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## УКРАЇНСЬКЕ ПИТАННЯ В ЗОВНІШНІЙ ПОЛІТИЦІ НІДЕРЛАНДІВ: БЕЗПЕКОВИЙ, ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ ТА КУЛЬТУРНИЙ ВИМІРИ (2014–2025 рр.)

*У статті розглядається еволюція українського питання в зовнішній політиці Королівства Нідерланди крізь призму трьох ключових вимірів — безпекового, економічного та культурного. Після початку російської агресії проти України в 2014 році, а особливо після повномасштабного вторгнення РФ, Україна посіла помітне місце в політичному дискурсі та стратегічних пріоритетах Гааги. Головна увага приділяється трансформації позиції Нідерландів у рамках Європейського Союзу та НАТО, їхньому внеску в колективну безпеку й підтримку України через військову допомогу, участі в санкційній політиці та обговоренні нових форматів співпраці. Водночас розглядаються і внутрішньополітичні дискусії щодо поєднання національних безпекових пріоритетів із міжнародними зобов'язаннями, що набули особливої гостроти в контексті українського питання. Наголошується на особливій актуальності культурної дипломатії та гуманітарних ініціатив у формуванні позитивного іміджу України серед нідерландського суспільства. У цьому контексті, особлива увага приділяється діяльності Українського інституту, міжінституційним програмам та мистецьким проектам, які стали інструментами публічної дипломатії, здатними формувати нові наративи у європейському просторі. Крім того, у статті обґрунтовується, що сучасний етап відносин між Україною та Нідерландами має вирішальне значення для майбутнього України в європейській спільноті. Подальша ефективність цього партнерства залежатиме від збереження внутрішнього політичного консенсусу в Нідерландах, стійкості підтримки на рівні суспільства та інтеграції політики України в ширший дискурс європейської безпеки.*

**Ключові слова:** Україна, Нідерланди, зовнішня політика, Європейський Союз, безпековий вимір, культурна дипломатія, внутрішньополітичні дискусії, російсько-українська війна.

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## UKRAINE IN DUTCH FOREIGN POLICY FROM INDEPENDENCE TO THE CURRENT STATE: SECURITY, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS (2014 — 2025)

*The article examines the evolution of the Ukrainian issue in the foreign policy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through the prism of three key dimensions — security, economic and cultural. After the beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, and especially after the large-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, Ukraine has occupied a prominent place in the political discourse and strategic priorities of The Hague. The article analyses the transformation of the positions of the Netherlands within the framework of the European Union and NATO, their contribution to collective security and support for Ukraine through military assistance, participation in sanctions policy and discussion of new formats of cooperation. At the same time, domestic political discussions on the combination of national security priorities with international obligations, which have become particularly acute in the context of the Ukrainian issue, are also considered. The author emphasizes the special relevance of cultural diplomacy and humanitarian initiatives in shaping a positive image of Ukraine among Dutch society. In this context, special attention is paid to the activities of the Ukrainian Institute, inter-institutional programs, and art projects, which have become tools of public diplomacy, capable of shaping new narratives in the European space. In addition, the article argues that the current stage of relations between Ukraine and the Netherlands is of crucial importance for the future of Ukraine in the European community. The further effectiveness of this partnership will depend on the preservation of internal political consensus in the Netherlands, the stability of support at the societal level and the integration of Ukrainian policy into the broader discourse of European security.*

**Keywords:** *Ukraine, Netherlands, foreign policy, European Union, security dimension, cultural diplomacy, domestic political discussions, Russian-Ukrainian war.*

### **Introduction**

The full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, launched on February 24, 2022, drastically altered the configuration of international relations and cast serious doubt on the stability of the existing European security order. In these conditions, the foreign policy of states, especially the member states of the European Union, acquired decisive importance as an instrument for shaping the long-term security architecture on the continent. For Ukraine, which is situated at the very epicentre of geopolitical confrontation, international support became a critically important condition for preserving statehood, modernizing the defence sector, and continuing the course towards European integration.

In this context, the policy of the Netherlands merits particular scholarly interest. Its foreign policy after 2022 demonstrates a combination of normative and value-based approaches — inherent in EU policy — together with pragmatic calculations driven by domestic political and economic imperatives. Therefore, examining the evolution of the Dutch position towards Ukraine makes it possible to trace how a country that has historically prioritised multilateral diplomacy and economic cooperation has changed its approach in response to the realities of a protracted military conflict and growing global instability.

