

**Vasyl Bodnar,**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of Ukraine to the Republic of Poland

## **UKRAINE-POLAND: a strategic partnership tested by war**

*— Mr Ambassador, what are the main tasks on the agenda of Ukrainian-Polish bilateral relations, and what challenges need to be addressed in the short and long term?*

— In the context of the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine, the key task on the agenda is strengthening Ukraine's defence capability. Poland has already become one of the leading providers of military support, having supplied 46 aid packages and now preparing the 47<sup>th</sup> package. We are grateful for this and continue to coordinate our defence needs closely.

Ensuring sustained political support from Poland is equally important — both within the framework of bilateral dialogue and in the international arena. Poland is active in strengthening sanctions pressure on Russia, isolating the aggressor, and advocating for providing Ukraine with all the necessary means to establish a just and lasting peace.

Another issue that remains relevant is Ukraine's further progress towards full-fledged membership in the European Union and NATO, which will have a direct impact on security, stable peace, and development both in Ukraine and the entire region. Poland plays an important role in this process, in particular by helping overcome certain countries' attempts to block Ukraine's European integration.

The long-term challenges include the search for prudent and balanced solutions in areas where the interests of our economies overlap, primarily in agriculture and transport. It is important to prevent elements of competition from becoming a source of friction or tension, but rather focus on finding models of mutually beneficial cooperation and turn them into a basis for cooperation.

There are also matters that require prompt response. For instance, before the exhumations began, there was an incident concerning a plaque at a mass grave of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army soldiers on Monasterz Hill. However, thanks to communication between the Ministers of Culture of Ukraine and Poland, the issue did not fall prey to Russian propaganda. Attention to the issue and swift reaction proved effective. Dialogue is essential in such situations, as virtually any problem has a solution — if not right away, then later. What matters most is the willingness, a clear vision, and action.

— *Could you please elaborate on current trends in political and economic relations between our states? How do you see the future of the strategic partnership between Ukraine and Poland?*

— At present, international political and economic relations are developing amid geopolitical shifts. Russia's war against Ukraine has catalysed new formats of partnership, and the Ukrainian-Polish relations are undoubtedly an example of such cooperation. Poland has always been our neighbour, partner, and friend, but its role has grown significantly since 2022. It has become a genuine bridge between Ukraine and the European Union in the logistical, economic, political, and humanitarian dimensions. Millions of tonnes of military and humanitarian aid have passed through Poland. It has become a logistics hub connecting Ukraine with the EU under the challenging conditions of war.

Currently, Poland is Ukraine's leading trading partner within the EU. A new economic ecosystem is emerging between the two states, as Polish companies are already participating in Ukraine's reconstruction projects and investing in logistics, energy, and agriculture. At the same time, thousands of Ukrainian entrepreneurs are starting businesses in Poland, thus strengthening horizontal economic ties.

Millions of Ukrainians reside in Poland — both those who deliberately came here in search of a better life or employment, and those who found themselves here against their will, forced from their homes by Russian missiles and compelled to seek refuge. This fact represents a powerful social and cultural foundation for a long-term partnership. Polish schools, universities, and companies are the spaces where the added value and new dimensions of Ukrainian-European relations are taking shape.

The Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce, which connects over 600 companies (about 450 Polish and 150 Ukrainian), serves as an effective platform for developing bilateral partnerships. We strive to create a favourable business environment, both sides are open to innovation



Василь Боднар під час наради керівників закордонних дипломатичних установ. Липень 2025 року  
Vasyl Bodnar during the meeting of heads of foreign diplomatic missions. July 2025

and cooperation. Ukraine has a unique expertise in public administration under wartime conditions, the development of defence technologies, and the implementation of social standards in times of crisis. This experience is a valuable resource for strengthening the resilience and sustainable development of both countries.

Poland's role is therefore unique. It acts as a bridge in four dimensions: logistical, economic, political, and humanitarian. Importantly, this bridge is not imposed from the top down — it is created by people, businesses, and communities themselves.

