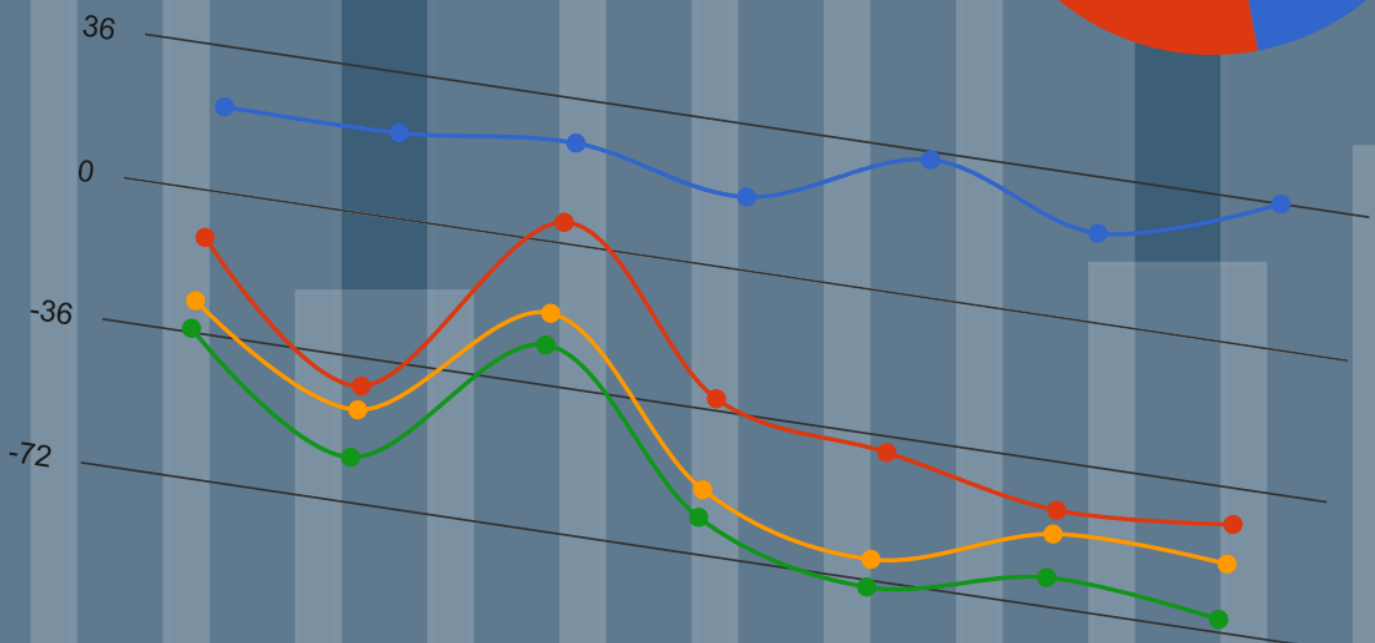
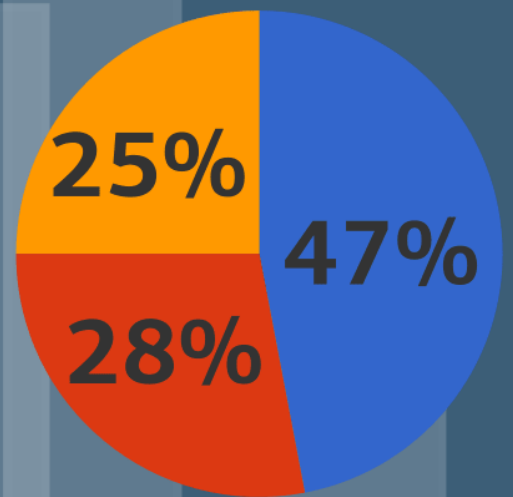
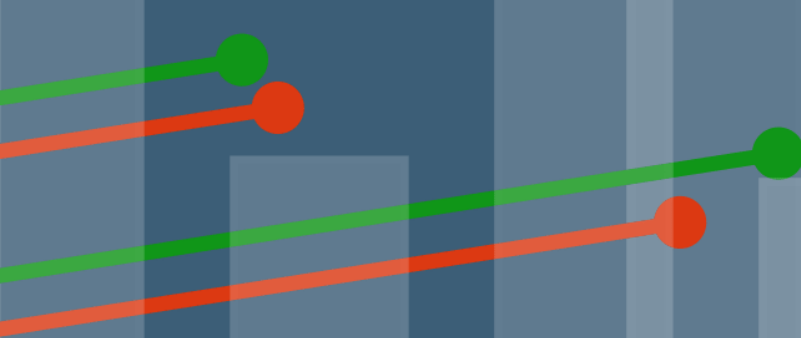


