



# REDEMOS

RECONFIGURING EU DEMOCRACY  
SUPPORT. TOWARDS A SUSTAINED  
DEMOS IN THE EU'S EASTERN  
NEIGHBOURHOOD

**REDEMOS Working Paper D2.2**

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15011612

# Taking Stock of EU Member States Democracy Action towards the Eastern Neighbourhood

**Theofanis Exadaktylos<sup>a</sup>, Michael Martin Richter<sup>b</sup>,  
Arusyak Aleksanyan<sup>c</sup>, Ashot Aleksanyan<sup>d</sup>, Laura  
Chappell<sup>e</sup>, Danyl Denysenko<sup>f</sup>, Valentina Gevorgyan<sup>g</sup>,  
Vanatur Sherents<sup>h</sup>**

<sup>ab</sup>eUniversity of Surrey <sup>cdgh</sup>Yerevan State University <sup>f</sup>University of St. Gallen

**December 2024**



Funded by  
the European Union

The REDEMOS project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101061738. The Associated Partner University of Surrey has received funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee under grant number 10040721. The Associated Partner University of St. Gallen has received funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, UKRI and SERI. Neither the European Union nor UKRI or SERI can be held responsible for them.

## I. Executive Summary

This working paper sheds light on the democracy support actions of key EU Member States and reflects on the way they developed bilateral relations with the countries of the eastern neighbourhood. It offers a detailed overview and analysis of these actions, carefully selecting seven countries that have been heavily involved in the region in terms of democracy assistance: Germany, Poland, Sweden, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The paper finds that while the EU developed its common strategy towards the eastern neighbourhood, not all Member States nurtured deeper relations with the region. Instead, these key Member States prominently directed aid to support the emergence, development and sustainability of democracy. Nonetheless, their focus did not always cover the whole region but rather focused on specific countries depending on their prior context, existing strong bilateral relations due to proximity to the region, or ethnic, linguistic and historical ties. The paper highlights for each EU donor selected their overall strategy during 2010-2021, offering a comparative view. In the analysis, the paper concludes that while significant amounts of aid were channelled towards the eastern neighbours, the distribution is not even towards these countries or across priority projects, and topics, usually coupled with changing priorities over time in the EU donors and political developments in the beneficiary countries. Country data are pulled from EU Aid Explorer and each Member State is assessed on their policy and objectives regarding democracy promotion, human rights, economic development and poverty reduction, which may be perceived by the donor countries with varying degree as key drivers for kickstarting, sustaining or consolidating democratisation processes in the beneficiary countries. Each Member State case presents the geographical focus, aid spending structure and distribution patterns and discusses their strategic interests (including political, economic and security interests) for further nuance. Each case also assesses the focus of the Member States on specific democracy models (as developed in Freyburg et al 2024) linked to their democracy promotion actions and how these actions have been implemented (bilaterally or multilaterally) within the wider EU framework for democracy support and alongside local stakeholders. The seven Member States present a wide variety of approaches based on a customised strategy reflecting their relative strengths and comparative advantages, domestically and internationally, showcasing a fundamental difference between a one-size-fits-all EU strategy and their own perceptions of their role in the region and within the EU.

## II. Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND CASE SELECTION</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>CASE STUDIES</b> .....	<b>15</b>
3.1	<i>GERMANY</i> .....	<i>15</i>
3.1.1	<i>Policy Framework and Objectives</i> .....	<i>15</i>
3.1.2	<i>Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus</i> .....	<i>17</i>
3.1.3	<i>Implementation and Partnerships</i> .....	<i>24</i>
3.1.4	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	<i>26</i>
3.2	<i>POLAND</i> .....	<i>28</i>
3.2.1	<i>Policy Framework and Objectives</i> .....	<i>28</i>
3.2.2	<i>Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus</i> .....	<i>29</i>
3.2.3	<i>Implementation and Partnerships</i> .....	<i>36</i>
3.2.4	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	<i>38</i>
3.3	<i>ESTONIA</i> .....	<i>40</i>
3.3.1	<i>Policy Framework and Objectives</i> .....	<i>40</i>
3.3.2	<i>Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus</i> .....	<i>41</i>
3.3.3	<i>Implementation and Partnerships</i> .....	<i>46</i>
3.3.4	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	<i>47</i>
3.4	<i>LATVIA</i> .....	<i>48</i>
3.4.1	<i>Policy Framework and Objectives</i> .....	<i>48</i>
3.4.2	<i>Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus</i> .....	<i>50</i>
3.4.3	<i>Implementation and Partnerships</i> .....	<i>54</i>
3.4.4	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	<i>55</i>
3.5	<i>LITHUANIA</i> .....	<i>56</i>
3.5.1	<i>Policy Framework and Objectives</i> .....	<i>56</i>
3.5.2	<i>Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus</i> .....	<i>57</i>
3.5.3	<i>Implementation and Partnerships</i> .....	<i>61</i>
3.5.4	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	<i>62</i>
3.6	<i>ROMANIA</i> .....	<i>64</i>
3.6.1	<i>Policy Framework and Objectives</i> .....	<i>64</i>
3.6.2	<i>Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus</i> .....	<i>65</i>
3.6.3	<i>Implementation and Partnerships</i> .....	<i>66</i>
3.6.4	<i>Conclusions</i> .....	<i>72</i>
3.7	<i>SWEDEN</i> .....	<i>73</i>
3.7.1	<i>Policy Framework and Objectives</i> .....	<i>73</i>
3.7.2	<i>Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus</i> .....	<i>74</i>
3.7.3	<i>Implementation and Partnerships</i> .....	<i>79</i>
3.7.4	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	<i>81</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>83</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>LIST OF REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>99</b>

### III. List of acronyms and abbreviations

AA	The Association Agreements
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BMZ	Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CDU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFCA	Central Finance and Contracting Agency
CPMA	Central Project Management Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSRDG	Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDC	Department of Development Cooperation
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EHU	European Humanities University
EIPK	Estonian Eastern Partnership Centre
EN	Eastern Neighbourhood
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESTDEV	Estonian Centre for International Development
EU	European Union
EUMS	European Union Member States
G7	The Group of Seven
GIZ	German Association for International Cooperation
GNI	Gross National Income
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBB	Support of Non-Governmental Initiatives in Belarus
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
ID	Identification
IEP	Institute for European Politics
IT	Information Technology
KfW	Credit Agency for Reconstruction
MDCP	Multianual Development Cooperation Programme
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MS	Member States
MSIF	Moldovan Social Investment Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGDO	Non-governmental Development Organisations
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PiS	Law and Justice Party of Poland
PLN	Polish zloty (zł)
PNL	National Liberal Party
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSD	Social Democratic Party
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
ROAID	Romanian Agency for International Development Cooperation

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	International Development Cooperation Agency
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USIF	Ukrainian Social Investment Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
LDC	Least Developed Countries
PO	Civic Platform
PSL	Polish People's Party
USD	United States Dollar
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy

## IV. List of Figures

Figure 2.1: EU Member State disbursement and share to the EN countries over time in millions of euros.	12
Figure 2.2: Total EU Member States contributions to EN countries.	13
Figure 2.3: Top 15 Relative (absolute figures divided by population size) EU Member States Contributions to EN Countries. Note: All other MS have a combined relative contribution of 21.4	14
Figure 2.4: Top 15 EU Member States with the Highest Share of the EN in their Total ODA. NOTE: All other MS are below 0.2% and have been excluded from the chart	15
Figure 3.1: Per-capita and absolute ODA by Germany to the EN countries.	18
Figure 3.2: Sectoral distribution of German ODA to the EN region.	19
Figure 3.3: German aid to EN countries by democracy promotion models.	20
Figure 3.4: Distribution of Bilateral and Multilateral ODA Contributions of Germany (OECD 2023)	25
Figure 3.5: Channels through which German ODA is channelled (OECD 2023).	26
Figure 3.6: Polish ODA Disbursements to the EN countries between 2013 and 2021. All figures in Euro.	31
Figure 3.7: Top 10 Polish aid recipient countries between 2013 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank	32
Figure 3.8: Polish Bilateral and Multilateral ODA between 2015 and 2021. All values in millions of PLN	33
Figure 3.9: Polish aid to EN countries by democracy promotion models.	33
Figure 3.10: Sectoral allocation of total Polish bilateral aid between 2013 and 2021	34
Figure 3.11: Distribution of ODA through various channels between 2013 and 2021.	38
Figure 3.12: Estonian ODA disbursements to the EN countries between 2013 and 2021	43
Figure 3.13: Top 10 Estonian aid recipient countries between 2013 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank	44
Figure 3.14: Sectoral distribution of Estonian bilateral aid to the EN region between 2013 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).	45
Figure 3.15: Estonian aid to EN countries by models of democracy promotion in 2013-2021.	45
Figure 3.16: Estonian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024a). All values in millions of USD	46
Figure 3.17: Distribution of aid channels of Estonian ODA in the EN region between 2013 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).	47
Figure 3.18: Latvian ODA disbursements to the EN countries between 2015 and 2021	51
Figure 3.19: Top 10 Latvian aid recipient countries between 2015 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank	52
Figure 3.20: Sectoral distribution of Latvian bilateral aid to the EN region between 2015 and 2021 (amounts in euros)	53
Figure 3.21: Latvian aid to EN countries by models of democracy promotion in 2017-2021.	53
Figure 3.22: Latvian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024b). All values in millions of USD	54
Figure 3.23: Distribution of aid channels of Latvian ODA in the EN region between 2015 and 2021 (amounts in million euros)	54
Figure 3.24: Aid Provided by Lithuania to EN Countries for Development Cooperation Projects in 2002–2020 (amounts in euros). Own work based on profiles of LDC partner countries.	58
Figure 3.25: Top 10 Lithuanian aid recipient countries between 2014 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank.	59
Figure 3.26: Sectoral distribution of Lithuanian bilateral aid to the EN region between 2014 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).	60
Figure 3.27: Lithuanian aid to EN countries by models of democracy promotion in 2015-2021.	61
Figure 3.28: Lithuanian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024c). All values in millions of USD	61
Figure 3.29: Distribution of aid channels of Lithuanian ODA in the EN region between 2014 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).	62

Figure 3.30: Romanian ODA disbursements to the EN countries between 2014 and 2021. All figures in euro.	66
Figure 3.31: Top 10 Romanian aid recipient countries between 2014 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank. All figures in euro.	66
Figure 3.32: Romanian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024d). All values in millions of USD	67
Figure 3.33: Distribution of support by main sectors of the EN countries in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.	67
Figure 3.34: Distribution of support by main sectors of Moldova in 2014-2021. All figures in euro	68
Figure 3.35: Distribution of support by main sectors of Ukraine in 2014-2021. All figures in euro	69
Figure 3.36: Distribution of support by main sectors of Azerbaijan in 2014-2021. All figures in euro	69
Figure 3.37: Distribution of support by main sectors of Belarus in 2014-2021. All figures in euro	70
Figure 3.38: Distribution of support by main sectors of Armenia in 2014-2021. All figures in euro	70
Figure 3.39: Distribution of support by main sectors of Georgia in 2014-2021. All figures in euro	71
Figure 3.40: Romanian aid to EN countries by models of promotion in 2014-2021.	71
Figure 3.41: Swedish ODA Disbursements to the EN countries between 2009 and 2021	75
Figure 3.42: Sectoral allocation of total Swedish bilateral aid (2009-2021)	75
Figure 3.43: Top 10 Swedish aid recipient countries between 2009 and 2021 and the EN countries with their respective rank	76
Figure 3.44: Sweden's ODA disbursement for democracy promotion (Government and civil society) 2007-2021.	77
Figure 3.45: Swedish aid to ENP countries by models of democracy promotion in the years 2009-2021.	79
Figure 3.46: Sweden's development assistance by channel, figures in USD (2018-2022) (Donor Tracker 2023)	79
Figure 3.47: Sweden's contributions to multilateral organisations 2021 (OECD 2024e).	80
Figure 3.48: Sweden's bilateral ODA through local and multilateral stakeholders (2009-2021) (OECD 2024e).	81

## V. List of Tables

Table 3.1: Ranked absolute (right-hand side) and per-capita recipients of ODA of Germany worldwide between 2007 and 2021.....	21
Table 3.2: Priority sectors of Poland’s policy in the ENP Countries within the MDCP 2012-2015 framework. ....	30
Table 3.3: Priority sectors of Poland’s policy in the ENP Countries within the MDCP 2016-2021 framework. ....	30
Table 4.1: Comprehensive and comparative overview of the case study analysis .....	93

# 1 Introduction

The creation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) strategy at the EU level brought about a notable turn of the EU towards countries of the former post-communist/post-Soviet space in terms of opening bilateral relations with the region not only in the form of trade relations but more importantly in the form of direct foreign assistance, investments, technical assistance and administrative/institutional support among other policy-related projects. Such strategies and initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for the countries in the eastern neighbourhood to reform their political systems and institutions, kickstart and sustain their economic development and growth, and improve conditions domestically for the benefit of their citizens and their societal structures at large in terms of democratisation, the rule of law, human rights and social justice.

This working paper sheds light on the democracy support actions of key EU Member States (MS) and the development of their bilateral relations with the region. To that end, this working paper offers a detailed overview and analysis of these actions by Member States who have been heavily involved in the region, namely Germany, Poland, Sweden, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, where the issue of democracy assistance has featured more prominently. While the EU has a common strategy, not all Member States have nurtured relations with the region. The paper finds that these key Member States have directed notable aid in actions that support the emergence, development and sustainability of democracy in the region, albeit some have focused more on specific countries considering various factors described further, which have also informed the focus of this working paper.

The Member States selection is based on their relative importance in the region. This is based on prior context, existing strong bilateral relations due to proximity to the region or ethnic, linguistic and historical ties. It also accounts for previous collaborations with these countries in terms of civic and business exchanges and the relative volume of spending on projects targeting these countries. While the list of projects and actions is not exhaustive, the working paper highlights the overall strategy that these Member States have initiated or implemented during the time period 2010-2021<sup>1</sup> and offers a comparative overview across the seven Member State cases in the analysis section. During this period, the EU Member States may have channelled close to €9 billion in total but there is an uneven distribution of aid not only between the countries of the neighbourhood themselves and the priorities of projects, but also in terms of the share of aid between Member States and the emphasis on specific topics and countries over time and in conjunction with political development.