If we want to see Ukraine in the European Union not just nominally, but deeply integrated, Poland must be the partner demonstrating how this is possible — through joint projects, shared risks, and, I am confident, shared victories.

***— Among the current priorities of European states is strengthening the security architecture in all its dimensions, including boosting the defence sector. What measures are Ukraine and Poland taking to develop defence and security cooperation?***

— This is indeed one of the main priorities. The aggressive and revisionist policy of the Russian Federation has compelled European countries to rethink the foundations of their security. Today, security is not

only about a strong army and a robust defence industrial base, but also about the ability to respond swiftly to dynamic threats through effective, adaptive, and coordinated solutions, as well as the mobilisation of society to be ready to defend itself. A well-prepared state poses a serious challenge to any aggressor. Another factor prompting Europe to strategically reconsider its approach to the security system is the shifting predictability of the foreign policy of certain partners.

In this context, security cooperation between Ukraine and Poland is of paramount importance. Above all, we share a common understanding of the nature of threats and a common vision of how to respond to them. It is clear that Poland's national interest lies in having Ukraine aligned with the Western bloc. Today, Ukraine is defending Europe, including Poland, against Russian aggression. Our defence means Europe's protection, a contribution to Poland's rearmament efforts, and the opportunity to study the experience Ukraine has gained on the modern battlefield.

Ukrainian experts are already sharing their experience with partners. A vivid example is the NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Centre in Bydgoszcz, where Ukrainian officers pass on knowledge gained in real combat conditions to their NATO counterparts. This is Ukraine's practical contribution to strengthening the North Atlantic Alliance and Europe's security.

*— Since the beginning of the full-scale russian aggression, Poland has played a major role in the logistics of supplies to Ukraine, enabling the transportation of humanitarian aid, military equipment, etc. What main challenges and achievements would you outline in this context, and what are the prospects for further strengthening cooperation in the field of logistics and border infrastructure?*

— From the very first days of Russia's full-scale invasion, Poland became our key logistics hub, the 'lifeline' for delivering military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, as well as for critical imports and consumer goods. Poland demonstrated extraordinary solidarity, swift decision-making, and a large-scale operational capacity. We are deeply grateful for this support — it has truly been one of the pillars of our resilience.

Over these years, thanks to effective coordination between Ukrainian and Polish authorities, we have significantly improved the capacity of several border crossings, established close cooperation between customs services, and introduced special logistics mechanisms for transporting defence and humanitarian aid.

To address the issue of border infrastructure development, in 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Strategy for the Development and Construction of Border Infrastructure with EU Countries and the Republic of Moldova until 2030, along with its implementation plan.

At the end of 2024, a new road border crossing point, Nyzhankovychi — Malhowice, was opened on the border with Poland, designated for international passenger traffic (cars up to 3.5 tonnes and buses). The infrastructure includes eight lanes in each direction, registration terminals, and administrative facilities. As of today, pursuant to the agreement on joint control at border crossing points on the Ukrainian-Polish state border, joint border checks are already in place at four crossing points: Smilnytsia — Krościenko, Ustyluh — Zosin (for exit from Ukraine and entry into Poland only), Uhryniv — Dołhobyczów, and Hrushiv — Budomierz.



Зустріч заступника Міністра закордонних справ України Олександра Міщенко з делегацією польського бізнесу, яку очолили Міністр розвитку та технологій (2024–2025 рр.) Кшиштоф Пашик та урядовий уповноважений з питань відбудови України, депутат Сейму Павел Коваль. Червень 2025 року

Meeting of Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Oleksandr Mishchenko with a Polish business delegation led by Minister of Development and Technology (2024–25) Krzysztof Paszyk and Government's plenipotentiary for Ukraine's reconstruction, member of Sejm Paweł Kowal. June 2025

The experience gained has shaped the approach to the development of logistics and border infrastructure not merely as a technical matter, but as an element of security policy. It involves the creation and functioning of an effective critical infrastructure space, which is essential both during the war and for the post-war reconstruction.