# Changes in Foreign Policy Orientations after EuroMaidan: National and Regional Levels

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# CHANGES IN FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATIONS AFTER EUROMAIDAN: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

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For Ukrainian version, see:

[Трансформації суспільних настроїв в умовах протидії агресії Росії на Донбасі: регіональний вимір](#)

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Changes in foreign policy orientations and integration preferences of society are an important component of the transformation processes in the period from 2013–2014 up to the present day. First of all, on the threshold of 2013–2014 the problems of the foreign policy course of Ukraine and the choice of integration became the subject of conflict between the official position of the state, on the one hand, and the internal social demands, on the other hand, which dictated the start of mass acts of protests – the EuroMaidan.

Despite the fact that the dynamics and intensiveness of relations between Ukraine and the EU up until 2013 practically did not reflect the official aim of gaining EU membership, the change in this course with the refusal to sign the Association Agreement was a trigger for the consolidation of the pro-European part of Ukrainian society. The foundation for this consolidation was the orientation towards the European integration of the relative majority of Ukrainian citizens built up over the period 2011-2013.

Secondly, the attitude towards the European and Euro-Atlantic prospects of Ukraine up until 2013-2014 was one of the cleavages in public opinion – first and foremost, as it pertained to regional division. For this reason the dynamics of public opinion regarding Ukraine's foreign policy at the level of macro-regions is one of the key variables in analyzing transformation processes.

## The Main Changes in the Attitudes towards European Integration

Prior to the events on EuroMaidan the moods in Ukrainian society regarding foreign policy and, in particular, integration priorities can be considered one of the most sensitive dimensions of public opinion. Indeed, the support of different integration vectors divided Ukrainian society into proponents of European integration, on the one hand, and the Eurasian vector, on the other hand.

Such a division was sufficiently stable and was strengthened by age differences. That is, youth in the 18-29 years age category was more oriented towards the idea of joining the EU. However, the changes parallel to the mass protests on the threshold of 2013-2014 became trends in 2014.

**The first trend** lies in the formation of **a steady nucleus of proponents of the European direction as the main integration vector**. The support of the European vector dominated in the polls since the end of April 2011 with an alternative question: to join the EU or the Customs Union (CU)? At the same time, the period 2011–2013 was marked not by the absolute majority, rather by the relative majority of the pro-European camp (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Which integration direction should Ukraine take?, %**

	Oct. 2011	Dec. 2012	May 2013	March 2014	May 2014	Dec. 2015 <sup>1</sup>	Feb. 2017 <sup>2</sup>
Accession to the EU	43.7	42.4	41.7	45.3	50.5	52	46.7
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)	30.5	32.1	31.0	21.6	21.4	14.6	14.3
Non-accession to the EU or the Customs Union	9.3	10.5	13.5	19.6	17.4	21.3	27.9
Difficult to say	16.4	15.0	13.7	13.4	10.6	12.0	11.1

Data compiled from polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation.

The shift of this balance began as a reaction of society to the refusal of then President Viktor Yanukovych to sign the Association Agreement in Vilnius in November 2013. One can speak about the start of a new, **second period** in the formation of a steady orientation towards the European prospect. The essence of this period is not the significant increase in support of the European prospect, rather the dramatic decline of the second potential vector of integration – i.e. Eurasian.

In particular, as early as May 2014, a share of proponents of the Customs Union fell by 10% compared to May 2013 and comprised 21%. Up to December 2015, the attractiveness of the prospects of Eurasian integration fell to 15%. Clearly, this was dictated by the new realities in bilateral relations between Ukraine and Russia.