Despite the considerable scholarly attention devoted to the European Union's foreign policy towards Ukraine, most studies focus primarily on pan-European approaches. By contrast, comprehensive analyses of the positions of individual EU members, in particular the Netherlands, remain relatively scarce and fragmentary. This lacuna is noteworthy, since the Netherlands plays a prominent role in the formation of a common European policy both through participation in collective decisions within the EU and NATO, and through the implementation of its own initiatives in the field of diplomacy, security, and economic support. Dutch foreign policy is characterized by a distinctive combination of value-based principles with pragmatic economic interests — an interaction that became especially pronounced after the onset of the full-scale war. Therefore, this analysis of Dutch-Ukrainian relations aims to explore the evolving nature of the Netherlands' support for Ukraine, situating it within the broader context of EU decision-making processes.

Scholarly research devoted to Ukraine's relations with the European Union includes the works of Valeriy Kopyyka and Tetyana Shynkarenko, who have comprehensively analysed the history and current state of European integra-

tion, with particular attention to Ukrainian-European relations<sup>1</sup>. A significant contribution to the study of the conceptual foundations of Ukraine's foreign policy and its gradual integration into the European political and security space has been made by Stepan Vidnyanskyj and Andriy Martynov<sup>2</sup>. Certain aspects of Ukraine's place in the processes of European integration and areas of cooperation with individual member states, in particular the Benelux countries, have been explored by Andriy Grubinko<sup>3</sup>, Iryna Manaenko<sup>4</sup> Andriy Kudryachenko, and Roman Kryvonos<sup>5</sup>.

Tetiana Sydoruk, Viktor Pavliuk, and Iryna Tymeichuk analyse the European Union's policy towards its eastern neighbours, highlighting the absence of a clearly coordinated EU strategy<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, César García Andrés<sup>7</sup> and Tatiana Shaban<sup>8</sup> emphasise the distinctive features of Ukraine–EU interaction within a broader regional framework.

After the onset of the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation in 2022, both Ukrainian and foreign researchers have analysed changes in the format and substance of Ukraine's cooperation with the European Union. In particular, Leonid Chupriy<sup>9</sup>, Yevheniia Horiunova<sup>10</sup> and Olena Polovko<sup>11</sup> emphasize the strengthening of the security and defence dimension of cooperation, the acceleration of integration procedures and the transformation of EU policy towards Ukraine into a strategic partnership. Among foreign authors, Nathalie Tocci<sup>12</sup>, Marianne Riddervold and Pernille Rieker<sup>13</sup> examine the European reaction to the war as evidence of the EU's changing geopolitical role of the EU and its enhanced capacity to act under crisis conditions. Taken together, these studies provide a theoretical and empirical basis for conducting an in-depth analysis of the Dutch foreign policy towards Ukraine after 2022.

### **Dynamics of interaction before the start of a full-scale war**

The beginning of the 21st century was marked by the consolidation of the positions of post-Soviet states in the international arena and by the European Union's growing interest in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as strategic partners. In the first decades of Ukraine's independence, the overarching framework of EU policy largely shaped the key guidelines of Dutch foreign policy towards Ukraine. For the EU, this period was characterized by large-scale geographical enlargement and institutional deepening of integration processes. In March 2003, the European Commission, in its address on 'Wider Europe,' introduced the concept of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)<sup>14</sup>. According to the initial concept of the ENP, the main goal was to create the prerequisites for the intensification of relations between the enlarged EU and its neighbours, thereby forming a zone of stability and security along the entire external border of the Union<sup>15</sup>.

An important stage in the Eastern dimension of EU policy was the launch of the Eastern Partnership initiative in May 2008, a joint project of Poland and Sweden, formally presented at a meeting of the EU Council on General Affairs and External Relations. The initiative brought together Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. However, due to significant differences in political systems, levels of economic development and aspirations for European integration, the application of the same approaches to all six countries has aroused criticism both from the expert community and from the Eastern partners themselves.

As a member state of the European Union, the Netherlands contributed to the formation and implementation of EU policy in the Eastern direction, combining bilateral initiatives with multilateral diplomacy within the framework of the ENP and the Eastern Partnership. A symbolic expression of this approach came in 2008, when Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans, delivered a speech at the fifth lecture of the Netherlands Society for Foreign Affairs. He affirmed Ukraine's right to independently determine its foreign policy course, while at the same time emphasising the importance of maintaining balanced relations with both the EU and Russia<sup>16</sup>. This approach, aimed at combining Ukraine's integration processes with maintaining a partnership with Russia, was characteristic of European policy until 2014.