Ukraine is open to deep and practical cooperation with its Polish partners. Our joint success in logistics is an example of how immediate solidarity transforms into institutional trust and becomes a foundation for a European future.

*— As is well known, the Polish private sector is interested in joint projects with Ukrainian partners, particularly in the context of the country's post-war reconstruction. Your Excellency, what steps could help advance such initiatives?*

— Polish businesses are already demonstrating a high level of interest in participating in Ukraine's reconstruction projects, and our shared goal today is to turn this interest into practical and long-term economic initiatives that will also contribute to strengthening our economies and enhancing the resilience of the region.

To coordinate these efforts, the Polish side has appointed a government's plenipotentiary for Ukraine's reconstruction, Pawel Kowal, who is also the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland.

In practical terms, several instruments to support Polish companies interested in the Ukrainian market have already been launched. In particular, BGK, the Polish development bank, is implementing guarantee and grant programmes worth nearly €265 million using resources from the Ukraine Fund, as well as a preferential loan programme of approximately €58 million. In addition, a new programme for small and medium-sized enterprises with a planned budget of €150 million is currently under development.

The Polish Export Credit Insurance Corporation (KUKE) has introduced a comprehensive insurance system for Polish-Ukrainian trade in three key areas: trade — transactions worth almost €1.2 billion have been insured, and a transport insurance programme with a value of approximately €1.5 billion has been launched to cover war risks in Ukraine; investments — insurance of investment loans and protection of direct investments against political and force majeure risks (including war) amounting to approximately €40.69 million; recovery and modernisation — during the 2024 Ukraine Recovery Conference

in Berlin, an agreement was signed with other export credit agencies to provide insurance coverage for recovery projects in Ukraine involving Polish contractors and suppliers.

Currently, including during the visit of a Polish business delegation to Kyiv in June 2025, opportunities are being discussed to form sectoral consortia of Polish companies for participation in infrastructure projects in Ukraine, to launch pilot projects in critical sectors such as infrastructure and energy, and to create bilateral financing facilities with support from Polish government agencies, municipalities, and European institutions. Particularly relevant are pilot projects that can become drivers of trust, technological synergy, and lasting partnership.

As part of the Ukraine Recovery Conference held in early July in Rome, Poland joined other countries in signing new financial agreements totalling €2.3 billion within the Ukraine Investment Framework, the investment component of the Ukraine Facility programme, as well as in establishing the European Flagship Fund for the Reconstruction of Ukraine (together with Italy, Germany, France, and the European Commission). Memoranda were also signed on the potential development of joint projects worth €200 million and on the identification of priority projects to be financed under the Ukraine Facility programme through BGK.

Engagement of Polish businesses in Ukraine's reconstruction projects will not only strengthen Ukrainian-Polish relations, but will also bring Ukraine closer to EU-compatible practices and values, creating favourable conditions for further European integration.

*— One of the priorities of Poland's six-month Presidency of the EU Council is countering foreign interference and disinformation. It is well known that Russia seeks to inflame tensions in Ukrainian-Polish relations through information manipulation. Mr Ambassador, what steps are helping to neutralise the impact of disinformation and hostile narratives from Russia?*

— The agenda of Poland's Presidency of the EU Council reflects a clear awareness of the common threat that necessitates coordinated action from all member states. The Russian Federation has long been waging not solely full-scale armed aggression, but also a systematic hybrid war against Ukraine and the democratic world at large. Disinformation and fake content — including so-called deepfakes — are among the key instruments of this war used to generate social tension and division, possess the potential to undermine trust between international partners, erode intergovernmental ties, discredit public

institutions, create and reinforce harmful stereotypes that divide nations and provoke ethnic hostility.