At the same time, according to polls, relations with EU countries from 2012 to the fall of 2016 were steadily considered the most important foreign policy option, with support of 41–52%.

1 Nationwide polling “Which integration direction should Ukraine take?”, conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on December 4-14, 2015, <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=584&page=6>

2 Nationwide polling conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on February 10-19, 2017, <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=689&page=1>

**Table 2. Which direction of foreign policy should be a priority for Ukraine? , %<sup>3</sup>**

	Nov. 2012	Dec. 2013	March 2014	Apr. 2014	March 2015	Sept. 2016
Relations with EU countries	40.8	43.4	46.0	52.2	47.7	45.8
With the U.S.	1.2	1.0	2.1	1.1	6.0	4.8
With Russia	35.5	34.0	24.1	16.6	10.0	12.6
With other CIS countries	4.8	5.7	5.7	6.8	6.7	6.9
With other countries	3.6	2.7	4.4	4.8	9.1	7.0
Difficult to say	14.3	13.2	14.7	18.1	20.5	22.9

The share of proponents of the top priority of relations with Russia steadily declined from 36% in 2012 to 17% in April 2014 (first breakthrough) and to 13% in September 2016.

In polls with no alternative integration option (“Does Ukraine need to join the EU?”) the “nucleus” of EU proponents also appears to be formed at the level of 50% of the population (see Table 3).

**Table 3. In your opinion, does Ukraine need to join the European Union?, %<sup>4</sup>**

	June 2006	Dec. 2009	Dec. 2011	Aug. 2012	Dec. 2013	May 2014	March 2015	Sept. 2016
Yes	43.7	42.8	46.0	42.1	48.0	53.0	52.7	49.7
No	35.9	32.8	32.9	38.6	35.9	35.5	23.6	35.3
Difficult to say	20.4	24.3	21.1	19.3	16.1	11.6	14.7	15.0

The second specific of changes at the nationwide level is the growth since 2014 of the share of proponents of non-accession to neither the EU, nor the Customs Union. At the end of 2015, it was the largest over the previous four years and amounted to 21%. And if to add the category “undetermined” (12%), then nearly 33% of the population chose the “non-integration” options in December 2015.

A certain share of former proponents of CU membership (the share of the disappointed in the CU option at the end of 2015 was 16%) clearly changed their position to neutral – i.e. non-accession to neither the European, nor the Eurasian unions. Today, a return to the position of favor for the Eurasian vector looks highly improbable. At the same time, options to affirm “non-accession” or possibly changing position in support of Euro-integration are both realistic.

**The second trend** is inseparably associated with the first one and leads to **dispelling the myth about the possibility of simultaneous integration in both directions – the European and Eurasian**. Up to the end of 2013, a certain share of citizens was inclined to support both the membership of Ukraine in the EU and in the CU. Only in December 2013, after a month of active protests on the EuroMaidan, for the first time proponents of the CU membership ended up in the minority (35%) relative to opponents (45%) (see Table 4-5).

3 Nationwide polling “Foreign policy orientations of citizens of Ukraine” conducted by the sociological service of the Razumkov Centre, [http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/news.php?news\\_id=781](http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/news.php?news_id=781)

4 Ibid.

**Table 4–5. In your opinion, does Ukraine need to join such international organizations?, %  
Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan**

	Dec. 2009	Aug. 2012	Dec. 2013	March 2014	May 2014
Yes	58.1	46.5	35.1	25.7	24.5
No	20.0	34.5	45.3	53.0	61.1
Difficult to say	21.9	19.0	19.5	21.3	14.4

Data compiled from polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation.

Instead, the share of those who supported the idea of joining the EU gradually grew from 43% in December 2010 to 48% in December 2013 and a record-high 53% in May 2014.

### **European Union**

	Dec. 2010	Dec. 2012	Dec. 2013	March 2014	May 2014
Yes	42.8	48.4	48.0	47.5	53.0
No	32.8	29.2	35.9	36.6	35.5
Difficult to say	24.3	22.4	16.1	15.9	11.6

In September 2016, in the event that a referendum was held regarding the membership of Ukraine in the EU, 49% would have voted “yes”, 25% “against”, 10% would have abstained from voting and 15% would have been undecided. At the same time, in case of referendum on the Customs Union only 18% of the population would have voted “yes”, 55% would have voted “no” and another 27% would have been undecided or would not have gone out to vote<sup>5</sup>.