This working paper takes stock of the bilateral actions using data provided by the EU Aid Explorer. Every Member State selected is discussed based on the policy framework and objectives governing each Member's aid policy, and an assessment is made of those objectives, focusing on the themes of democracy promotion, human rights, economic development and poverty reduction as actions helping to kickstart, sustain or consolidate the recipient countries' democratisation processes, which have been identified as of particular interest for these member states. For every Member State selected, the geographical focus of the actions is presented, assessing the overall spending structure of aid, with graphs presenting the distribution towards the recipient countries of the eastern neighbourhood, including the share compared to other geographical regions where available. Each Member State case includes a discussion of strategic national interests driving aid allocation, including political, economic and security ones to provide the nuance behind democracy support actions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the formal REDEMOS assessment period is from 2010 until 2022, the last year was dropped due to the Russian large-scale invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent extraordinary nature of financial inflows to Ukraine. These would have significantly skewed the analysis and diminished the temporal comparability of cases.

At the same time, the assessment follows a deeper theoretical underpinning by assessing and critically contextualising models of democracy promotion that each of the Member States pursues in the region. This is based on the framework developed by the REDEMOS D.3.1 working paper, referenced in the bibliography (Freyburg et al 2024). These models are then logically connected to the broader themes and findings of the case studies to retrieve an overall and exhaustive picture of member state democracy promotion actions in the region.

The cases also include an analysis of the implementation of these actions and additional partnerships, with specific reference to bilateral versus multilateral support, assessing the role of partnerships with the recipient countries not only within the wider EU framework for democracy support but also within the context of other international organisations where this is necessary. To that end, the cases assess the level of engagement with local stakeholders based on the Member State's strategy, including interactions with civil society organisations and other grassroots initiatives.

The working paper is structured as follows. Section 2 describes in detail the rationale behind the choice of Member States in focus vis-à-vis the six recipient countries of the eastern neighbourhood, and the indicators the paper is using to analyse data and other information for each Member State. Section 3 presents the Member States cases in detail, presenting each Member State strategy, objectives, aid distribution, implementation and partnership. Section 4 presents the analysis of the Member State cases in a comparative fashion between them and Section 5 offers the conclusions.

In brief, the seven Member States present a wide variety of approaches stemming from their prior experience and relationships with the recipient countries of the neighbourhood, as well as their own political and institutional arrangements and geopolitical circumstances. This is not only in terms of the amount of funding distributed but also in terms of the type of projects they are more likely to direct the aid to.

Member States have taken a customised and more bespoke approach over time, driven out of their national priorities in terms of security over democracy promotion and the availability of human and financial resources domestically. Unique elements characterise each country's approach, such as Estonia's emphasis on e-governance or Sweden's focus on gender equality. Despite these differences, all countries frame their assistance within the context of supporting European integration processes and emphasise civil society development. This diversity in approaches at the member state level contrasts with the EU's more uniform ENP strategy, suggesting that member states can drive more targeted, country-specific support in the region.

The support actions have been focused on specific sectors (such as education, civil society and administrative capacity building), and shaped by political changes within the recipient countries and current affairs, ability to project issues at the European Union level (multilateral paradigms), proximity/affinity to specific recipient countries, and fundamental values governing the perception of each Member State's role within the European Union and within the international environment.

## 2 Financial Overview and Case Selection

The choice of seven EU member states countries for deeper analysis is highlighted in orange in Figures 2.2 to 2.4. This choice was made based on two factors: (1) the nominal and relative size of contributions; and (2) the relative importance of the eastern neighbourhood (EN) region in the total official development assistance (ODA) policy of each country. For example, Germany was chosen because of its outstanding nominal contributions, but France was rejected despite its relatively high absolute contribution to the region as it falls significantly behind in both per-capita contributions and the relative share of the region in its total ODA (which is below 1%). At the same time, Sweden was selected despite a relatively low share in the region of its total ODA because of its outstanding contribution to the EN region in per-capita terms as

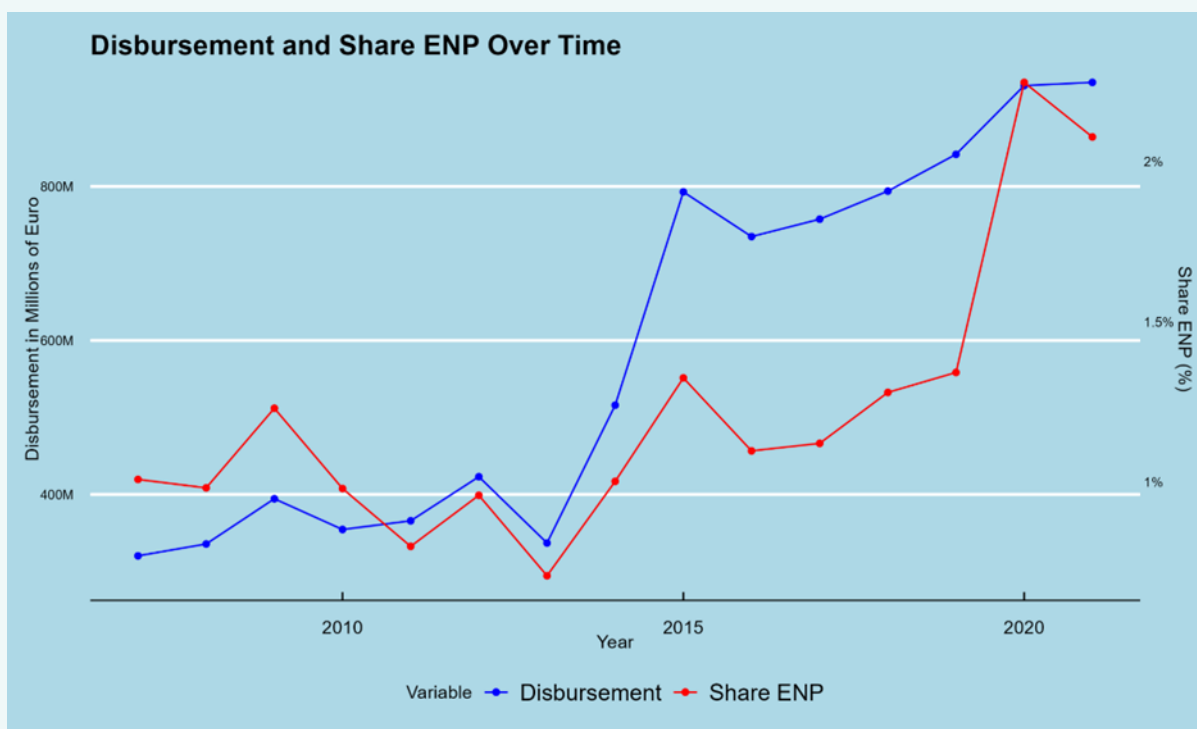
well as overall high level of expenditures. The remaining five EU member states – Romania, Poland, and the three Baltic countries – were chosen due to the relative importance of the region in their ODA policy, as the region's share ranges from 18% up to 64.8% in these cases. Finally, all cases, except for Latvia, are included in the top ten of per-capita contributors, pointing also towards the significant two-way importance between those countries for the EN but also of the EN for those countries in terms of ODA.

Each country-case analysis is based on an analytical framework that highlights three components: the EU Member States' individual legal and policy frameworks; their geographical, strategic, and financial foci; and an assessment of their ODA implementation. The first step examines the legal and policy framework governing each country's aid policy, including an assessment of the stated objectives, notably democracy promotion, human rights, economic development, and poverty reduction. The second step elaborates on the geographical, strategic, and financial focus of each country towards the EN. The selection process looks at the overall spending structure of aid and the question of how much of it is spent on EN countries and what the sectoral mix of this aid is as a share of democracy promotion. This also includes an analysis of democracy promotion models over time that is based on the framework by REDEMOS working paper 3.1 (2024). These findings are then further discussed within the context of strategic interests driving aid allocation, including political, economic, and security interests. Finally, the last part of the framework assesses the implementation of ODA and corresponding partnerships, focusing on the difference between bilateral and multilateral aid for each of the case countries. Moreover, the role of partnerships, both within the EU framework and with other international organisations, is assessed and the level of engagement with local stakeholders, including civil society organisations, grassroots initiatives, evaluated.

Data from the European Commission's official EU Aid Explorer (European Commission, last access 30/09/2024) shows that the EN countries are, on average, relatively small recipients of ODA from the member states.<sup>2</sup> Figure 2.1 depicts the absolute disbursements of EU MS ODA to the six EN countries as well as each year's share of this figure in absolute development aid provision. For much of the reference period, the share of the ENP in total ODA of all EUMS stood between 1% and 1.5%. For comparison, India and Afghanistan accounted for around 2.5% individually over the same period, which suggests a relative de-prioritisation of the EN compared to other regions. In some years, such as in the period from 2011 until 2013, it even fell below 1%. It is only in the last years of the reference period (2020 and 2021) that it jumped above the 2% mark.

---

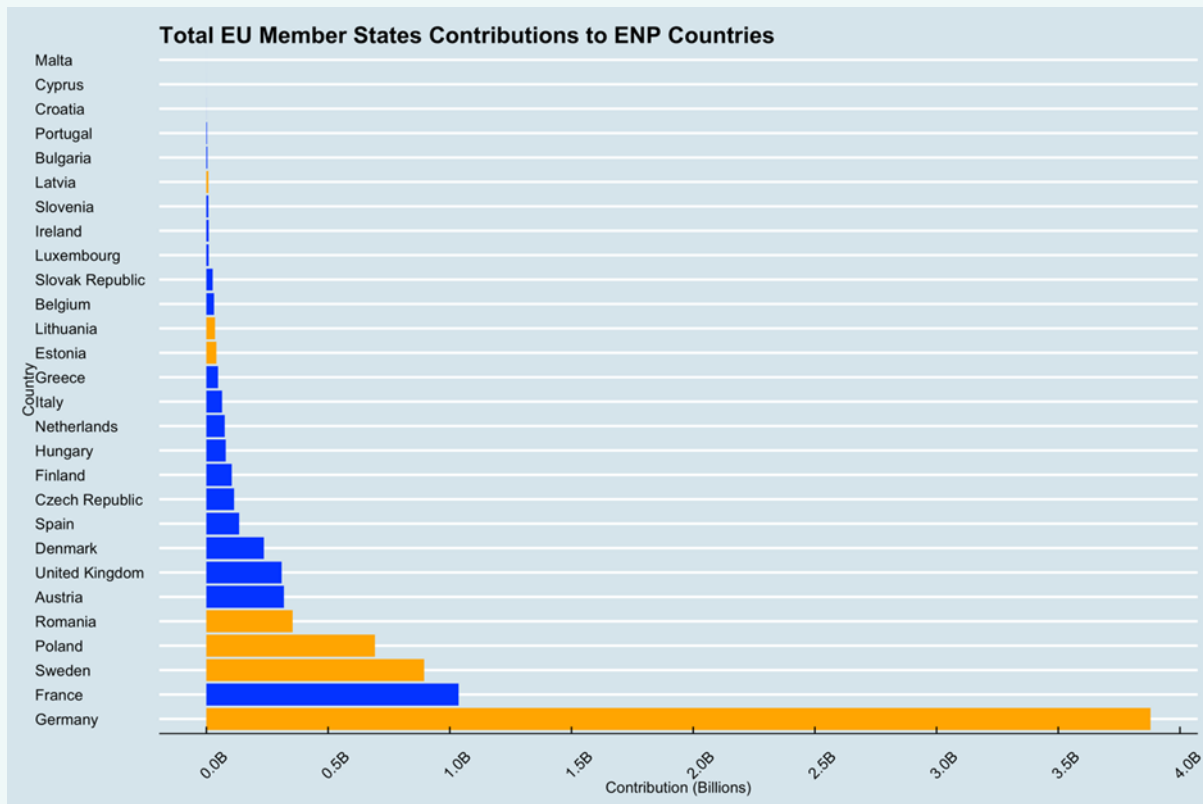
<sup>2</sup> EU Aid Explorer data can be accessed here: [https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/index_en)



**Figure 2.1: EU Member State disbursement and share to the EN countries over time in millions of euros.**

In absolute terms, all MS ODA was relatively constant, or stagnating, until 2014, after which it started to grow significantly. This coincides with Euromaidan which is likely linked to a subsequent increase of support activities in and towards Ukraine (EEAS 2024). As a result, ODA to the EN region more than doubled between 2013 and 2015. After a small drop in 2016, disbursements have grown slowly but steadily afterwards. Nonetheless, the very sharp increase of the relative share of ODA provided to the EN from 2020 onwards is not a result of a significant rise of financial contributions to these countries; but rather, of the decrease of contributions to other regions, signalling the shifting priorities of the EU as a global actor.

