, Deputy Minister of Justice of Ukraine for European Integration (online)

Polina LI, Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine – Minister of Justice of Ukraine

Prof Dr John MORIJN, Lead Legal Expert, 3*E4U Project, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Prof Dr Dr h.c. Angelika Nußberger, Vice-President of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Professor at the University of Cologne (online)

Oleksii OMELIAN, Deputy Chairman, the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine

Moderator:

Johannes UHL, Implementation Manager, 3*E4U Project, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Q&A

17:45 – 18:00

Concluding remarks

Olga AIVAZOVSKA, Board Chair, Civil Network OPORA, Kyiv

Ljudmyla MELNYK, Head of Ukraine Programme, Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP), Berlin

Helge ARENDS, Project Director, 3*E4U Project, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

18:00

Reception

Please scan the QR code for a 5-minute evaluation of the conference. We appreciate your feedback!