**The change in the age map of attitudes towards Euro-integration** can be considered the **third trend**.

In 2014, after the events on EuroMaidan for the first time in history of polling a qualitative change in the attitudes towards European integration by age division was fixed. Up until then youth in the age category 18-29 years was the most inclined to the idea of Euro-integration. And this was the only age category in which half of its representatives demonstrated the pro-European choice.

The change in this situation was detected as early as May 2014, when the support of Euro-integration exceeded 50% not only among the youth, but also in the age group 30-39 years (55%), 40-49 years (53%) and 50-59 years (51%).

**Table 6. Which integration path should Ukraine take?, %<sup>6</sup>  
(Age division, May 2013 – May 2014)**

	18–29 years		30–39 years		40–49 years		50–59 years		60 years and up	
	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014
Accession to the EU	54.1	55.9	44.5	55.3	44.5	53.0	37.5	51.4	30.4	41.4
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)	18.8	15.8	22.3	17.9	27.6	22.3	38.7	22.2	45.0	27.8

5 Nationwide polling “Geopolitical orientations of residents of Ukraine: European Union, Customs Union, NATO (September 2016)” conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on September 16-26, 2016, <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=650&page=1>

6 Maria Zolkina, “Public Opinion Regarding Euro-integration: New Trends As a Chance to Consolidate Society,” *Euro-integration of Ukraine: the Experience of Neighbors and the Prospects of Unifying Society* (Kyiv: Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2014), 12, [http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/1407765948\\_3132.pdf](http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/1407765948_3132.pdf)

	18–29 years		30–39 years		40–49 years		50–59 years		60 years and up	
	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014	May 2013	May 2014
Non-accession to the EU or the Customs Union	13.4	17.4	16.1	18.7	13.0	16.5	13.7	16.9	11.6	17.7
Difficult to say	13.6	10.9	17.2	8.1	14.8	8.2	10.1	9.4	13.0	13.1

The absence of significant growth in the support of Euro-integration after the EuroMaidan among young people can be explained by the fact that for this age category the potentially possible maximum at that moment was de facto reached before EuroMaidan.

The **fourth trend** is *internal regional dynamics*. Indeed, already in May 2014, a significant decline in the level of support of the Customs Union was registered in the Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine, which were the basis for this option (see Tables 7-9).

**Table 7. What integration path should Ukraine take?, %  
South (Odesa, Mykolayiv, Kherson oblasts)**

	May 2013	May 2014	May 2015	Sept. 2016 <sup>7</sup>
Accession to the EU	32.9	28.0	31.2	26.9
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan)	39.5	25.1	14.9	23.6
Non-accession to the EU or the Customs Union	13.8	28.4	33.0	38.8
Difficult to say	13.8	18.5	20.9	10.7

**Table 8. What integration path should Ukraine take?, %  
East (Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts)**

	May 2013	May 2014	March 2015	Sept. 2016 <sup>8</sup>
Accession to the EU	28.6	30.5	35.8	31.4
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)	40.9	29.5	25.9	21.9
Non-accession to the EU or the Customs Union	12.6	32.2	26.4	39.3
Difficult to say	18.0	7.8	11.9	7.4

Polls conducted jointly by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, the sociological service of the Razumkov Center and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Tables of compiled data were prepared by Maria Zolkina.

In the context of these changes, the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the spring of 2014 remained the only macro-region where the absolute majority (62%) of the residents was in favor of joining the Customs Union. At that time, it showed the impossibility of uniting all eastern and southern oblasts into a unified South-East macrostructure.

7 The nationwide poll “What integration path should Ukraine take?” conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on September 16-26, 2016, <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=655&page=1>

8 The aggregate data in three oblasts were singled out from the overall nationwide poll “What integration path should Ukraine take?” conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on September 16-26, 2016.