After the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, the position of the Netherlands underwent a significant transformation. In 2015, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Bert Koenders (2014–2017), described a new approach to Russia, based on a strategy of the “clenched fist” and the “open hand”. The policy of “clenched fist” meant the continuation of sanctions until Moscow began to work on de-escalating the conflict in Donbas and/or gave up Crimea. At the same time, “the ‘open hand’ assumed the preservation of a limited dialogue with Russia based on mutual respect, maintaining economic relations and cooperation in the fields of education, science, and civil society. However, even then it was obvious that the Kremlin was using the “Minsk process” as an instrument of hybrid warfare, combining diplomatic pressure with direct military intervention<sup>17</sup>. The Russian Federation could not accept its geopolitical defeat in the struggle for the “soft” domination of Ukraine, but also, more fundamentally, its very existence as a state. Therefore, the Kremlin decided to use not only all the overt and covert methods of conducting hybrid warfare in the fight against Ukraine, but also direct armed intervention in its internal affairs<sup>18</sup>. In this context, the Netherlands continued to view Russia as a strategic partner. As Bert Koenders emphasized: “We must continue to put pressure on Russia, but also look for new political solutions. Russia and the Russians are not our enemies, but we cannot allow the unilateral implementation of European rules on national sovereignty and the use of force”<sup>19</sup>.

His successor, Stef Blok (2018–2021), reaffirmed the relevance of the policy of “pressure and dialogue”. At the same time, he emphasized that this policy could succeed only if the EU and NATO continue to act in unity. The most important means of pressure remained the sanctions regime aimed at Russian politicians and individuals directly involved in the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. An additional priority for the Dutch government remained bringing to justice those responsible for the tragedy of flight MH17.

Understanding the Dutch position requires examining not only its official statements within European institutions, but also domestic political factors that influenced support for — or scepticism toward — Ukraine’s European integration course. As researcher Barend ter Haar notes, Dutch foreign policy typically includes three key orientations — “engagement,” “trade,” and “withdrawal”<sup>20</sup>. The engagement approach involves active participation in the formation of a peaceful and just world order, combining national interests with a moral obligation to the international community, and supporting multilateral institutions such as the EU and the UN. The trade model prioritises promoting exports, attracting investment, protecting economic interests, and recognising the crucial role of international economic integration for the country’s well-being. By contrast, the withdrawal orientation reflects concerns that the benefits of global interaction accrue primarily to the elite, while the middle class suffers losses, which stimulates the desire to limit international involvement and focus on domestic issues.

In this context, the interplay of these three orientations — combined with pronounced domestic political scepticism and increasing Eurosceptic sentiments — led to the use of the ‘Ukrainian issue’ as a tool of political struggle within the country, which contributed to the formation of a contradictory and often ambivalent image of Ukraine in Dutch society.

The consultative referendum of 6 April 2016 on the ratification of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU offers a telling illustration of domestic political dynamics shaping Dutch–Ukrainian relations. Initiated by right-wing political forces, in particular the Forum for Democracy (Forum voor Democratie — FvD), it became a platform for expressing Eurosceptic sentiments, although it was not formally directed against Ukraine. As Arjan van Dixhoorn, the head of the organising committee, noted in a commentary for NRC Handelsblad, the referendum was seen as a tool to put pressure on relations between the Netherlands and the EU, rather than as an attempt to revise bilateral relations with Ukraine<sup>21</sup>.

Subsequent political contacts, including the official visit of the Speaker of the Dutch Senate, Ankie Broekers-Knol, to Kyiv in June 2016, took place in an atmosphere of caution on the part of The Hague. Although key issues were

discussed, from visa liberalization to the consequences of the MH17 crash, public statements focused on “testing” of bilateral relations and the need to rebuild mutual trust. Prior to the full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine, although remaining an important partner of the Netherlands, did not figure among the key strategic priorities of their foreign policy, and bilateral interaction was mainly carried out in line with pan-European approaches and EU initiatives.