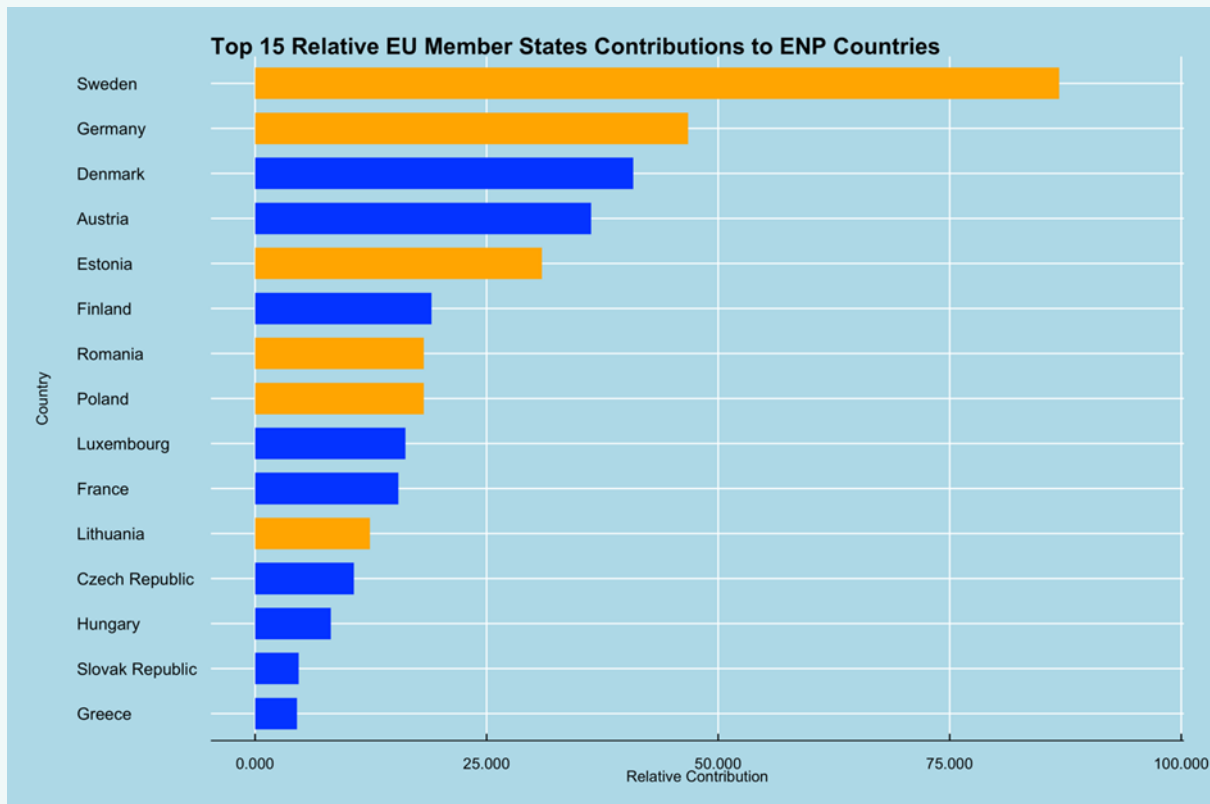
If the EU's ODA to its eastern neighbours is broken down by the contributions of each EU MS, the absolute figures for the period 2010-2021 reveal a clear dominance of Germany, as shown in Figure 2.2. Germany provided almost €4 billion to the EN countries between 2007 and 2021. This is 45% of the total volume of all member states during that period, which stands at €8.83 billion. During this period, Germany's ODA alone is roughly as big as that of the combined contribution of the next nine biggest contributors. While France comes second, this only corresponds to its economic weight as the EU's second biggest economy, with its contributions being only slightly higher than that of Sweden and Poland, which come next in the ranking. However, despite Sweden and Poland being the two initiators of the EaP, their contributions remain below the €1 billion mark. Overall, there is an immense gap between Germany and all other EU countries in terms of contributions in absolute figures. Romania, with slightly over €350 million in contributions to the EN region, closes the top 5 of this indicator ranking.



**Figure 2.2: Total EU Member States contributions to EN countries.**

However, absolute figures do not provide a sufficiently comprehensive picture in terms of proportionality as the population numbers vary significantly among EU Member States. Looking at the per-capita contributions, (see Figure 2.3), a slightly different picture emerges. Dividing the contributions by the mean population size<sup>3</sup> in this time period for each member state, a per-capita indicator metric brings Sweden ahead of Germany. Sweden spent almost €90 per capita on bilateral ODA to the EN region in the 14-year period between 2007 and 2021. Germany comes second in this ranking; despite having the biggest population of all EU MS. Estonia is ranked fifth but it is the top per capita contributor among post-Soviet MS in that ranking. France, despite coming second in absolute terms, drops to tenth in the per-capita metric.

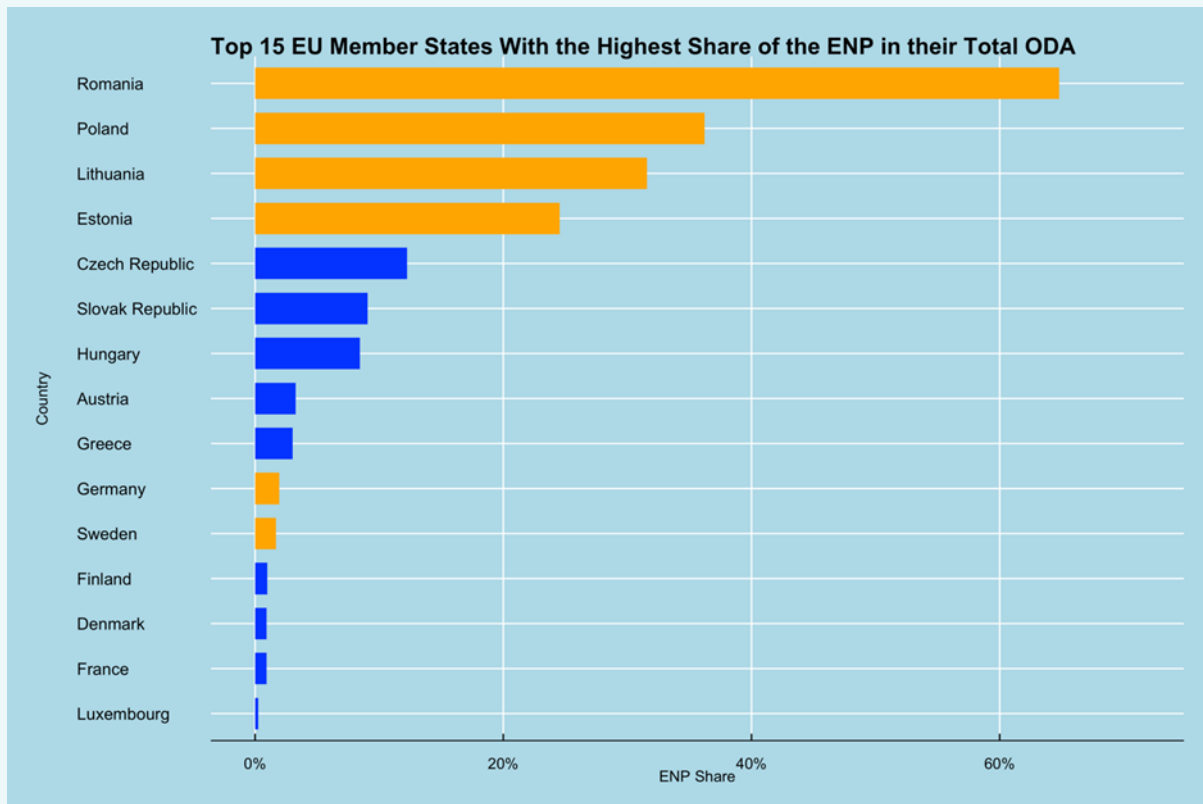
<sup>3</sup> Data from the UN Population Fund: <https://www.unfpa.org>



**Figure 2.3: Top 15 Relative (absolute figures divided by population size) EU Member States Contributions to EN Countries based on UN Population Fund data. Note: All other MS have a combined relative contribution of 21.4.**

Figure 2.4 presents the relative importance of the EN region in total bilateral ODA for each Member State. It is therefore taking the previously introduced relative metric for all MS, showing the share of ODA channelled to the eastern neighbourhood. This indicator ranges from over 60%, as in the case of Romania, to approximately 0%, which applies to countries like Croatia or Malta which are not included in Figure 2.4. The strong dispersion of the relative EN share in the ODA of each MS is further visible in descriptive statistical metrics: whilst the average, unweighted, share of the EN in ODA for the member states is 8.4%, the median is only 1.7%. This suggests a strong skew in the sample towards the top contributors.

With the exception of Croatia which has extremely low figures and hence not included in the figure, nine Central and East European Member States come top on their contributions for bilateral assistance to the region. France, which ranked second in absolute numbers, is only 17th in this metric. This shows, in quantitative terms, the relative low importance of the region in the total ODA policy of France. Notably, Germany and Sweden, previously coming very high in absolute and per-capita ODA to the region, have a much lower share of the ENP in their total bilateral ODA contributions. This points towards much lower priority that the EN region has for these countries. This relative lower importance is, however, outweighed by the much bigger overall ODA contributions that these countries make, hence bilateral ODA can be viewed as playing a generally bigger focus in these countries. In the case of most post-socialist Member States the pattern is the opposite: whilst bilateral ODA might play a more peripheral role for these countries, they prioritise the EN region within their limited development assistance policy.



**Figure 2.4: Top 15 EU Member States with the Highest Share of the EN in their Total ODA. NOTE: All other MS are below 0.2% and have been excluded from the chart.**

The following case studies draw on primary and secondary data sources. The former included official documents of the respective countries, such as laws, constitutions, development policy framework documents, official state publications on the ENP and development policy- as well as quantitative data from official databases, including statistical agencies and especially the official EU Aid Explorer, secondary literature, notably scholarly articles and policy papers, further helped to shape the argument and understand key developments. Based on the criteria above, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been selected as the seven key EU MS to explore in this working paper in depth. As mentioned, Latvia is not in the top list but it has been included as a control case within the Baltic states region.

## 3 Case Studies

### 3.1 Germany

#### 3.1.1 Policy Framework and Objectives

Germany’s legal framework differs from that of many other donor countries. This is because it does not possess a designated development cooperation law. Instead, since 1961 it has had a development ministry, which was first called “Ministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit” (Ministry for Economic Cooperation) and subsequently from 1993 onwards “Ministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung” (Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, hereafter abbreviated as BMZ) (Ashoff 2014). However, the BMZ takes a primarily coordinative role. This is because development policy is considered as a “multifunctional, cross-sectional task at the intersection of foreign and economic policy” (Andersen, 2021). The official description of the BMZ reads that it is responsible for the Planning and political management of German development cooperation, cooperation with civil society and the private sector, cooperation with partner countries and multilateral organisations as well as development information and education work (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, N.d.a).

As a result, the provision of ODA requires the agreement of the Foreign Ministry, trade questions are covered by the Economic Ministry, and global disaster relief is also a competence of other ministries where the BMZ plays only a participatory role (Andersen, 2021). Since 1964 it has been technical assistance and since 1972 capital support that are competences of the BMZ. The basic governance structure of development policy therefore mirrors the general governance structure of Germany that can be characterised as relatively complex and involving many different actors on different levels.

In terms of the execution of development policy, the BMZ has mostly a coordinating role. The actual implementation of development policy provisions is carried out by various state institutions and independent actors, depending on the matter at stake. The corresponding significant number and diversity of various actors involved in development policy is something that is internationally criticised (Andersen, 2021). The actors carrying out most tasks are the state-owned development and investment bank KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau - Credit Agency for Reconstruction), which is responsible for financial cooperation, and the 2011 created GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit - German Association for International Cooperation), responsible for technical and personal cooperation (Andersen 2021). Technical support goes generally “almost exclusively” through the GIZ (OECD 2023). Particularly for the eastern neighbourhood and democracy promotion, Germany’s five political foundations (Stiftungen) are noteworthy. Nearly exclusively funded by the state budget, their combined 2019 budget for “global grants for socio-political and democratic educational work” accounted for €130 million in that single year alone (The Federal Constitutional Court 2023).

The complexity of the decision-making process in the development policy domain becomes particularly visible in the budgetary sphere. The budget allocation for development assistance is decided by a process involving the Chancellor, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Finance Ministry, the BMZ, the Budgetary Committee of the Parliament, and the Committee for Economic Cooperation of the Parliament (Bohnet 2017). The overall guidelines for it, however, are set out in the coalition agreement of the government and current framework documents on that matter (Bohnet 2017). It is worth noting that multilateral agreements, such as the G7 conclusions (Bohnet 2017) as well as developing UN objectives (Andersen 2021) also play a significant role in shaping Germany’s development policy. As such, the framework documents, which often span more than one political term, are oriented toward broader, multilateral development agendas. Certain smaller framework documents are, however, also directly informed and based on coalition agreements. One example is the “Charter for Future”, issued in 2014 by the BMZ and which was based on the coalition agreement from 2013 (OECD 2019). In the latter, good governance and democracy are singled out as two out of seven separate, key objectives. In the former, democracy was not mentioned as a key objective but only good governance in conjunction with human rights as one out of eight priority areas.

The Charter for the Future was set up following the end of the “Aktionsprogramm 2015”, which was the 2001 set-up framework document, aiming at promoting the Millenium Development Goals of the UN (Federal Government of Germany 2001). Whilst its focus was on halving global poverty levels, the programme also openly addressed issues referring to democracy promotion, with Chancellor Schröder stating in the foreword that ‘Free trade brings prosperity when it is embedded in a framework that is characterised by democratic conditions, respect for human rights, and social balance’ (Federal Government of Germany 2001). In 2005, the coalition between CDU and SPD then designated the goal of “realising democracy, the rule of law and human rights” as one of its five priorities in Berlin’s development policy (Andersen 2021). The subsequent coalition between the CDU and the liberal FDP, which was in power from 2009 until 2013, added as development goals “the strengthening of civil society and the expansion of a development partnership with the private sector” (Andersen 2021). The following government, a coalition between CDU and SPD between 2013 and 2021, oriented German development policy along the 2015 introduced UN Sustainability and Development Goals (Andersen 2021).

This is also visible in the most recent documents in 2020 introducing the BMZ 2030 Strategy, which operationalises the Development Policy 2030 document of 2018 (OECD 2021). It announces a “new direction” in Germany’s development policy and whose priority areas are explicitly framed around the SDGs (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2021). This new strategy reduced the

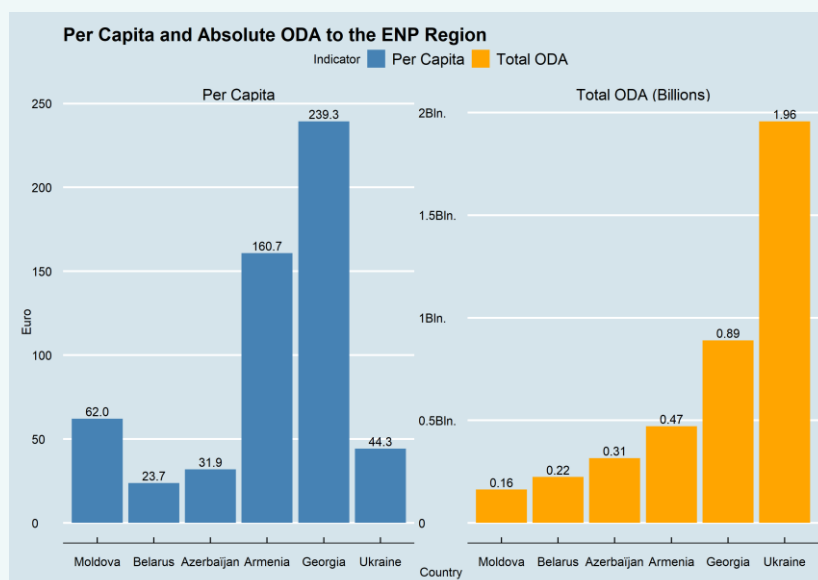
number of official partner countries from 85 to 60, arguing explicitly that the main indicators for selection were “issues such as good governance, anti-corruption and level of need”. Moreover, within that context, it also put forward the “countries” reform efforts and the relevance and volume of our cooperation to date” (p. 6). In total, the strategy incorporated five core areas, of which the first one relates to “peaceful and inclusive societies” and of which good governance is the first “area of intervention” (p.9). Within that, it puts forward “democracy, justice and a functioning state, anti-corruption, domestic resource mobilisation, local authority structures, social protection” as areas of work (p.9). Despite these changes, one key feature of Germany’s development policy is non-partisan consensus among key policy actors. As such, Berlin’s policy in long-term retrospect has been characterised as being strongly path-dependent and with a high degree of continuity (Bohnet 2017; Ashoff 2014).

