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**SECURITISING AID – AN IMPULSE TO ENHANCE SELECTED CEE COUNTRIES’ SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE?**

When the OECD DAC modified its list of foreign aid recipients in 1993, Ukraine was included in its second part covering Central and Eastern European Countries and New Independent States of the former Soviet Union entitled to receive Official Aid (together with, among others, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic). In 2005, when the single *DAC List of ODA Recipients* was restored, Ukraine was transferred from part II and listed in the group of Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories enabled to benefit from Official Development Assistance (ODA)[[1]](#footnote-1) (OECD, 2023a). At the same time, four indicated Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries officially became aid donors, sharing common experiences before and after 1989, obliged by the same external conditions of development cooperation, similarly identifying their comparative advantages as ODA donors, differed by nominal ODA transfers but comparable in burden on ODA expenditures.

Since 2005, all four CEE countries delivered ODA to Ukraine. However, not all of them identified Ukraine as a priority partner in their development cooperation and, according to official documents, an explicit condition for providing aid to Ukraine became sharing a border with this country. For instance, Poland indicated Ukraine as a priority partner already in 2005 (MSZ, 2023). The Slovak Republic has included Ukraine among its partner “project countries” since 2009 (putting “programme countries” higher in the hierarchy; MFEA, 2009, p. 13). Hungary does not directly indicate partner countries but selects partner regions (Western Balkans and Eastern Europe; MFAT, 2014, p. 9). The Czech Republic recognised Ukraine as a partner country only in 2014, and since 2016, it has been listed among “specific countries” (a category reflecting the government’s interest to develop partnerships and target support in post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction processes; MFA, 2017, p. 13).

Notably, annual aid transfers reflected the variable circumstances of aid delivery to Ukraine (mainly the so-called Orange Revolution, the launching of the Eastern Partnership, the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine). Changes in the conditions for providing aid significantly influenced the volume and nature of aid transferred to this state by the four countries. For example, the annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in 2014 forced the provision of humanitarian assistance to this country, including support for internally displaced people or food aid. At the same time, strengthening the beneficiary’s resilience did not become a priority in the aid provided by the four donors to Ukraine after 2014. Most aid was still directed to support infrastructure and social services, especially education. Only two countries – Poland and the Slovak Republic – focused on, among others, supporting reforms in the security sector and enhancing border security (OECD, 2023c).

Finally, from 2005 to 2021, Poland transferred to Ukraine ODA worth USD 571.54 mln, Hungary – USD 100.54 mln, the Czech Republic – USD 65.30 mln and the Slovak Republic – USD 19.42 mln. It constituted 22.61% of total bilateral Polish aid, 7.42% of Hungarian, 4.13% of Czech and 3.99% of Slovak aid. At the same time, the four CEE countries delivered only 3.91% of total official donors’ ODA to Ukraine (OECD, 2023d).

Currently, the most critical condition for providing aid to Ukraine is the full-scale attack by Russia, which started in 2022. The main consequence is the need for increased support (in terms of humanitarian aid, development aid and securing the Ukrainian refugees’ stays in other countries). Total ODA to Ukraine grew significantly (OECD, 2023d), also in the case of three CEE countries – Poland (from USD 94.89 mln in 2021 to USD 226.50 mln in 2022), Czech Republic (from USD 4.08 mln in 2021 to USD 23.20 mln in 2022) and the Slovak Republic (from USD 1.54 mln in 2021 to USD 8.60 mln in 2022). Only Hungary decreased its aid (from USD 20.79 mln in 2021 to USD 14.80 mln in 2022).

Without a doubt, Ukraine, during the war, still needs and – after its end – will need international assistance. Therefore, the paper aims to consider the securitisation of aid as an impulse to enhance selected CEE countries’ future aid to Ukraine. Notably, I do not use the term “securitisation” strictly, as presented originally by representatives of the Copenhagen School. Aid is not “the issue presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23-24). It is not perceived as a threat in itself but as a tool for securitising problems that have been included in the development agenda. In other words, aid implements the donors’ interests related to security. Securitisation understood in this way may manifest itself, for example, through political declarations related to the reasons for undertaking aid activities, justification of aid activities in strategic documents, directing ODA to specific beneficiaries and the method of shaping priorities to be achieved through ODA. This approach was also presented by S. Brown and J. Grävingholt (2016, p. 3).

Consequently, taking into account ODA delivered to Ukraine by selected CEE countries from 2005 to 2021, the current state of aid (2022-2023) and perspectives on supporting Ukraine in the future, it is crucial to answer the following questions:

1. Did the four donors consider assisting Ukraine before 2022 as an effort to strengthen their security?
2. Is the aid delivered to Ukraine by the four donors securitised since 2022?
3. Has there been securitisation of aid to states during/after conflicts conducted by the four donors in the past (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria), and if so, has it generated increased financing?
4. How should CEE countries’ aid to Ukraine be managed in the future?
5. Can the LRRD (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development) concept be a valuable framework for programming aid for Ukraine?

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1. Official Development Assistance – according to the OECD definition – covers flows to eligible recipient countries, the purpose of which is to support the socio-economic development of these countries and which are concessional in nature. As a rule, it does not include military assistance, e.g. arms supplies (OECD, 2023b). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)