### **Russian Aggression and the Transformation of the Netherlands’ Vision of Ukraine’s Role in the European Security Architecture**

The full-scale Russian invasion of 2022 marked a turning point in the Netherlands’ perception of Ukraine’s place in the European security system. During the first weeks of the war, Prime Minister Mark Rutte (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)) condemned Russia’s violation of international law and Ukraine’s sovereignty in a speech in Madrid on 30 March 2022<sup>22</sup>. He described the Russian-Ukrainian conflict as an “existential challenge” to the European security order, as well as framed it as a moral and legal issue. Rutte also called for military and humanitarian assistance, presenting such measures as necessary to preserve Ukrainian statehood. At the same time, he stressed the centrality of Western unity and coordinated EU and NATO actions as vital to deterring aggression and maintaining continental stability.

This reaction indicated a shift from predominantly diplomatic rhetoric to a logic of crisis mobilisation in Dutch policy towards Ukraine. Moreover, it demonstrated that Ukraine’s defence was no longer viewed solely as a matter of regional security, but rather as a test of the resilience and credibility of the entire European security architecture.

The first year of the war was marked by the dominance of an emergency crisis approach. The Netherlands allocated approximately €60 million for humanitarian aid, in particular through the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund and demining programs, and also invested in supporting energy stability in the winter (€90 million through the World Bank, €72 million through the EBRD for Ukrenergo, €18 million for equipment). Financial assistance was concentrated on emergency loans and guarantees (over €300 million through the IMF and the World Bank), while military supplies reached €1 billion. Specific reconstruction projects also played a role - for example, €1 million for the restoration of Kherson, Odessa and Mykolaiiv<sup>23</sup>.

In 2023, Dutch support for Ukraine evolved from a purely war-driven response to a blended support model that combined emergency measures with structural investments in future reconstruction. Humanitarian programs remained significant (€20 million through the EU Humanitarian Aid Office, €14 million for demining), but investments in the health sector also increased (€25 million for health and reproductive rights, €10 million for psychosocial

support). Infrastructure and housing reconstruction programs expanded to over €180 million (EU, World Bank, EIB, Council of Europe). New areas of engagement appeared, such as support for the agricultural sector (€40 million through IFC) and the protection of cultural heritage (€5 million).

By 2024, Dutch aid had reached a qualitatively new level, taking on the characteristics of a long-term partnership. Total financial guarantees and support reached €2.9 billion, of which €1 billion was channelled through the International Fund for Ukraine over a four-year period, a clear signal of medium-term consolidation of support. At the same time, humanitarian assistance remained stable (over €40 million), with priority given to the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure (over €170 million) and energy sustainability. There was an increased focus on the business sector and civil society, with over €35 million for human rights and socio-economic development initiatives.

On the third anniversary of the invasion (24 February 2025), the Dutch government updated the framework of its foreign policy communication, entrenching the formula: “achieving peace by showing strength, not risking further war by showing weakness”<sup>24</sup>. This positioning pursued two goals: first, to present support for Ukraine as a key element in guaranteeing the security of all of Europe, and not just as an act of solidarity; second, to shift the public discourse from the topic of national spending in favour of the argument that it is an investment in deterring aggression and preventing the spread of conflict. Such a framework significantly limits the space for criticism of the aid by political opponents who seek to portray assistance as an “external burden” on the budget.

The domestic political environment in the Netherlands at the beginning of 2025 created a specific context for the formation of the foreign policy discourse on Ukraine. The fall of Dick Schoof's government after the withdrawal of the Freedom Party (Partij voor de Vrijheid — PVV) from the coalition was the result of accumulated contradictions on migration policy and budgetary priorities. However, even in the conditions of the government crisis and the functioning of the “interim cabinet”, an inter-party consensus on strategic support for Ukraine remained, which indicates a deep institutional consolidation of the Ukrainian issue in the foreign policy agenda of The Hague.

The persistence of this consensus largely stems from the perception that assistance to Ukraine is an important element of the European Union's security policy, and that any drastic deviation from this agreed course by an individual member state potentially creates geopolitical risks.

Despite the overall stability of the Dutch position on Ukraine, the scale and priorities of further financing for Ukraine once again became subjects of political debate. The government's decision to allocate an additional €3.5 billion in aid to Ukraine in 2026 received the backing of the ruling liberal party

People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie — VVD)<sup>25</sup>.