### 3.1.2 Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus

In the latest development strategy document, Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova were explicitly designated as Germany’s transformation partners (Federal Ministry For Economic Cooperation And Development 2021). This is also visible in evaluating the distribution of aid towards the whole region, where the dominance of Ukraine in absolute figures is clearly visible, as depicted in Figure 3.1 below. The country received almost €2 billion bilateral development assistance from Germany during the period 2010-2021. However, Georgia, having a far smaller population, comes second with almost €900 million in that same period. Once per-capita assistance is considered, it is a different picture as visible in the blue chart below. In this case, Ukraine is only ranked fourth, behind Georgia, Armenia, and Moldova.

This is noteworthy as Armenia and Georgia, two countries with a much bigger geographical distance than Moldova, Ukraine, or Belarus, see much higher bilateral ODA flows from Germany. In the same period, Georgia received per-capita more than five times as much ODA as Ukraine. Equally striking, Armenia, a country without an association status that is “only” classified as one of many countries falling in the “ordinary” list of the “developing countries” to which Germany refers with reference to the Development Assistance Committee’s assessment (DAC) (Federal Ministry For Economic Cooperation And Development, 2021), received per capita substantively more than Moldova or Ukraine, two countries with a special status. This geographical distribution shows that geographical or formal institutional considerations do not always seem to play a dominant role in Germany’s ODA’s allocation.

Timing becomes an important component in the distribution of aid. For instance, in Ukraine, the 2015 ODA was more than three-times (around €337 million) that of the 2014 bilateral ODA from Germany (€109 million), clearly linked to domestic political changes. A similar pattern is even visible in Belarus, where the aid almost quadrupled in 2020, rising from roughly €12 million in 2019 to over €45 million in 2020, clearly linked to the protests in Belarus. In Moldova too, in 2012, after the year-long political deadlock was resolved and a nominally pro-European president was elected, the support of Germany more than doubled. However, after the election of Maia Sandu as president at the end of 2020, Berlin’s financial support for Moldova increased by only a third, showing much weaker reaction to the previous political change. Sometimes, deep political changes were also preceded by huge spikes in ODA. As such, Armenia received significantly more assistance in 2017 linked potentially to the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, the year before 2018 the Armenian Revolution. However, 2017 was the year of regular parliamentary elections, in which the Way Out Alliance of current Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, made significant gains. Armenia received in 2017 almost €85 million in assistance from Germany, which was an increase of over 100% compared to the 2016 figure of, in which it accounted for less than €40 million.

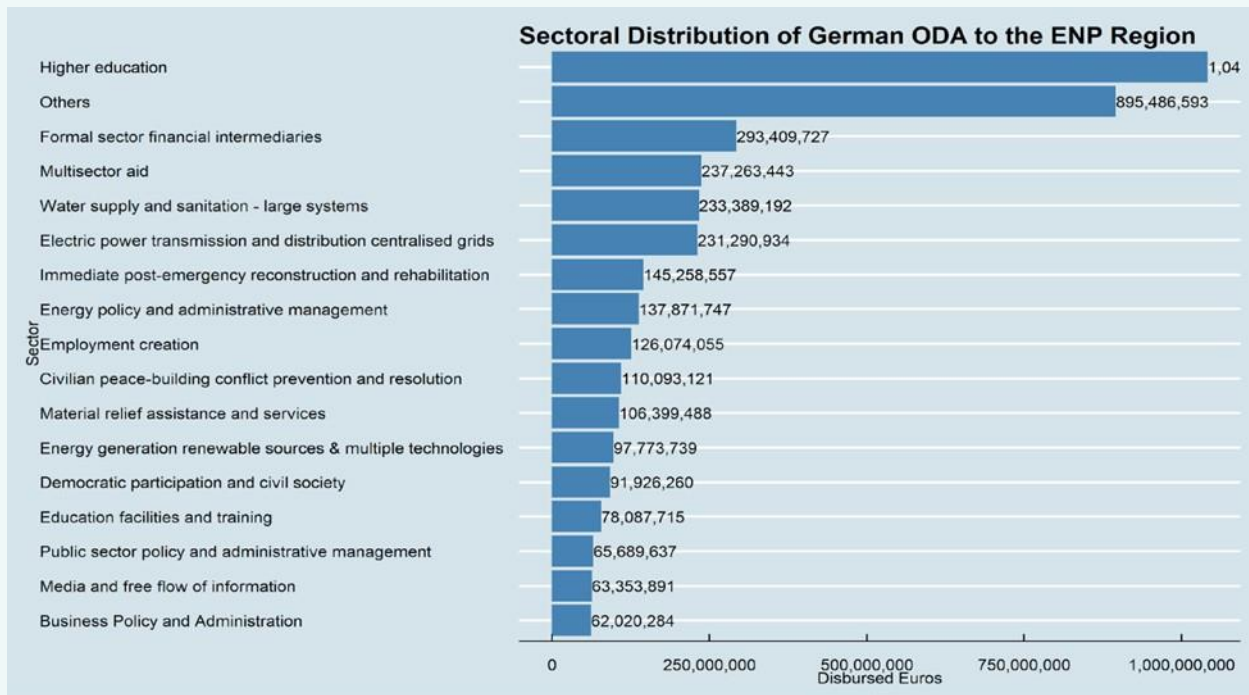


**Figure 3.1: Per-capita and absolute ODA by Germany to the EN countries.**

Looking further at the sectoral breakdown of ODA to the EN region, the clear dominance of the higher education sector becomes visible (Figure 3.2), which made up over €1 billion of ODA in the assessed period. Looking, for instance, at projects for Ukraine, the biggest nominal recipient, the top 10 in terms of volume are all but one related to “student costs”, with the other being by far the biggest contribution – a budget financing grant for Ukraine in 2015 accounting for approximately €200 million.

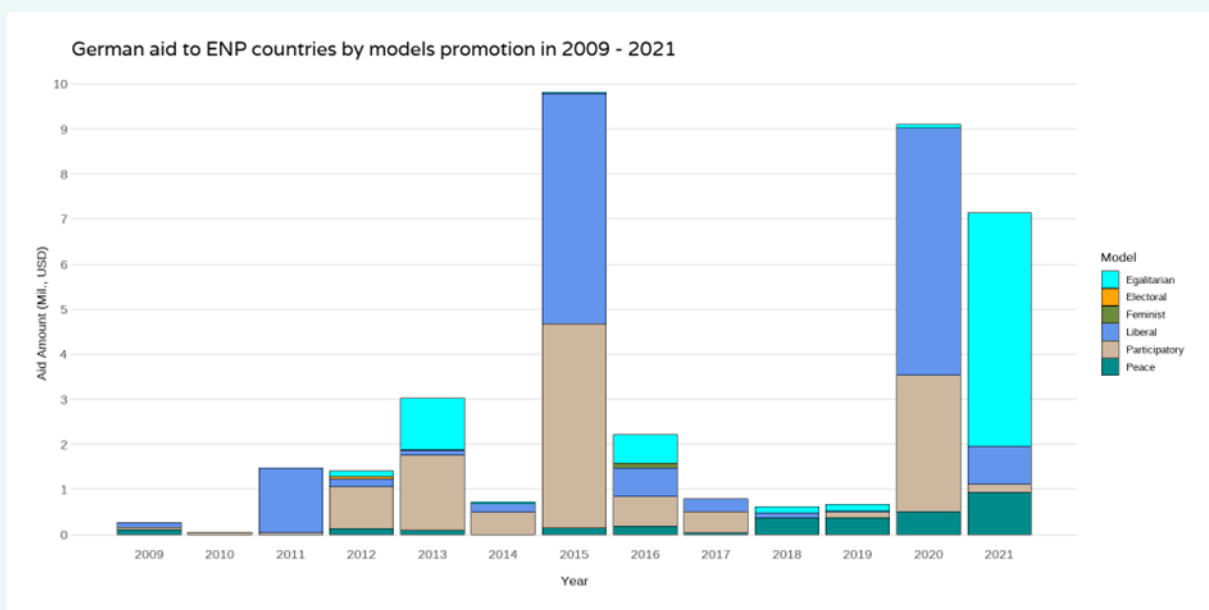
Higher education, as well as potential multisector aid, which comes fourth in the ranking. The first measure of direct democracy aid, that is, democratic participation and civil society, is in 13th place with slightly above €90 million spent on it in the assessed period. Of this €90 million, almost €60 million were spent on Ukraine in that time. Public sector policy and administrative reform as well as media and free flow of information, both directly related to democratic governance, are trailing slightly behind. This shows that democracy promotion is not an explicit priority of German ODA in the eastern neighbourhood region, but rather implicitly incorporated in other sectors.

The composition of aid differs quite substantially between countries. For instance, in Armenia, higher education comes only fourth, after support for “formal sector financial intermediaries”, and energy as well as water supply support. This shows the different priorities that Germany has with respect to the countries of the region. The temporal dimension is hereby also clearly visible. As such, the yearly contributions for legal and judicial development that Germany provided to Armenia, which are on the 11th place with roughly €4.51 million in total, more than doubled from 2016 onwards and remained on a significantly higher level than in the time before, in line with political changes in Armenia itself. In Belarus, the country with the smallest per-capita aid money received in the assessed period, democratic participation and civil society takes the highest position, being ranked third out of all sectors as it accounts for roughly €18.19 million.



**Figure 3.2: Sectoral distribution of German ODA to the EN region.**

Germany's aid to EN countries from 2009 to 2021 demonstrates a complex and evolving distribution across various democracy promotion models, which are laid out in Figure 3.2. All six democracy promotion models are used over the period, albeit with varying emphasis. The Participatory and Liberal models form a consistent foundation throughout most years, indicating Germany's ongoing commitment to grassroots engagement and institutional development. The early years (2009-2011) show relatively modest aid amounts, with a mix of Peace, Participatory, and Liberal models. A notable shift occurred in 2011, with a significant increase in the Liberal model's prominence. The middle period (2012-2015) sees substantial growth in overall aid, peaking dramatically in 2015 at nearly \$10 million. This peak is predominantly composed of Participatory and Liberal model contributions. Post-2015, there's a sharp decline in total aid, followed by a period of relatively lower but stable funding until 2019. During these years, Germany maintains a balanced approach across multiple models, with the Peace model gaining more prominence. The final years (2020-2021) show another significant uptick in aid, approaching the 2015 peak. Notably, 2021 sees a substantial allocation to the Egalitarian model, which had been less prominent in previous years. This shift might indicate a new focus on addressing socio-economic inequalities in EN countries. Throughout the period, the Electoral and Feminist models receive consistent, albeit smaller, allocations, demonstrating Germany's ongoing, if secondary, commitment to these aspects of democracy promotion. This data paints a picture of Germany as a major and dynamic supporter of democracy in EN countries. The diversity of models employed suggest a sophisticated and adaptable approach to democracy promotion.



**Figure 3.3: German aid to EN countries by democracy promotion models.**

It is noteworthy that although the EN countries receive significant amounts of German ODA, they are not among the top ten beneficiaries in absolute terms. The top positions are primarily occupied by large, populous countries such as India, China, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, each receiving over \$5 billion in German ODA. Other countries in the top ten include Turkey, Indonesia, Morocco, Brazil, and Egypt, as per Table 3.1 below. Among the EN countries, Ukraine is the highest recipient of German ODA, ranking 14th overall. Georgia follows in 35th place, Armenia is 58th, while Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Moldova rank 72nd, 84th, and 94th, respectively, with ODA ranging from about \$315 million to \$162 million.

Absolute ODA Rankings			Per-Capita ODA Rankings		
Country	ODA	Rank	Country	Per_Capita	Rank
India	8,058,502,202.00	1	Syria	282.38	1
China	5,532,034,773.00	2	Georgia	239.27	2
Iraq	5,385,934,217.00	3	Armenia	160.72	3
Afghanistan	5,352,092,064.00	4	Afghanistan	143.98	4
Syria	5,228,800,293.00	5	Iraq	140.14	5
Turkey	3,761,978,091.00	6	Morocco	86.60	6
Indonesia	3,403,058,537.00	7	Moldova	62.00	7
Morocco	3,094,902,732.00	8	Turkey	46.62	8
Brazil	2,607,062,495.00	9	Ukraine	44.25	9
Egypt	2,468,631,906.00	10	Azerbaijan	31.90	10
Ukraine	1,956,898,914.00	14	Egypt	25.08	11
Georgia	889,398,127.00	35	Belarus	23.65	12
Armenia	470,990,465.00	58	Indonesia	12.89	13
Azerbaijan	314,978,559.00	72	Brazil	12.45	14
Belarus	223,125,804.00	84	India	6.39	15
Moldova	161,686,410.00	94	China	5.41	16

**Table 3.1: Ranked absolute and per-capita recipients of ODA of Germany worldwide between 2007 and 2021.**

Table 3.1 also shows the top recipients of German ODA on a per-capita basis. It offers a different perspective on the geographical focus of Germany's aid compared to the absolute figures. Thus, when considering per-capita aid, the EN countries feature more prominently among the top recipients. Syria ranks first, receiving approximately €282 per capita, followed already by Georgia and Armenia, the two top EN recipient countries in this benchmark category. This underlines the relative importance of the two Caucasus countries for Germany's ODA policy.

Other EN countries also rank relatively high in terms of per-capita aid. Moldova receives about €62 per capita, placing it seventh on the list. Ukraine and Azerbaijan rank ninth and tenth, respectively, with per-capita ODA of around €44 and €32. Belarus, while receiving a lower absolute amount of German ODA, still ranks twelfth in per-capita terms, with approximately €24 per person. This data highlights the significant support Germany provides to the EN countries when taking into account their population sizes. The high per-capita ODA figures for Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan demonstrate Germany's focus on supporting these countries within the ENP framework.