Unfortunately, Ukrainian-Polish relations are one of the key targets of such attacks. A vital element in countering this threat is systematic communication, prompt information exchange, and timely response to hostile disinformation efforts. Equally important is the maintenance of an open and sincere dialogue between our societies to deprive hostile propaganda of fertile ground for manipulation.

One example was a wave of disinformation in early June 2025 regarding the alleged suspension of search and exhumation works in Ukraine. This was further fuelled by the circulation of a deepfake video, purportedly featuring a statement by a Polish scholar. The fake was aimed at stirring public outrage, undermining mutual trust, and destabilising intergovernmental dialogue on issues of historical memory. Thanks to the prompt and coordinated response of the Ministries of Culture of Ukraine and Poland, which issued almost simultaneous refutations, the threat was neutralised, and trust was preserved.

Our strength lies in unity. The stronger our ties, the less vulnerable we are to external attacks. In this context, countering disinformation is not merely a matter of information hygiene — it is a real stand against the aggressor in the information space.

We highly appreciate the political will and the concrete steps taken by our Polish partners during Poland's Presidency of the EU Council, as well as their active efforts to unblock the negotiation process in response to Hungary's obstructive stance. Thanks to the facilitation of the Polish Presidency, a practical solution was agreed upon: Ukraine and Moldova continue their cooperation with the European Commission and the Council of the EU at the technical level, laying the groundwork for the opening of the first cluster as soon as political obstacles are removed. This enables us to avoid delays and be fully prepared for negotiations and the opening of further clusters on the path to full membership in the European Union.

*— Your Excellency, could you please describe the status and activities of the Ukrainian community in Poland? What role do Ukrainians play in Poland's social and political life and in fostering bilateral relations?*

— The Ukrainian community is an important part of Polish society and a valuable asset for the country's development. Today, there are approximately one million Ukrainians who arrived in Poland before the full-scale invasion, and nearly another million who fled the war.



Ukrainians have demonstrated a high capacity for integration. They actively learn the Polish language and are economically engaged: 69% of those who arrived after the full-scale invasion are employed in Poland. They maintain an open and friendly dialogue with Polish society and respect local customs and laws. The rate of offences committed by Ukrainians remains below 1%, which falls within the margin of statistical error.

According to recent studies, the Ukrainian presence has significantly strengthened the Polish economy. Data from Deloitte indicate that Ukrainians contributed approximately 1.5% to Poland's GDP in 2022 and 0.7–1.1% in 2023. In 2024, thanks to entrepreneurship and swift integration into the labour market, Ukrainians added 2.7% to Poland's GDP. Altogether, in the period from 2022 to 2024, Ukrainians contributed an estimated €39.7 billion to Poland's GDP. This clearly illustrates that Ukrainians represent added value to the Polish state.

Ukrainians living in Poland, including diplomats, businesspeople, students, researchers, and activists, act as a bridge between our countries and bring our peoples closer. They are working, studying, developing skills, and building partnerships with Polish society — experiences that will be vital in rebuilding Ukraine. At the same time, they remain connected to their homeland: nearly 70% have expressed their

readiness to return, provided there are conditions for this — above all, safety, employment opportunities, decent income, housing, and access to healthcare and education for their children.

With Russia's full-scale aggression, the people of Poland have demonstrated a remarkable power of solidarity. Thanks to the support of the Polish nation, millions of Ukrainians found refuge from Russian aggression, and Ukraine received the first delivery of military assistance.

We remember and deeply appreciate this support — boundless and not dependent on political views. The European Union has extended temporary protection for Ukrainian citizens until 2027, and Polish legislation is being aligned with this framework. For its part, Ukraine continues to defend the rights of its citizens abroad and is doing everything possible to ensure they feel secure and comfortable here. At the same time, however, Ukraine is waiting for them to return home. No matter how good life may be in other countries, there is no place like home.

*Interview dated 8 August 2025*