**Table 9. What foreign policy should Ukraine conduct?,%**  
*Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (since 2014 territories controlled by Ukraine)<sup>9</sup>*

	Sept. 2013	Sept. 2015	Dec. 2016
Accession to the EU	18.4	19.1	11.9
Accession to the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)	61.0	38.9	28.3
Non-accession to the EU or the Customs Union	9.5	29.9	40.7
Difficult to say	11.1	12.1	19.1

Over the period 2014-2015 changes in public opinion in the Donbas went in the same direction as in the South and East of the country. At the end of 2016, not a single macro-region in which the majority of the population opted for Eurasian integration was left in Ukraine. Even in the Donbas (the part controlled by Ukraine) the number of proponents of accession to the Customs Union was more than halved from 61% to 28% (table 9).

Instead, the share of those in favor of non-accession to the EU or the CU grew fourfold from 10% to 41%. The share of EU proponents in 2015 reached 19%, but the poll conducted in the second half of 2016 registered a decline to 12%. The first explanation is the shift of a significant percentage from the category of EU proponents to the “non-accession” category. However, as it was shown above the lion’s share shifted from the category of former proponents of the CU to the category of “non-accession”.

On the background of a sufficiently stable nucleus of EU proponents and a stably low level of support of the Eurasian vector, those who are undetermined or are in favor of a “non-accession” will most likely have the greatest influence on the overall changes in integration priorities.

9 Aggregate data on the Donbas are singled out from the corresponding polls conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. See, Olexiy Haran, Maria Zolkina, “The Demise of Ukraine’s ‘Eurasian Vector’ and the Rise of Pro-NATO Sentiments,” *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo 458* (Feb. 2017), <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/demise-ukraines-eurasian-vector-and-rise-pro-nato-sentiment>



## Dramatic Shift Regarding the Euro-Atlantic Prospects of Ukraine

The attitudes towards Euro-Atlantic prospects were one of the main sensitive topics up until the EuroMaidan. Now it is one of the dimensions in which the greatest changes in public opinion transpired.

The **first trend** lies in the cardinal **changes in the attitudes towards the idea of NATO membership at the national level**. Opponents of NATO from 2005 to 2014 traditionally constituted the majority. As of 2012, the proponents of NATO in a hypothetical referendum would have been 26%, while the opponents – 61% (with a probable turnout of 58.5%).

**Table 10. If you had participated in the referendum on accession to NATO, how would you have voted?, %<sup>10</sup>**  
(% of those who would have voted in the referendum)

	Dec. 2007	Dec. 2009	Apr. 2012	June 2014	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Dec. 2016
I would vote for accession	31.8	21.0	26.2	45.4	63.9	74.9	77.7	71.5
I would vote against accession	52.8	59.7	60.6	36.4	28.5	19.8	17.4	22.7
Difficult to say	15.4	19.3	13.4	18.1	7.6	5.3	4.8	5.8

A fundamental change regarding Ukraine's accession to NATO was registered as early as June 2014, when the share of opponents fell nearly twofold and for the first time proponents of NATO constituted the relative majority – 45%. Clearly, such was the impetuous reaction to the annexation of Crimea and the start of Russian aggression in the Donbas.

Further modeling of the hypothetical referendum demonstrated a growth in the support of Ukraine's membership in NATO with a parallel decrease in the share of those who would vote against it (relative to comparative indicators of expected turnout). Indeed, in July 2015 the participants of the referendum who would have voted for NATO membership amounted to 75% in November 2015 and 72% in December 2016.

**However, analysis of the results of a hypothetical referendum should not be deceiving as the actual campaign for preparation of such voting would be highly politicized and the mobilization of the electorate would apply to proponents and opponents alike.** Formally, for all of the current and former members of the parliamentary coalition, integration with the Alliance is a priority. Opponents of Ukraine's membership in NATO are at this given moment not actively promoting these ideas among the general public. For that reason, identifying the results of such modeling with the actual results of voting would be erroneous, as not all factors that would potentially influence voting are relevant today.

**Second trend** – the orientation to joining NATO since 2014 prevailed in the attitudes of Ukrainians as the main option that would guarantee national security.