However, far-right PVV leader Geert Wilders declined to approve this initiative. He conditioned its adoption on a parallel increase in public spending aimed at increasing the purchasing power of Dutch citizens. The Farmers-Citizens Movement (BoerBurgerBeweging — BBB), which represents the interests of rural regions, also opposed this decision, arguing that the funds should be prioritized for domestic needs.

The debate over blocking or limiting support for Ukraine should also be considered in the broader context of the so-called “Ukraine fatigue”. According to a survey conducted by Eurofound in 2024, a significant proportion of Europeans still support Ukraine and their governments’ measures to help the country and its people: 82.4% support humanitarian aid to Ukraine and 65.2% support military aid<sup>26</sup>. Nevertheless, as Eurofound also found, a considerable share of the EU population is experiencing war fatigue, especially those who have been most affected by the rising cost of living since the start of the war.

Even though questions about the appropriateness of aid to Ukraine are increasingly being raised across Europe, the situation in the Netherlands has not changed significantly. On 17–18 December 2024, a survey was conducted on the attitude of Dutch citizens towards the arrival and reception of refugees from Ukraine, as well as towards events in Ukraine more broadly. Despite the ongoing discussions about the so-called “Ukraine fatigue” in EU societies, the proportion of residents who believe that the Netherlands should stop supplying weapons has remained almost unchanged since the beginning of 2024 (18%–20%)<sup>27</sup>. More than half of residents (54%) completely disagreed with this statement and maintained that the Netherlands should not stop supplying weapons. At the same time, the level of direct civic involvement of Dutch citizens in measures to support Ukraine over the past year has decreased over the past year. Compared to 2022, the proportion of those who try to use less gas at home dropped from 74% to 47%, electricity from 67% to 35% and petrol from 25% to 13%. Similarly, the percentage of residents who donate money to Ukraine has also decreased from 30% to 20%, as has the percentage of residents who have collected humanitarian goods for Ukraine (from 12% to 8%)<sup>28</sup>. This change seems natural: whereas in 2022 the war in Ukraine largely shocked the world community, after three years of war, public opinion has increasingly shifted toward expecting more proactive steps from the governments of their countries to ensure a resolution of the conflict and secure peace on the European continent.

In this context, official diplomatic initiatives acquire particular significance. A notable example was the first Ukrainian–Dutch intergovernmental conference, held in Lviv on 12 April 2025. The Conference was established by

the governments of Ukraine and the Netherlands to develop existing cooperation, further deepen bilateral relations and support Ukraine in implementing reforms and fulfilling the relevant EU accession criteria with a view to future membership in the Union. Within this framework, five main areas of cooperation were identified: the rule of law, accountability for Russia's armed aggression against Ukrain, agriculture, energy, social policy<sup>29</sup>.

In the area of the rule of law, Ukraine and the Kingdom of the Netherlands reached an agreement on further periodic cooperation on key issues within the "Fundamentals" cluster of the European Union membership process. This initiative envisages regular expert meetings to exchange best practices in the field of state policymaking and harmonization of Ukrainian national legislation with the EU *acquis*, in particular in the areas of the functioning of the judicial system and combating corruption.

In the agricultural sector, cooperation includes the exchange of experience and the implementation of EU standards, as well as the support of technological innovations and direct dialogue between industry associations. The energy partnership has a strategic dimension, focusing on the integration of the Ukrainian energy system into the European market and the involvement of Dutch companies in the field of sustainable energy.

The social block focuses on the adaptation of Ukrainian social services to EU standards, including childcare reforms, deinstitutionalization and the integration of people with disabilities into social and economic life.

Within such intergovernmental initiatives, the Netherlands is increasingly positioning itself as a co-architect of Ukrainian reforms, combining its own economic and political interests with support for Ukraine's long-term stability, modernization, and gradual European integration. Despite scepticism from some domestic political forces, the Netherlands remains one of the most consistent supporters of Ukraine during the war. As Dutch Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans stated on the social network X on August 4, 2025, the Netherlands will contribute 500 million euros to the purchase of American military equipment for Ukraine<sup>30</sup>. This decision followed the Donald Trump's statement that the United States would provide Ukraine with weapons that would be paid for by European allies. Thus, the Netherlands became the first NATO country to contribute to a new mechanism for supplying American weapons to Kyiv.

### **The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Bilateral Relations**

Cultural diplomacy has become one of the key instruments for supporting diplomatic dialogue between Ukraine and the Netherlands. The first institutional principles of cooperation in this area were laid down back in 1996, when the parties signed the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation.