In contrast, larger countries that receive substantial absolute amounts of German ODA, such as India, China, Brazil, and Indonesia, rank lower in per-capita terms due to their large populations. For example, India and China, which rank first and second in absolute ODA, receive only about €6 and €5 per capita, respectively. Hence, the per-capita ODA figures provide a more nuanced understanding of Germany's aid allocation, emphasising the importance of the EN countries as recipients of German support relative to their population sizes.

### 3.1.2.1 Projects per country

#### *Armenia*

Advice on Legal and Judicial Reform in the South Caucasus was a programme running between 2015 and 2018. Its format was “a regional dialogue (through which) progress (was to be) made in aligning the legal and judicial systems in the South Caucasus with European standards” (German Association for International Cooperation 2017). In particular, it meant to “combine the provision of reform advice with regional networking activities. The project's six areas of action cover the whole cycle, from the creation and application of legislation to training and raising public awareness of legal issues” (German Association for International Cooperation 2017).

In addition to this, Germany is running the large Local Governance Programme South Caucasus since 2009 with different foci for all three South Caucasus countries (GIZ N.d.). In general, it seeks to strengthen “the capabilities of the public authorities and personnel in state institutions and promoting regional and local administrations”(…). For instance, in the 2013-2016 programme, it established citizen service offices in many municipalities and focused on financial management, advising “the Finance Ministries on creating the necessary frameworks for results-oriented budget management and... assisting the municipalities in managing the transition to the new system” (GIZ N.d.).

Moreover, between 2017 and 2020, Germany had a “Public Finance Management in the South Caucasus” programme in Armenia and Georgia, which sought to bring the system of public finances in these countries to “European and international standards regarding results orientation, efficiency and accountability” (GIZ 2017a, b). This happened through advisory activities on introducing results-oriented budget management, on improving internal, external and parliamentary control mechanisms, as well as on taxation and customs regulations.

#### *Azerbaijan*

Azerbaijan was part of both the Local Governance Programme South Caucasus as well as the Advice on legal and judicial reform in the South Caucasus programmes. In the former, the scope was more limited than in Armenia and Georgia, and the GIZ singled out the Caucasus Cities' Network where, in "heavily polluted Azerbaijani city of Sumgait," GIZ supported the creation of "a digital register of contaminated land... as a basis for sustainable urban development." In the subsequent edition, which ran from 2020 until 2023, exemplary activities include the training of 100 local female politicians from the Aran economic region, "focusing on soft skills such as leadership skills", through which it sought to achieve the "mainstreaming gender into key governance structures and processes" (GIZ 2021).

### *Belarus*

A major project carried out by Germany with a total budget of over €20 million was the Belarus Support Program, which was implemented in Belarus between 2002 and 2020 and ran in nine stages (Internationales Bildungs- und Begegnungswerk N.d.). In the assessed period, multiple support phases were identified, starting with phase four of the first "Support of Non-Governmental Initiatives in Belarus" programme in 2012, which had a budget of \$0.616 million. Its continuation, the "Support of Non-Governmental Initiatives in Belarus (IBB) II," started in 2016 (ibid.). Over multiple rounds of funding, it sought to "contribute to the solution of urgent tasks of the sustainable development of Belarus. The program relied on the development of multilateral cooperation and sought to unleash internal resources, competently combine and use them to effectively respond to such national and global challenges, like demographic transformation, climate change, etc." (ibid.). As a result, it carried out "270 joint German-Belarusian projects" and supported "the development and implementation of more than 25 local and regional sustainable development strategies" (ibid.).

### *Georgia*

The largest democracy-related project in Georgia is the "History dialogue as basis for normalisation of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict" project, which has been ongoing since 2012 (Berghof Foundation N.d.). By "overcoming the 'silence on history' that characterises many interactions across conflict lines" it aims to "contribute to the goal of building sustainable, trustful relationships between civil society actors on all sides, while bolstering sustainability in the entire peacebuilding system" (Ibid.).

In the realm of civil society and democratic participation, significant projects included, among others, the 2014-2016 "CSR DG core program", worth \$0.238 million. As the literature notes, "CSR DG is a civil society organisation working countrywide since 1995. Its mission is to promote good governance, stable and inclusive economic development, and the formation of an active civil society for the welfare of Georgian society" (Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia 2022). It is worth noting that many single contributions were provided by German political foundations, notably that of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, highlighting the role of these organisations (Ibid. 2022).

In recent years, Germany has increasingly focused on participatory approaches to local development. The 2020-2022 project "Participatory and sustainable development of rural communities in Georgia" received funding of \$0.127 million in 2020 and \$0.162 million in 2022. This project aimed to improve the livelihoods of local communities by strengthening municipal services and fostering cooperation between local communities and municipal authorities.

Georgia also fell under the large South Caucasus Project focused in the years 2013-2016 on establishing citizen service offices in many municipalities, which led the "the relevant ministry (to) adopt the strategy on the introduction of citizen service offices as the national standard." GIZ also advised the Finance Ministry on creating frameworks for results-oriented budget management, which aimed to "ensure effective and efficient use of public funds and improve budgetary transparency for local councils and citizens" (GIZ 2016). Lastly, Georgia was also part of the advice on legal and judicial reform in the South Caucasus programme, as outlined in the section on Armenia.

## *Moldova*

A strong focus of German actions in Moldova was providing contributions to the Moldovan Social Investment Fund (Moldovan Social Investment Fund N.d.). As the project website of the KfW mentions, “the Fund finances infrastructure projects in villages and small towns with up to 20,000 inhabitants. Citizen participation is the key prerequisite: projects have to be proposed, planned and implemented directly by the citizens of the respective municipality” (GIZ 2016). As such, it is, as its official objectives state, not just a tool for technical and financial assistance, but also “a mechanism for communities for learning new principles of good governance at the local level” (Moldovan Social Investment Fund N.d.).

In 2016, the "Strengthening Civil Society in the Fight against Corruption in Moldova" project received \$0.157 million and from 2020, the GIZ launched a project titled ‘Strengthening the rule of law & anti-corruption mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova’. This project is pursued by engaging civil society in corruption prevention; strengthening the institutional and operational capacities of specialised investigative authorities and public prosecutor's offices.

High-level dialogues were also included in the measures in Moldova. In 2014, a delegation of the German Bundestag met with former Moldovan Prime Minister, Iurie Leanca, through which it “address(ed) topics such as the fight against organised crime and human trafficking, human rights and the situation of ethnic minorities” (Government of the Republic of Moldova 2014).

Germany ran in 2021 a project titled "Fight against disinformation in Moldova", which was carried out by the Institute for European Politics. As measures, it included “a training series for Moldovan students (capacity building) and a qualitative mapping study to develop a joint analysis and advocacy strategy as well as to improve the legal framework against disinformation in the Republic of Moldova” (Institut für Europäische Politik 2021).

Conflict resolution was also a part of Germany's support, particularly regarding the Transnistrian conflict. In 2015 and 2017, Germany funded several conferences on the Transnistrian conflict. An example is the 2015 ‘Conference on Confidence Building Measures in the Transnistrian Conflict Settlement’ held in Germany. The conference focused on ‘thematic sessions centring on topical economic, transport and ecological issues of common interest that involved foreign experts’ (IPN Press Agency 2015).

## *Ukraine*

Germany managed through the GIZ two programmes seeking to “support Ukraine’s public finance reforms”, one from 2015 until 2019 and the other from 2019 until 2022 (GIZ n.d.). Overall, it sought “to promote good financial governance”, whilst at the same time to “foster close cooperation with civil society partners to create greater acceptance and trust among the population” (GIZ n.d.).

A strong emphasis of German support in Ukraine was on the Ukrainian Social Investment Fund (USIF), which is a “non-profit organisation established to support vulnerable groups of population and initiatives of territorial communities and non-governmental organisations” (Ukrainian Social Investment Fund n.d.). As the KfW notes, “it has been a proven project-executing agency for KfW since 2008 and has successfully implemented numerous projects, with financing carried out on behalf of the German Federal Government and the EU”. Its key activities are closely linked to broadly understood democracy actions, as it seeks to foster the “development of local communities” capacities in solving local problems, promotion of their participation in decision making (as well as) providing support to formation of innovative models of social services, including the ones, intended for vulnerable groups of population (disabled persons, orphans, homeless, elderly, victims of violence, etc.)’ (Ukrainian Social Investment Fund n.d.). Germany provided repeated support to this organisation, with three USIF support tranches being among the top 10 single support measures that the German government provided throughout this entire period in the EN region (Vlasenko and Freyburg 2024).

Conflict resolution became an increasingly important area of support following the outbreak of conflict in eastern Ukraine. In 2015, Germany funded the project "Overcoming consequences of war together", which supports "Ukrainian civil society in tackling the social conflicts resulting from the war in Eastern Ukraine [by] providing actors in civil society with professional training in order to prevent subsequent conflicts and promote the long-term peace process in the region" (Kriegsfolgen Ueberwinden n.d.).

### 3.1.2.2 Motivations

The previous elaboration of data suggests that while Germany allocates substantial ODA to the EN countries, particularly Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia, the overall geographical focus of its aid extends beyond this region. Therefore, the allocation of aid appears to be driven by a combination of factors. As the literature stipulates, this is motivated by two main factors. The first relates to "international solidarity" and, the second to Germany's "own interests of different nature" (Ashoff 2014). With respect to the latter, foreign and economic interests are singled out. As such, besides general peace considerations, the German position as a "trading nation" is highlighted, which led to respective German governments emphasising open markets through its development policy (Andersen 2021). For instance, the 2030 Development Policy document puts "fair trade" and "sustainable private investments" as two of six key foundations (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2021).

It is, however, also argued that this field of policy, and the respective financial allocations, were significantly impacted by global trends, as outlined in Part 1. This includes, "the international paradigm shift from promoting economic growth to meeting basic needs, supporting structural adjustment and promoting good governance, to the Millennium Development Goals and to the Sustainable Development Goals" (Ashoff 2014). Hence, the allocation follows domestic, recipient, as well as global considerations.

The 2021 OECD report also outlines in its "results, evaluation and learning" section that Germany's development co-operation aligns with partner country priorities, but it does not articulate overall objectives in ways that can be measured and assessed (OECD, 2021). However, this relates to the overall development policy. When looking at specific country cases, this is not always the case. A good example is that of the ENP countries which sought an accession perspective. Although the literature argues that the existence of this perspective is a potential reform boost (e.g. Mungiu-Pippidi 2020), it was Berlin that "remain(ed) cautious about the language of the documents prepared within the bilateral and multilateral dimension of the ENP, e.g. it avoid(ed) terming relations with the partner countries 'strategic' and calling the harmonisation of their legislation with the *acquis* an 'integration process'" (Gotkowska 2011).

When assessing and explaining the outstanding importance of the South Caucasus in relative terms for German development policy, observers highlight the importance of "security policy aspects, in contrast to democracy promotion, (which) shape the German view of the South Caucasus" (Sarjveladze 2021, 7). It is further argued that in particular "from Germany's point of view, regional stability is a high priority because destabilising the South Caucasian states could have long-term consequences for EU states in terms of international crime, drug trafficking, illegal migration, and terrorism" (ibid.).

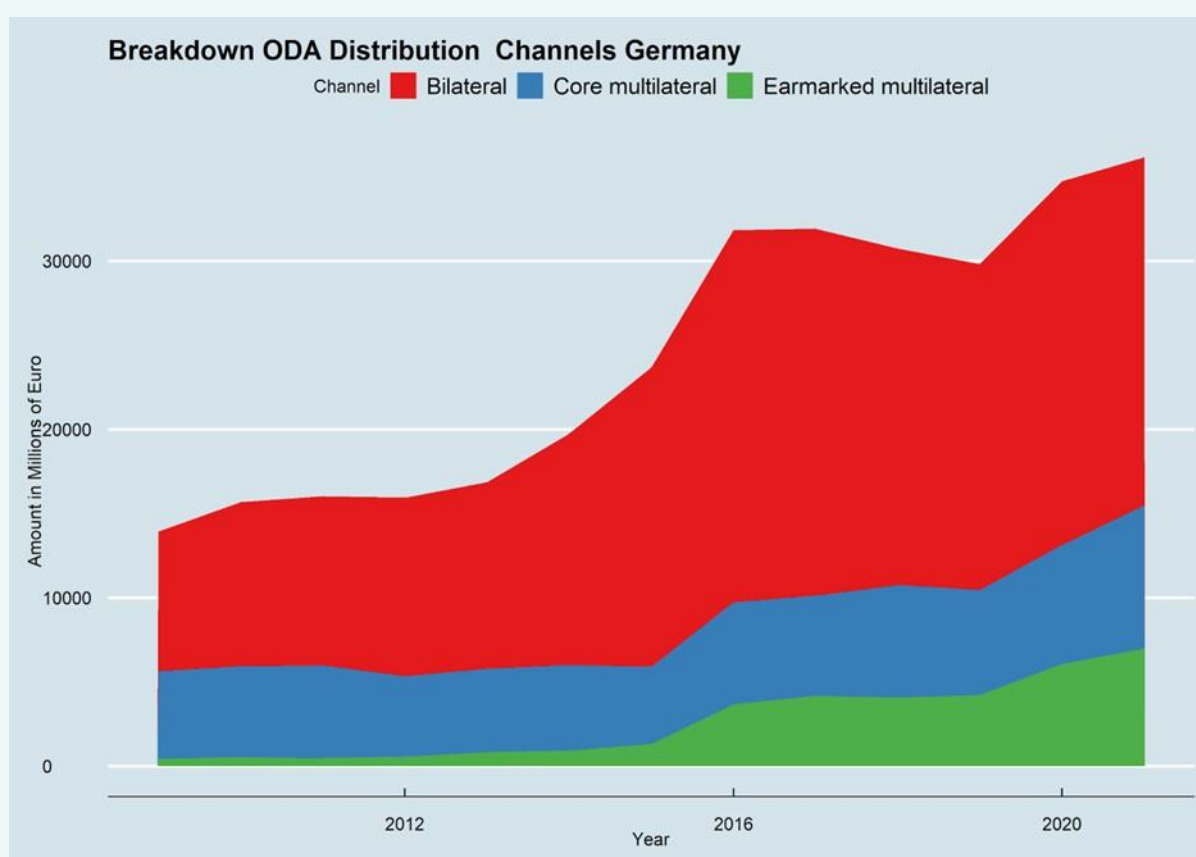
### 3.1.3 Implementation and Partnerships

Figure 3.4 below showcases the breakdown of Germany's development assistance contributions from 2009 to 2021, categorised into bilateral, earmarked multilateral, and core multilateral funding. The data reveals a consistent emphasis on bilateral assistance, with its share remaining relatively stable, fluctuating between 58.7% and 65.5% over the period. The upward trend in bilateral contributions, rising from around €8.3 billion in 2009 to over €20 billion by 2021, underscores Germany's commitment to direct engagement with partner countries, including those in the EN region.