10 Results of nationwide polls conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, <http://dif.org.ua/article/referendum-shchodo-vstupu-do-nato-buv-bi-vigraniy-prote-tse-pitannya-dilit-ukrainu>

**Table 11. In your opinion, which option of guarantee of national security would be the best for Ukraine?, %<sup>11</sup>**

	Dec. 2007	Apr. 2012	May 2014	Sept. 2014	Dec. 2014	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Dec. 2016
Accession to NATO	18.3	13.0	32.6	43.6	46.6	35.9	45.7	43.3	44.1
Military alliance with Russia and other CIS countries	31.3	26.2	13.0	14.8	10.1	7.8	8.2	7.1	6.4
Military alliance with the U.S.	-	-	1.5	-	-	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.9
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	30.7	42.1	28.3	22.2	20.9	28.9	22.6	25.1	26.4
Other	1.6	0.9	1.0	0.4	1.0	1.6	2.4	2.2	2.5
Difficult to say	17.5	17.8	23.7	19.0	21.7	22.6	17.6	19.1	16.6

In May 2014, immediately after the annexation of Crimea and the start of Russian aggression in the Donbas a +20% “jump” in the research results was observed. Compared with 2012, the share of those who are in favor of NATO as the key security option grew more than threefold: from 13% in April 2012 to 44% in December 2016. Parallel to the changes in favor of NATO, the share of those oriented towards a non-bloc status declined from 42% in early 2012 to 28% in May 2014 and to 26% in December 2016.

The idea of a military alliance with Russia and other CIS countries took second place in 2012 in Ukrainian public opinion after the idea of neutrality. And the changes in the perception of this option were the most radical since 2014. In particular, in 2012, exactly 26% of the population was oriented towards this option of guaranteeing national security, while in May 2014 (the moment of the most significant change in security preferences) it fell to 13%, and in December 2016 it fell to 6%. Refusal of the non-bloc option and of a military alliance with Russia could be even strategically more important than the growth in the affinity for NATO.

**The third trend lies in the changes in those macro-regions which are the most skeptical towards NATO.** As of May 2016, there would not have been a single macro-region of the country in which the majority of the residents would have voted in a hypothetical referendum against Ukraine joining NATO. The only macro-region in which the public opinion on Ukraine’s membership in NATO would have been equally divided into proponents and opponents was the Donbas. In all other macro-regions, the overwhelming majority of the participants in such a referendum (the turnout would have fluctuated depending on the region) would have supported Ukraine’s membership in NATO.

**Table 12. If you were to take part in the referendum regarding Ukraine’s accession to NATO, how would you vote?, %  
(% of those who would vote in the referendum)**

	West		Center		South		East		Donbas	
	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016
I would vote for accession	91.1	94.7	80.0	81.8	61.0	64.1	57.3	71.5	58.8	47.8

11 The compiled results of polls by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, <http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad>. For December 2016 data see, <http://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/13816462815863c78c6b27d3.47743328.pdf>

	West		Center		South		East		Donbas	
	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016
I would vote against accession	3.6	3.5	11.1	10.9	38.0	30.8	40.7	23.8	40.0	46.7
Difficult to answer	5.3	1.7	8.9	7.2	1.0	5.1	2.0	4.8	1.5	5.6

Compiled results of studies of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, <http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad>

*Western region:* Volyn, Zakarpattya, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi and Chernivtsi oblasts; *Central region:* City of Kyiv, Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy and Chernihiv oblasts; *Southern region:* Mykolayiv, Odesa and Kherson oblasts; *Eastern region:* Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv oblasts; *Donbas:* Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (parts of the territories controlled by Ukraine).

The increase in the orientation towards NATO as a guarantee of national security for Ukraine is also glaringly evident in all macro-regions of the country. The most significant increase in orientation towards NATO was observed in public opinion in the East and the Donbas. In the East in 2012, only 2% supported it. By May 2016, this figure rose to an amazing 29%.

**Table 13. In your opinion, which variant of national security would be the best for Ukraine?, %**

**East**

	Apr. 2012	July 2015	Nov. 2015	Nov. 2015
Accession to NATO	1.7	20.2	36.0	29.0
Military alliance with Russia	38.3	13.5	18.3	14.8
Military alliance with the U.S.	-	0.8	2.7	3.5
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	38.0	43.1	29.4	37.5
Other	1.3	0.8	1.6	0.6
Difficult to answer	20.7	21.6	12.0	14.6

Compiled results of the studies of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, <http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad>

In the Donbas the growth in the number of NATO proponents between 2012 and 2016 was “+23%”: from 1% to 24%.