In the context of the full-scale war in Ukraine, cultural diplomacy has acquired particular importance as a form of public diplomacy<sup>31</sup>. Although it did not immediately come to the forefront, over time, it was cultural initiatives that began to actively attract the attention of a broad audience not only to the destruction of the material infrastructure of Ukraine, but also to the threats of Ukrainian cultural identity.

In this context, an important step was the opening of a representative office of the Ukrainian Institute in the Netherlands, headed by Yulia Malinovska<sup>32</sup>. The main tasks of the representation include popularization of Ukrainian culture through participation in key cultural events, presentation of Ukrainian artists, projects and opportunities for cooperation, as well as deepening mutual understanding with the local cultural and educational community. In particular, the Ukrainian Institute already cooperates or prepares joint projects with such European institutions as the European Cultural Foundation, Mondriaan Fund, Prince Claus Fund, Fonds Podiumkunsten, Nederlands Letterenfonds and Cultural Emergency Response, as well as with cultural spaces — H'ART, FOAM Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam, Eye Filmmuseum, De Balie, Holland Festival.

This activity became possible through effective cooperation with DutchCulture, the national office for cultural cooperation, which facilitated the implementation of the Ukrainian Institute's representation in the Netherlands.

Cultural diplomacy gained additional impetus through artistic collaboration. For instance, founded in 2022 by Ukrainian ballet graduates with the support of local institutions, United Ukrainian Ballet performed on large stages, touring Europe, the UK, and America. Although the troupe ceased to exist in 2024 due to financial difficulties, it became an important centre of Ukrainian culture in the Netherlands.

The Embassy of the Netherlands in Kyiv plays a particularly active role in cultural diplomacy, collaborating with the Ukrainian Institute, the Cultural Emergency Response (CER) programs, DutchCulture and other cultural agencies to preserve Ukraine's national heritage in the times of war. Among the priorities are the protection, documentation and restoration of cultural artifacts and objects, as well as support for initiatives to hold accountable the destruction of cultural heritage. These efforts are pursued by cultural and legal groups and international organizations in The Hague.

Within the framework of the Cultural Partnership: Ukraine-Netherlands 2025–2028 Program, DutchCulture offers platforms for creative exchange, encompassing research programs, art residencies, exchange of experience in the field of heritage architecture, art, design, music and theatre. These programs form the basic infrastructure for sustainable cultural dialogue that goes beyond the crisis period<sup>33</sup>.

Cultural diplomacy is also not limited only to traditional state institutions. The Netherlands has become a platform for supporting Ukrainian media

projects, promoting research and Ukrainian studies, for example at the University of Amsterdam.

The cultural dimension of cooperation between Ukraine and the Netherlands has proven to be extremely flexible, multi-vector and strategically significant. Its value is particularly pronounced in the times of war, when material heritages is at risk and the value of cultural dialogue and the preservation of identity is a critical factor in the survival of a nation. In this regards, cultural diplomacy serves as a foundation for Ukraine's long-term European integration.

### **Conclusion**

Over the past decades, cooperation between Ukraine and the Netherlands has undergone a significant transformation, evolving from a peripheral direction in The Hague's foreign policy to one of the key elements of its European and security dimension. The decisive factor in this change was Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which made it the issue of regional security, as well as the concern of the strategic stability of the European Union as a whole, more relevant for Dutch policy. This intertwining of domestic political narratives, European scepticism, and an amalgamation of political forces has sharply altered the perception of the Ukrainian issue. It has become, and is increasingly being utilized, as an instrument of internal political contests.

The Netherlands is emerging as a partner that combines economic interests with support for Ukraine's democratic and security transformations. Concurrently, the development of diplomatic relations is being fostered through the Ukrainian cultural component, which is deeply rooted in the Netherlands, encompassing a broad spectrum of arts and thus facilitates sustaining a dialogue. This, in turn, amplifies cultural identities, and lays the groundwork for deeper grassroots support for Ukraine's policies. These cultural initiatives, along with the economic, energy, and social aspects, reflect the Dutch foreign policy towards Ukraine as multi-vector.

Therefore, the current stage of relations between Ukraine and the Netherlands is crucial for Ukraine's future in the European community. The further effectiveness of this partnership will depend on the preservation of internal political consensus in the Netherlands, the stability of support at the societal level, and the integration of Ukraine's policy into the broader European security discourse.

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