Despite this, Germany is described as a "strong multilateralist" (OECD 2023a). As such, Germany is responsible for 21% of the entire EU budget (OECD, 2021). Out of all the multilateral contributions outlined

in Figure 3.4, 39% fall on the UN (OECD 2021). As such, roughly \$6 billion are paid to the UN system, with the WFP (\$1.4 billion), UNICEF (\$908.5 million) and UNDP (\$701.3 million), making up the top three (OECD 2021). The World Bank and regional development banks are other multilateral recipients of German ODA that the literature emphasises.

While the data also shows an increase in multilateral contributions (both earmarked and core) over the years, these remain less relevant compared to the dominant role of bilateral assistance in Germany's development cooperation strategy. Noteworthy is, however, the steep rise of earmarked multilateral contributions, which rose from approximately €435 million in 2009 to nearly €7 billion in 2021, highlighting Germany's increasing engagement with international organisations to advance specific development objectives. The almost 20-fold increase of earmarked contributions contrasts with the comparatively modest rise in core multilateral funding, from around €5.2 billion in 2009 to €8.5 billion in 2021. By connecting the data on Germany's aid delivery mechanisms to the broader narrative of the case study, it becomes evident that the country's focus on bilateral assistance, coupled with its growing engagement in specific multilateral channels, serves as a key pillar of its development cooperation strategy.



**Figure 3.4: Distribution of Bilateral and Multilateral ODA Contributions of Germany (OECD 2023).**

Figure 3.5 below depicts the channels through which German ODA flows. As visible, more than half of the aid goes directly to the public sector, such as through budget grants. The absolute value of these public sector contributions has, however, remained stagnant since 2016 and even slightly decreased up until 2019. Reflective of the trend described in the previous section, a significant increase has taken place in ODA channelled through multilateral organisations. Research institutions have also experienced a slight increase since 2016. Notably, before 2016, the private sector played almost no role in Germany's ODA. After that, it has started to increase slightly. The absolute size of NGOs has also slightly increased between 2009 and 2021, but its overall share remained relatively stable. It can therefore be said that the structure of ODA channelling has experienced a significant diversification since 2016. This aligns with the end of the 2015 development policy strategy and the new focus on the SDG put forward in Germany's policy.

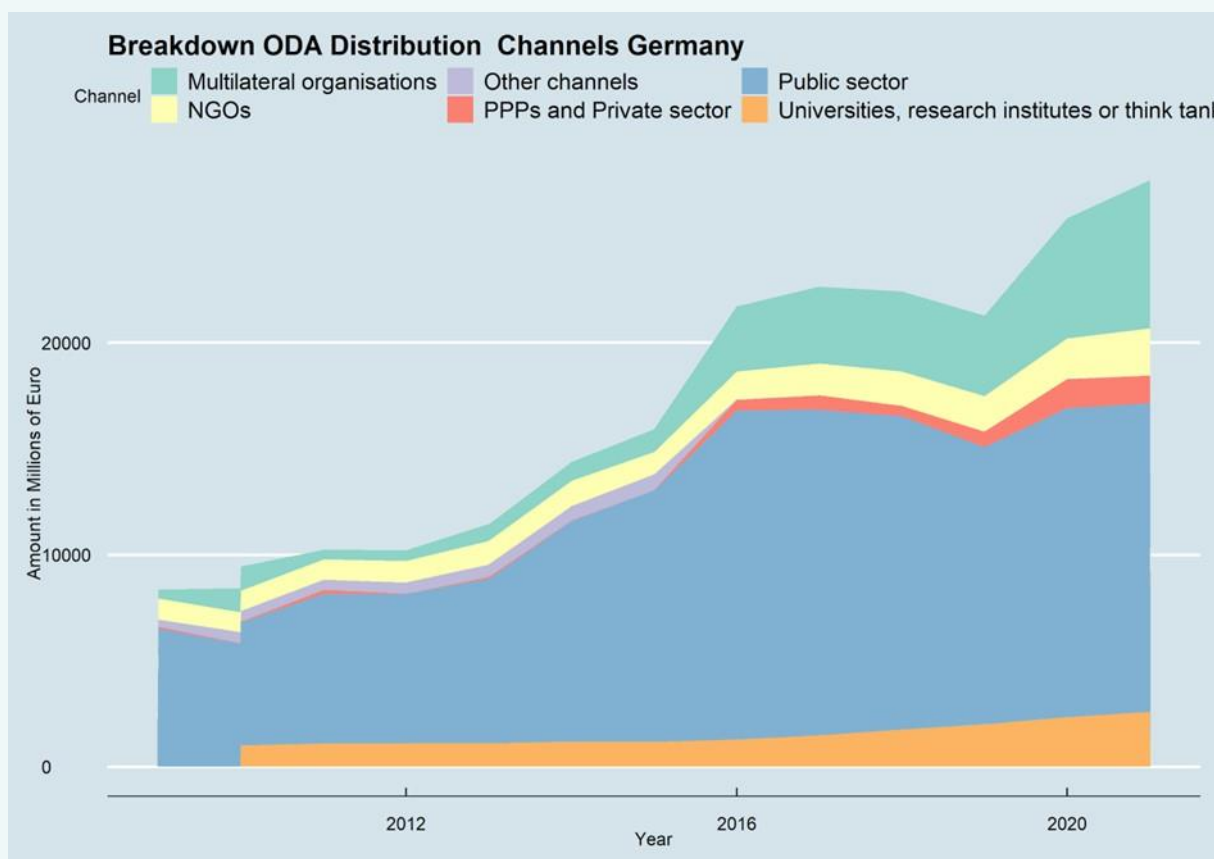


Figure 3.5: Channels through which German ODA is channelled (OECD 2023).

This situation, showing Germany's overall ODA channels, is also visible in the EN region. For instance, focusing just on the two biggest recipients of aid per capita, Armenia and Georgia, the public sector makes up by far the biggest share. In total, it accounts for roughly 57% of channelled funds. The central government makes up the biggest share of it, accounting alone for 36% of total funds. Local or regional authorities come second, accounting for 28%. Another 3% relating to the public sector come from other public entities in the recipient countries. The relatively big share of the education and research sector, which accounts for 22%, and therefore represents the biggest recipient outside the public sector, corresponds with the situation in the thematic breakdown of ODA funds sent to the EN region, as presented in Figure 3.2. Noteworthy, international NGOs only account for roughly 1%, whilst developing-country based NGOs and multilateral organisations are close to 0%.

This is in line with broader German development-policy trends. Local NGOs do not play any noticeable role in the channelling of ODA. They make up only a minuscule share in recent years and none in the years before 2016 (OECD 2023). There are, however, two major trends. First, there is an overall increase of funds channelled through CSOs on a global level, particularly after 2016. Secondly, there is an increasing presence of international CSOs that are being used as partners for the distribution of Berlin's ODA. Again, this trend gained traction from 2016 onwards. Nevertheless, Germany-based CSOs make up the by far biggest share of recipients of German development assistance funds.

### 3.1.4 Conclusion

While eastern neighbourhood countries do not receive the largest absolute amounts, they feature prominently when German ODA is considered on a per capita basis. Georgia and Armenia stand out as top recipients globally in relative terms. The main sectoral focus is on higher education initiatives, while direct democracy promotion receives a comparatively small share. Germany's significant per-capita aid to states like Georgia and Armenia appears driven more by security interests than a primary emphasis on promoting democracy.

A clear temporal component is visible, with fluctuations in assistance levels closely linked to domestic political changes and democratisation processes within EN nations. Ukraine and Armenia received significantly increased aid following pro-democratic shifts, while Belarus saw a surge in aid amid protests against the Lukashenko regime. Moldova also experienced higher aid after resolving political deadlocks, though the reaction was more muted following Maia Sandu's election.

Differences exist in aid composition across EN countries, reflecting Germany's varying strategic interests. In Armenia, sectors like finance, energy, and water supply took precedence over higher education. The temporal dimension is evident, with legal and judicial aid increasing substantially from 2016 onwards, suggesting responsiveness to domestic reforms. Paradoxically, democratic participation and civil society accounted for a significant share of aid to Belarus despite receiving a relatively low share of aid overall.

More broadly, Germany maintains a strong bilateral aid focus, though engagement with multilateral channels has increased. Partnerships prioritise donor-based German civil society organisations, while the public sector remains the primary aid recipient. However, there has been diversification in aid channels since around 2016, aligning with Germany's strategic reorientation towards the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## 3.2 Poland

### 3.2.1 Policy Framework and Objectives

The legal foundation for Poland's development assistance is the Development Cooperation Act from September 16, 2011 (Wolters 2024). It entered into force on January 1, 2012, and sets out the overarching framework for development aid actions. It explicitly mentions in Article 1 the focus on the Eastern Partnership countries. According to this framework document, development cooperation comprises three spheres: development aid, humanitarian aid, and what it calls "global education", focusing on "educational activities [...] to increase awareness and understanding for global problems and interdependence between countries" (Article 2.2). As such "development cooperation shall be understood as the totality of actions undertaken by government agencies in line with the international solidarity rule with a view to providing developing countries with [these types of aid]" (Article 2.1). It is worth noting that this law from 2011 introduced all the components of development cooperation not just in their entirety for the first time, but even individually, such as "development assistance [...] for the first time into the Polish legal order" (Government of Poland, N.d.a).

Development aid refers primarily, as denoted in point (a) of Article 2.1, to "promoting and supporting the development of democracy and civil society, including development of parliamentarism, principles of good governance, and respect for human rights". The second component that comprises development aid focuses on economic development and general well-being of the population through the support for healthcare and education (Point (b), Article 2.1). However, it is worth mentioning that development aid consists of only two dimensions and the naming of broadly understood democracy promotion measures in its first point of its respective law shows the relevance of it within the Polish aid framework.

Just as the development cooperation framework constitutes multiple dimensions, so, too, does it involve multiple entities transcending the strictly public sectors in its operations. As Article 3 stipulates, "the following entities may participate in development cooperation [...] entities constituting finance sector units [...] entities which may conduct public benefit activities [...] entrepreneurs [...] research institutes" (Article 3). The range of activities covered under this framework is equally broad, ranging from financial ones, such as "financing of tasks entrusted to entities participating in the implementation of development cooperation" (Article 4.1), or "transferring funds to the state budget of a developing country" (Article 4.2), to non-financial ones, such as the "organisation of trainings and consultations for entities participating in the implementation of development cooperation" (Article 4.7) or "drafting, publishing and dissemination of publications" (Article 4.8).

Whilst the law lays out the basic foundations of development cooperation, it also stipulates that this cooperation is being run on the basis of multi-year programmes (Article 5.1), which "specifies the geographical and thematic goals and priorities" (Article 5.2). So far, Poland has had 3 of these "multiannual development cooperation programmes" as they are officially called. The first one from 2012 until 2015 under the second PO-PSL coalition government, then from 2016 until 2020 under the first PiS government, and the last comprehensive programme was set up in 2021 and envisioned a running period until 2030. This programme is created in the MFA and presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Council of Ministers and approved by the latter (Article 6). The approved programmes are, in turn, the basis for yearly plans set up by the head of the MFA, which lay out more specific budget allocations for a given period ahead (Article 7).

In general, most of the responsibilities in the field of development aid fall on the Minister of Foreign Affairs. As such, not only does he/she bear the responsibility for developing the multiannual programmes as well as the plans, but also bears coordinative duties on a national (Article 13.1.1) and international level (Article 13.2.3) as well as tasks of an evaluative nature. (Article 13.1.10). He/she coordinates this work with a National Coordinator for International Development Cooperation (Article 14) and the minister is further

supported by a Development Cooperation Programme Board, which takes a consultative role and is elected for a four-year period (Article 15) and is made up of various representatives of ministries and other national government and NGO bodies (Article 17).

As stated, there are three broad focus areas of development cooperation that Law 2021.0.1425 foresees. However, each multiannual programme emphasises a different aspect of it, leaving some scope for developing focus areas in a given period. Democracy is a central recurring theme. The 2012-2015 multiannual programme was called “Solidarity, Democracy, Development”. It sets out that the “overarching objective of Polish development cooperation is to create conditions for the sustainable development of developing countries, in particular through the promotion and consolidation of democracy, respect for human rights and support for the building of modern and efficient state institutions [...]” (MDCP 2012, 3). The 2012-2015 programme lists “democracy” and “systemic transformation” as its only two main foci, highlighting the importance of these issues (MDCP 2012, 7).

Reference to Poland's own historic experience informs its development cooperation strategy, setting it apart from its Western European counterparts. The 2012-2015 programme states that: “the history of Poland over the last twenty years provides an example of a successful transition of the state and society from an authoritarian system to democracy and from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy. This experience may be of particular interest to countries in a similar initial situation, wanting to benefit from knowledge of reforms in almost all areas of state functioning. Polish experts can also offer to impart knowledge on the mechanisms of managing the transformation process itself”. (MDCP 2012, 7).

In 2020, Poland founded the Solidarity Fund, which serves as a “repository of knowledge from Poland’s own democratic transition” (OECD 2023). This has also been noted in the literature and described as a “knowledge advantage”, which explains Poland’s focus on democracy promotion rather than poverty reduction which is the EU’s overarching development policy objective (Chappell 2021,13). All this knowledge sharing happens explicitly with respect to “subsidiarity, taking account of local social, cultural, economic and political circumstances and involving local partners and beneficiaries as widely as possible in decisions concerning their own development (MDCP 2012, 3)”.