**Table 14. In your opinion, which option of a guarantee of national security is the best for Ukraine?, %**

**Donbas**

	Apr. 2012	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016
Accession to NATO	0.8	12.0	23.3	24.4
Military alliance with Russia and CIS countries	50.2	12.9	13.6	14.4
Military alliance with the U.S.	-	-	3.8	3.8
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	41.4	48.6	34.7	33.3
Other	0.0	4.4	3.2	1.7
Difficult to answer	7.6	22.1	21.5	22.4

Compiled results of studies of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, <http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad>

In every region the percentage of those who see in NATO a guarantee of national security is today higher than it was on average all over the country in 2012 (13%). **At the same time, it is worth noting that the idea of non-bloc status, which lost its popularity throughout Ukraine, is perceived**

**differently in different regions of the country.** Indeed, the non-bloc option to this day has a relative advantage as a guarantee of national security in the South (44%), the East (37.5%), and the Donbas (33%).

**Table 15. In your opinion, which option of the guarantee of national security would be the best for Ukraine?, %**

**South**

	Apr. 2012	July 2015	Nov. 2015	May 2016
Accession to NATO	6.6	24.2	25.2	19.1
Military alliance with Russia and CIS countries	30.6	15.5	7.0	12.2
Military alliance with the U.S.	-	2.3	2.3	3.2
Non-bloc status of Ukraine	50.6	35.8	37.9	44.3
Other	0.6	0.5	1.9	0.4
Difficult to answer	11.6	21.9	25.7	20.9

Compiled results of studies of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, <http://dif.org.ua/article/gromadska-dumka-pro-nato-noviy-poglyad>

Herewith, since November 2015 an increase in the popularity of the non-bloc option was observed in the South (38% in November 2015 and 44% in May 2016) and in the East (29% and 37.5% respectively).

Therefore, on the one hand, the unfolding of Russian aggression against Ukraine became the trigger for unprecedented changes in attitudes towards NATO, the non-bloc option and a military alliance with Russia. On the other hand, in such a situation there are several hidden risks. Even the certain easing of pressure on the frontline and a freezing of the situation could lead to a decrease in Euro-Atlantic enthusiasm, as the advantage of collective security would lose its attractiveness, a fact to which Ukrainian society turned its attention in 2014. The rising affinity for Euro-Atlantic integration means a certain level of expectations from the Alliance, first and foremost regarding military assistance to Ukraine. The absence of the anticipated response could influence the attitudes towards NATO. In light of this, one of the possible scenarios could be a gradual decline in the support of NATO membership to a certain level, which could be considered the level of conscious choice and, consequently, growth in the affinity for the non-bloc status in the East, South and the Donbas.

## Conclusions

Changes in foreign policy attitudes of Ukrainians in 2014–2016 are one of the most significant transformations in public opinion over the past years and are characterized by both quantitative and qualitative indicators throughout the country, as well as at the regional level.

Regarding **European integration** one can speak of the *disappearance of the polarity in integration priorities*. The choice between the ideas of Ukraine joining the EU or the Customs Union no longer divides society. As of February 2017, proponents of joining the CU in Ukrainian society amounted to a mere 14%. At the same time, the fluctuation in the support of the idea of accession to the EU ended up at the level of 47% (in May 2013 it was 42%). *Basically, this suggests that the maximum possible level of conscious support of Euro-integration in today's realities has been reached*. Any additional growth seems possible only with the emergence of new circumstances, both domestic and foreign, including bilateral relations with the EU.

*The notion of dualism disappeared in the integration priorities of Ukrainians*. Up until 2014, if the question posed contained no alternative option, the predominant part of Ukrainians supported both the idea of membership of Ukraine in the CU and the EU. However, since the end of 2013 this balance shifted towards those who are against the Customs Union: in March 2014 only 26% “in favor” and 53% “against”. Meanwhile, the proponents of membership in the EU continued to remain in the majority.