The next MDCP displayed a new self-understanding of Poland with respect to the mission of development support, as “highly- developed countries, including Poland, should strive to maintain the support provided to those (developing) countries, to ensure access to knowledge and means necessary to continue reforms and evening out the different development levels” (MDCP 2018, 9). Again, a reference with respect to Poland’s own path was created when referring to its overall approach: “the comparative advantages of Poland arising from Polish transformation experiences as well as from the knowledge and skills of the stakeholders of Polish development cooperation, were considered [in the new document] (MDCP 2018, 8)”.

One novelty in the 2016-2020 programme was the direct reference to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the EU’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (MDCP 2018, 11), meaning that Polish development is underpinned by these broader agendas. The 2016-2020 program was broader in its designated goal, as it put “support (for) democratisation processes and state reforms, build modern state institutions, promote human rights and support civic society” (ibid, 12) just at the end of a longer list of objectives at the beginning of the goals chapter. This might have been linked to the new government, PiS, which came into power in 2015 and had portrayed its domestic actions much more along the lines of reducing inequality and improving the economic well-being of its citizens. However, further down the Chapter, it puts “good governance” and “democracy and human rights” (ibid, 13) as the first priorities of development assistance listed. They are also explicitly listed as “horizontal issues” that “will be taken into account horizontally at all stages of planning and implementing projects” (ibid, 15).

### 3.2.2 Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus:

The eastern neighbourhood region has enjoyed significant attention in Poland’s development assistance. Already in the first multiannual programme (2012-2015), the EN region was designated as the first out of

two geographic priority areas (MDCP 2012). Besides this geographic priority, distinct policy areas of focus are highlighted for each EN country as per Table 3.2.

Priority sectors of Poland's policy in the EaP Countries within the MDCP 2012-2015 framework							
Country	Public security and border control	Regional development and creation of public and local administration capacities <sup>1</sup>	Support for independent media and civil society <sup>1</sup>	Support for disadvantaged groups	Environmental protection	Agriculture and rural development	SMEs and work creation <sup>1</sup>
Armenia							
Azerbaijan							
Belarus							
Georgia							
Moldova							
Ukraine							

<sup>1</sup> Columns in dark green indicate direct or indirect democracy promotion efforts.

**Table 3.2: Priority sectors of Poland's policy in the EN Countries within the MDCP 2012-2015 framework.**

Similarly, in the subsequent programme the EN region was explicitly singled out as the only individual focus region. All other focus countries were a mix of states from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (p.14). However, one key difference with respect to the previous programme was the explicit focus on Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine within the EN region instead of all EN countries. As the programme notes: "compared to the previous multiannual programme, the Multiannual Programme for 2016–2020 has a reduced number of priority countries and of thematic priorities" (MDCP, 2016: 8). Despite a narrower focus within the EN, the four countries accounted for one third of the programme's geographical focus countries in total (p.14). The main reason for this adjustment related to "higher than before efficiency and impact of the Polish Development Cooperation within the financial and organisational measures available" (p.14). Within each priority country, the document applies different weights to each aspect. Table 3.3 shows the way the 2016-2020 multiannual programme outlines these aspects per priority country.

Priority sectors of Poland's policy in the EaP Countries within the MDCP 2016-2021 framework				
Country	Good governance <sup>1</sup>	Human capital <sup>1</sup>	Entrepreneurs and the private sector <sup>1</sup>	Agriculture and rural development
Belarus				
Georgia				
Moldova				
Ukraine				

*Includes actions that support democracy directly or may be linked to democracy initiatives indirectly.*

**Table 3.3: Priority sectors of Poland's policy in the EN Countries within the MDCP 2016-2021 framework.**

Good governance was a cross-cutting theme for all four countries, but the level of support varied. For instance, in the case of Ukraine good governance covers a vast array of in total 7 subgoals, including fighting corruption or "improved engagement of the civic society to support reforms" (p.23). On the other hand, in Belarus, there are just two subgoals in the good governance realm, namely "improving public access to reliable and objective information" as well as "supporting regional development" (p.18).

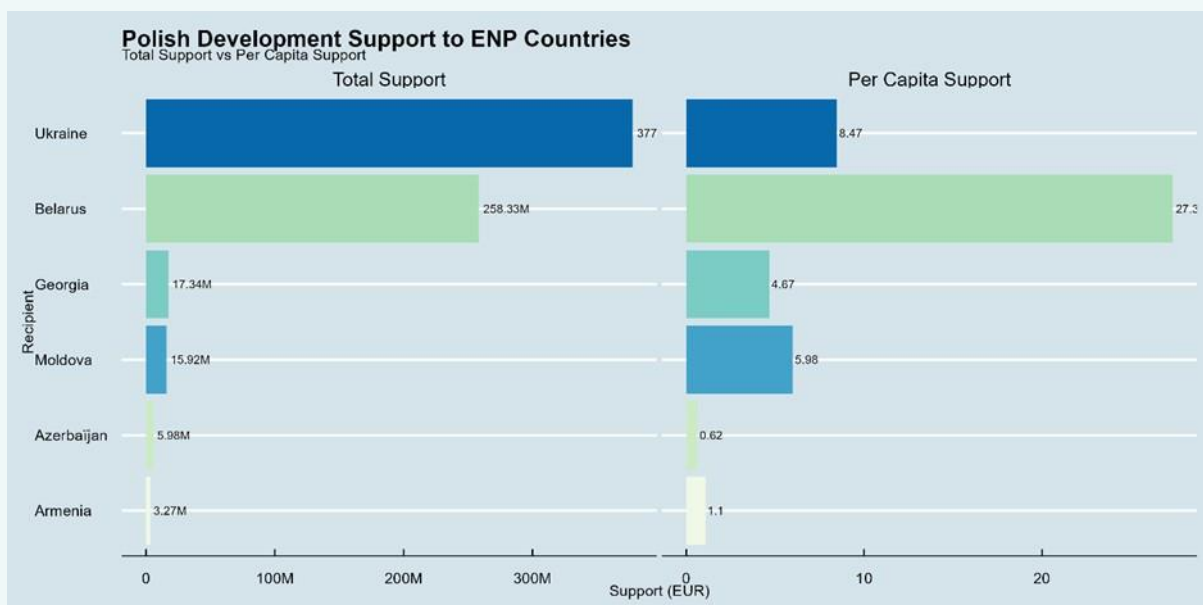
The current programme, which covers the years 2021-2030, and therefore falls largely out of scope for this study, is titled "Solidarity for Development" (MDCP 2021). It, once again, centres its actions around EU priorities and the Agenda 2030 goals (p. 19). The latter are even used to present Poland's thematic development cooperation priorities. The first priority stated is SDG 16, that is, "peace, justice and strong institutions" (p.22). The programme therefore denotes "strong and stable institutions, following good governance principles, respecting human rights, and granting citizens equal opportunities to influence the decisions that affect them stand a chance to achieve lasting and sustainable development" as the first

priority area of Polish development cooperation (p. 22). However, in contrast to previous multiannual programmes there is no group of preselected focus countries for the duration of the entire programme. Instead, based on a group of criteria, including the partner’s relevance for the “security of Poland, and potential benefits of cooperation”, a group of ten countries was selected in the “Development Cooperation Plan for 2021” and this selection will be reviewed in the plans for 2024 and 2027 respectively (p.20). This change can be attributed not least to the sole length of the current multiannual programme, running for 10 years as compared to only 5 and 4 of the previous programmes.

### 3.2.2.1 Assess the overall spending structure of the aid

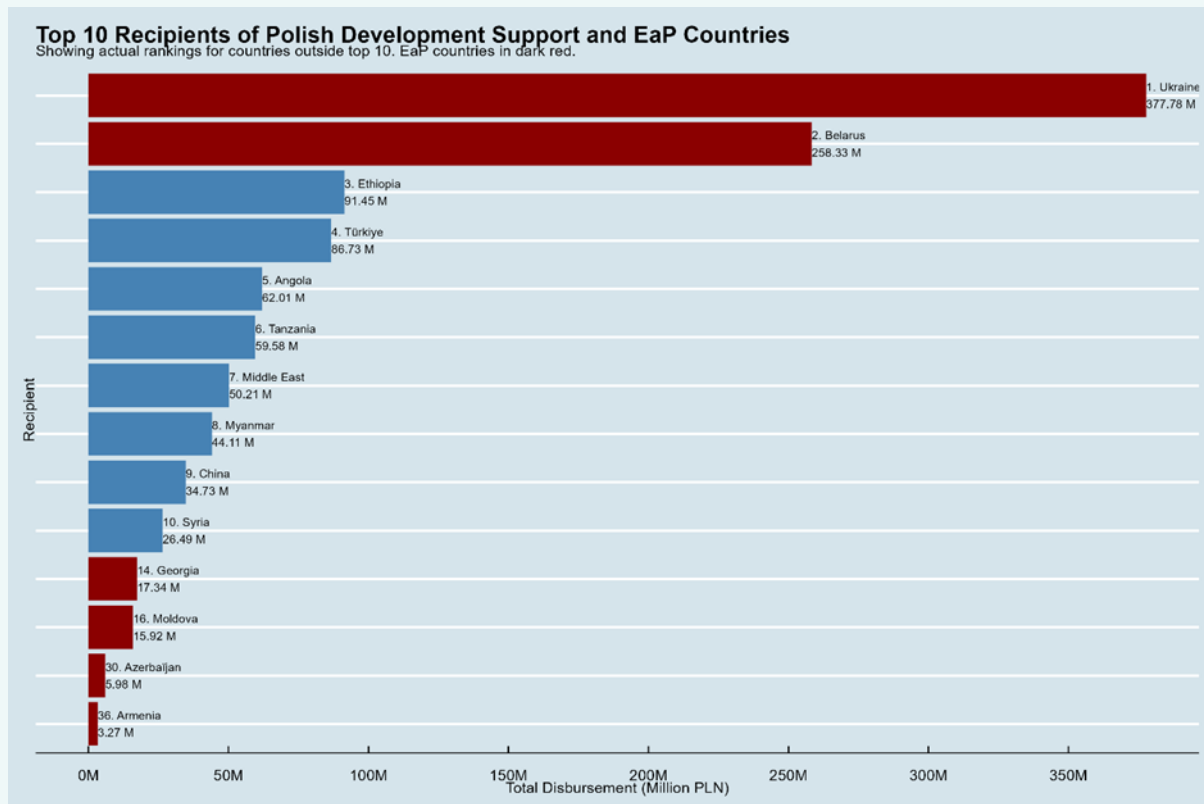
The relative importance of democracy themes in bilateral aid is clearly visible. The 2012-2015 programme lays out that no less than 70% of the aid allocated to the EN in that period must be allocated to the two priority areas at that time, that is, democracy and transformation (MDCP 2012, 9). At the same time, it stipulates that around 60% of total bilateral aid provided by Poland in this period was foreseen for the EN countries, highlighting the importance of democracy in the region for Poland. This is also visible as the minimum spending amount covering democracy and transformation stands at 60% in all other world regions (MDCP 2012, 9).

Within the EN, there are significant differences with respect to how much aid is allocated to each country. This is presented in Figure 3.6, which shows the strong geographical determinant in the allocation of bilateral aid. In total, between 2013 and 2021, 93% of total bilateral aid to the EN countries was provided for Ukraine and Belarus. Also in per capita terms, Belarus and Ukraine are clearly leading, although the former is standing out with having received roughly 3.5 times more than Ukraine according to the same metric, which is visible in Figure 3.6.



**Figure 3.6: Polish ODA Disbursements to the EN countries between 2013 and 2021. All figures in Euro.**

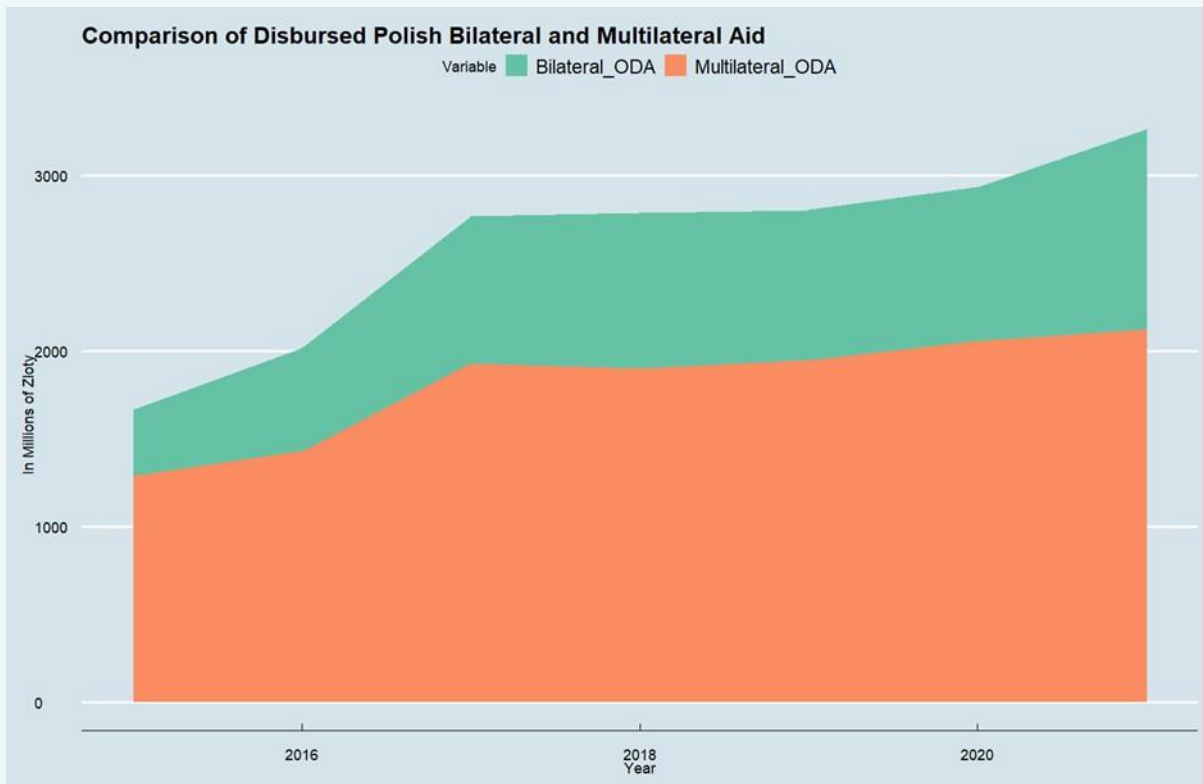
The same distribution is also visible when assessing total bilateral development aid contributions, as shown in Figure 3.7 below. With the EN countries indicated in dark red, between 2013 and 2021, the geographical breakdown of the top 10 Polish aid recipients shows that only Ukraine and Belarus fall in this group. Despite being designated as priority countries as well, Georgia and Moldova are placed in 13th and 15th position respectively in terms of absolute bilateral aid received from Poland. Azerbaijan and Armenia, countries within the EN group that did not enjoy a formal priority status since 2016, only come in 29th and 35th position.