**Regional changes** regarding integration priorities should be considered the most significant ones. The maximum decline in the support of the CU was observed exactly in those regions where the idea of Eurasian integration was traditionally supported by the majority of the population: South, East, and the Donbas.

At the same time, the disappointment in the Eurasian vector of integration gradually began to meld with the growth *in support of the idea of non-affiliation* with any of these unions. This, in turn, means that the predominant part of those people disappointed with the Eurasian vector “swayed” either towards the “non-accession” category or towards those who were “undecided”. The greatest support of the idea of “non-accession” significantly grew over the past two years in the South, the East, and the Donbas.

However, here two scenarios are possible. First: the position “do not join any union” could become constant. Then we will have a new situation with the regional breakdown, when yesterday's proponents of the CU would simply object to the need to sway in favor of the EU. This, in turn, will create new regional differences, but probably less tangible than the previous ones. That is, without a high level of polarization as in the situation with the division of the country into those who are in favor of the EU or the CU.

The second option: the position “neither the EU, nor the CU” is temporary in nature as an interim position and could potentially become a resource for supplementing the ranks of EU proponents. Given that the nucleus of conscious proponents of the EU can already be considered formed in the majority of regions, the transition from the position “nowhere” to the support of the EU seems possible only if new circumstances arise, which will stimulate loyalty to the EU.

In the attitudes of Ukrainians towards **Euro-Atlantic integration** there were also cardinal

upheavals over the period since 2014. They were even more dramatic than those regarding the choice between the EU and the CU.

*Support of Ukraine's membership in NATO began to steadily grow* in the spring of 2014 and at the moment is unprecedentedly high over the entire history of NATO-Ukraine relations. So, if a referendum was organized in Ukraine regarding NATO membership, then since June 2014 it would have positive results. In December 2016, the potential “yes” vote comprises 72% among those who would have participated in the referendum (62% turnout).

The vision of the role of NATO also changed – *in 2014 accession to the Alliance for the first time became the most supported option of guaranteeing the security of Ukraine*. Alongside this was a decline in the support of non-bloc status (the main security option up until 2014) and a military alliance with Russia (up until 2014 it was in second place).

*The attitudes towards NATO membership considerably changed at the regional level as well*. As of May 2016, not a single macro-region was left where the majority would vote in a referendum against Ukraine joining NATO. The most subtle limit between the camps would be in the Donbas, where the votes “for” and “against” would be divided in half. In all other macro-regions a referendum on NATO membership would be confidently won.

*The attitudes in the East and the South towards different security options changed*. It is worth paying attention to the internal dynamics in every region. In 2012, less than 1% of the residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts considered NATO as a guarantee of national security. In the summer of 2015, this figure in the Ukraine-controlled Donbas grew to 12% and by May 2016 to 24%.

*At the same time, one must consider a number of risks*. The steady growth of support of NATO is associated with a vacuum of security, in which Ukraine got caught up after the failure of the non-bloc policy and Russian aggression in the East of the country.

Thus, two of the most widespread security options in Ukrainian society up until 2014 – non-bloc status and a military alliance with Russia – were refuted with the emergence of new realities. However, while the support of a military alliance with Russia collapsed, the non-bloc status is a different matter altogether. As an option it dropped from first place (from 42% in 2012 to 25% in May 2016), but on a regional level remains the most popular prospect, albeit in the relative majority, in the East (37.5%), in the Donbas (33%) and in the South (44%). In the event of a freezing of the conflict in the Donbas, the population accustomed to the status quo (the conflict persists, the territory is uncontrolled, Crimea has been annexed, etc.) and the absence of adequate support of western partners, one can expect a certain decline in the level of NATO support and an increase in the support of non-bloc status. Precisely this category of the population – residents of the South, the East and the Donbas who support non-bloc status – should be the target audience of information and awareness campaigns regarding the realities and prospects of the national security policy of Ukraine.

Moreover, the aforementioned *risks will be strengthened if key political players in Ukraine return the NATO topic as the central focus of political campaigns (elections/referendum)*.

To sum up, society's attitudes toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration became a field of dramatic shifts since 2014. The new map of society's moods in Ukraine will depend on potential changes in the critically important regions of the country – namely, the South, the East and the Donbas.