**Figure 3.7: Top 10 Polish aid recipient countries between 2013 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank.**

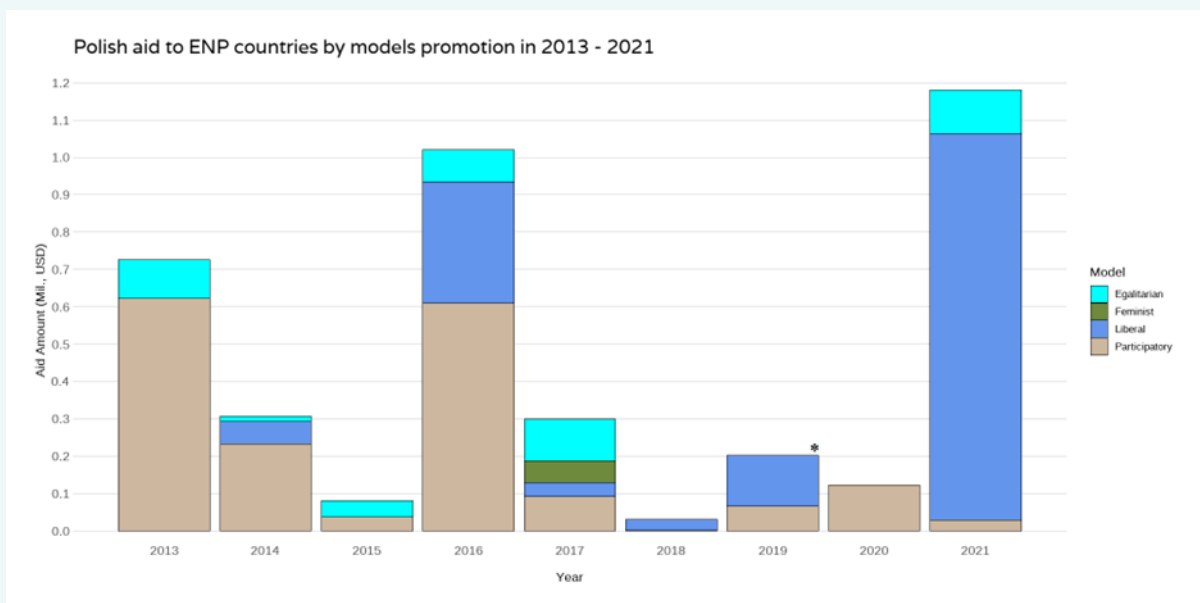
It can be assumed that the explicit incorporation of security aspects into the decision of bilateral aid provisions, as outlined in the MDCPs, goes a long way in explaining this situation. As direct neighbours of Poland, both Ukraine and Belarus not only have a bigger relevance to Warsaw in terms of security, but there are also more trade linkages as well as significant Polish minorities in the border regions with these countries.

However, it is worth noting that for Poland bilateral development assistance covers a much smaller share than assistance channelled through multilateral organisations. As such, the 2021-2022 period saw roughly 23% of development funds allocated to the Department of Development Cooperation (DDC) (OECD 2023). Noteworthy, 92% of multilateral development assistance money is channelled through the EU, 4% through the UN, 3% through the World Bank, and 1% through the Council of Europe). Figure 3.8 shows that the dominance of multilateral over bilateral aid is a general trend in Poland's development policy.



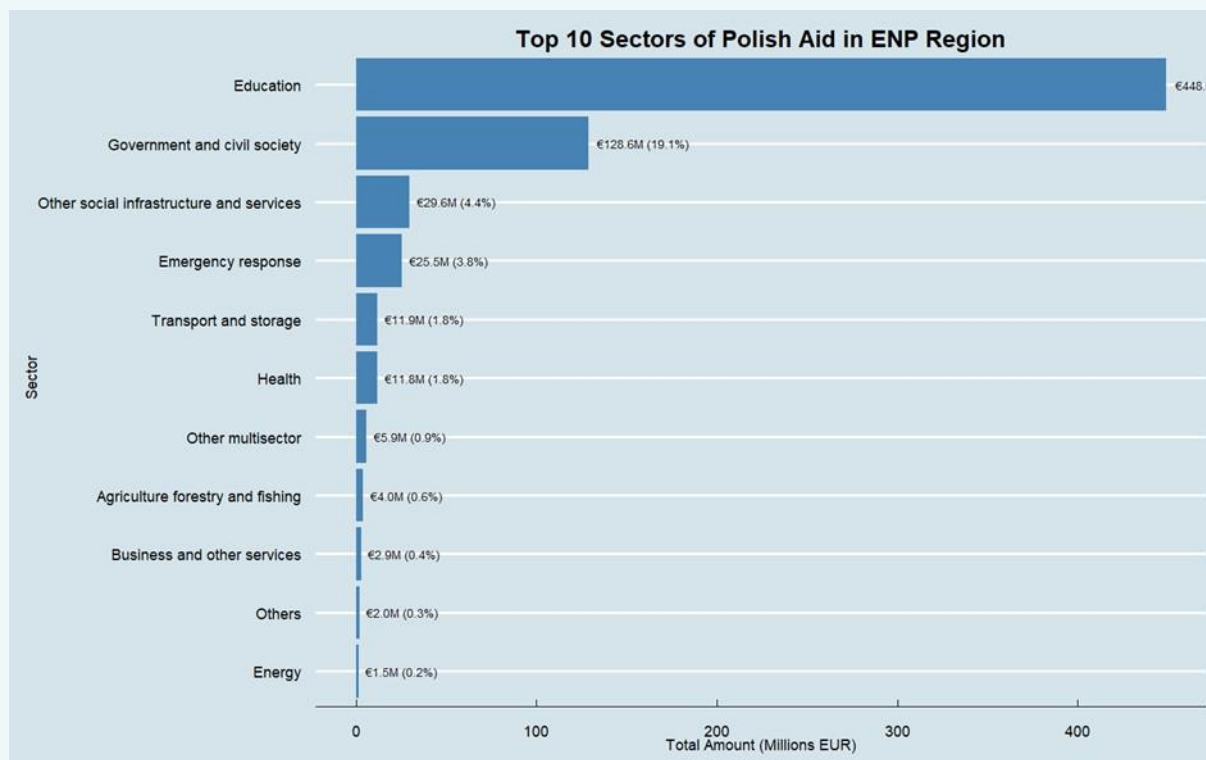
**Figure 3.8: Polish Bilateral and Multilateral ODA between 2015 and 2021. All values in millions of PLN.**

The models of democracy promotion, which are laid out in Figure 3.9, show considerable variation both across years and between different models for Poland's aid to EN countries from 2013 to 2021. A notable feature is the substantial spike in aid during 2016, with the Participatory model receiving particularly large attention. The Liberal model becomes increasingly prominent in later years, especially in 2021, where it dominates the aid allocation. The Egalitarian model, while often receiving smaller amounts, maintains a consistent presence throughout most of the timeframe. The Feminist model appears sporadically, with a small but noticeable contribution in 2017. This diversity in democracy promotion models suggests that Poland has employed a multifaceted and adaptable approach in its engagement with EN countries. The graph illustrates a shift in focus over time, from an initial emphasis on participatory democracy to a later preference for liberal democratic models, while maintaining some commitment to egalitarian principles throughout the period.



**Figure 3.9: Polish aid to EN countries by democracy promotion models.**

Assessing the specific sectors on which Polish bilateral aid is focused, a clear dominance of education is noticeable, as presented in Figure 3.10. Almost half of total aid in the period between 2013 and 2021 is spent on projects relating to that sector. This fits the usual trend of emphasising “global education” as one of the key themes of Polish development assistance and the direct linkage of scholarship and other education programmes to broader democracy promotion objectives, not least in the ENP region (see Section 3). The second biggest sectoral focus, making up roughly 15%, is on government and civil society support activities, being therefore also clearly connected to democracy support.



**Figure 3.10: Sectoral allocation of total Polish bilateral aid between 2013 and 2021.**

### 3.2.2.2 Specific Projects

Looking at specific projects in the democracy promotion domain, a surprising focus on Belarus is retrieved. For instance, based on Vlaseno and Freyburg (2024), no specific democracy-promotion related project in Azerbaijan can be found, and only a single one in the entire period in Armenia, which focused on “improving the conditions of probation service facilities in Armenia” and was carried out in 2021. As part of this project, “The State Probation Service’s regional offices have been capitally renovated, rehabilitation program spaces have been created, separate psychological room was designed for the individual psychological works with beneficiaries”, which, as a result, is expected to result in “decreasing crime rates” (Government of Poland 2021a).

In contrast, in Belarus in 2019 alone, financial support worth 10.603 million USD was provided to Belsat, which is “the only TV station that provides the Belarusians with reliable news free from propaganda” (Belsat 2024) considering the control of the media in Belarus. The single sum of support in 2019 already accounted for over three quarters of Poland’s entire direct democracy support actions in the ENP in the 2013-2021 period (Vlasenko and Freyburg 2024). This shows the significant role that this television station plays for Poland’s democracy support actions. As the academic literature notes, it “serves also as a laboratory of soft power impact on an authoritarian system. Belsat proves the significance of the dissemination of European basic values such as democracy and freedom of the press eastwards” (Ociepka 2016, 111).

Moreover, project grants to various organisations account for the second biggest chunk of Polish democracy support to Belarus. The country is part of the program for “open grant competitions for NGOs’ initiatives for supporting democracy in selected countries” (Solidarity Fund 2021). Most of these grants are provided through the Solidarity Fund, which notes in its official report that “between 2012 and 2017, more than one hundred projects were carried out and funded for the country” (ibid.). It highlights such issues as “support for independent media [...] independent educational institutions, initiatives of local organisations and communities aimed at developing civil society [and] strengthening Belarusian national identity and language” (ibid.)

In Georgia, Poland has focused on a variety of projects. Noteworthy, in 2017 it set up for \$0.058 million a Crisis Centre for SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence) Victims in Tsaishi (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2019). Moreover, it also created a Tourist and Education Centre in Akhmeta in 2021 for \$0.031 million. The Centre “actively promotes the region and its assets. It is also a place where local young people (both Georgians and representatives of the Chechen minority) will have the opportunity to take part in training and workshops organised periodically to improve their professional skills.” (Government of Poland 2022). In addition to this, Poland carried out an Academy of Local Leaders in Kazbegi in 2015, through which it “familiarise[d] young people with the purpose of a youth council and the activities they can undertake. An important part of the meetings was to increase the participants’ knowledge of project planning and to come up with and plan their own activities” (Solidarity Fund 2015).

Also in Moldova, several concrete projects in the domain of democracy promotion domain, and closely related areas, were supported. For instance, in 2013 a programme focusing on the “preparation of Moldovan local communities for effective absorption of funds from EU cross-border cooperation programs” was set up by the Polish MFA, which “provided training to 50 representatives of local public authorities and NGOs. They participated in various training programmes and study visits and were helped to prepare 8 projects that were submitted for financing” (IPN Press Agency 2014).

A significant emphasis was also put on the Information Centre in Moldova, which is outlined in Chapter 3 as one of the explicit “flagship projects”. Moreover, Poland also set up a Centre for Development and Entrepreneurship Poland-Moldova in Chisinau in 2018, which provides “training and conference space and kitchen/reception facilities, as well as appropriate technical equipment for the launch of training and consultancy activities for Polish and Moldovan business representatives” (Government of Poland 2019a). The Solidarity Fund also supports rural areas in Moldova since 2017, creating so-called “Local Action Groups (...) bringing together local government officials, entrepreneurs and active residents of municipalities” (Solidarity Fund 2021).

In Ukraine, a relatively huge emphasis was put on decentralisation reform and strengthening local governance. From 2013 onwards, almost every year a project focused on that issue. As such, Poland had a programme called “implementation of the participatory strategic planning model in the municipalities of central-northern and western Ukraine”, which was carried out in 20 hromadas around Ukraine (Government of Poland 2019b). In 2018, a special “decentralisation in practice” forum was held in Lviv, organised by Poland that “aimed at strengthening the combined hromada (OTH) in the Khmelnytsky, Chernivtsi, Zaporizhzhya and Cherkasy regions. It envisaged an exchange of experience between the leaders of the new OTH in the management of educational and medical facilities, municipal economy and budget construction and management” (Government of Poland 2018a). The focus on the decentralisation reform and the functioning of hromadas was already singled out as one of the top priorities of Poland’s 2016 report on aid to Ukraine (Government of Poland 2016). Some other initiatives focused on the inclusion of displaced people, such as that of the Crimean Tatars, for which Poland provided support for the Centre for Social Integration of Crimean Tatars in Drohobych in 2018 (Government of Poland 2018b). In 2019, Poland carried out education activities in Eastern Ukraine for social workers, which sought to increase “the capacity of staff in social institutions through the provision of training to enable them to deal with the current crisis situation” (Government of Poland 2019c). However, the bulk share of aid was generally related to scholarship programmes, which are elaborated in part 3 of this chapter.

### 3.2.2.3 Strategic interests driving aid allocation, including political, economic, and security interests.

The literature has stipulated that “the CEECs are seeking to influence EU development policy to fit their own foreign policy priorities”, which also covers ODA “to achieve broader foreign and security policy aims” (Lightfoot 2010, 341). As official documents lay out, in Poland, outgoing ODA has a strong internal dimension. As one document notes: “Its (of Polish aid) purpose is to build a stable international environment for Poland, improve the country’s security, strengthen its international standing and build its brand. Its actions also strengthen Poland’s presence in the Partner States and contribute to building relations with them” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2021, 12). Clearly the rationale of ODA follows an in-out logic, in which Polish interests are supposed to be promoted through the provision of development assistance. This is also visible in the selection of geographic focus countries. The second MDCP, running between 2016 and 2020, included a reduced list of priority countries within the EN, removing Armenia and Azerbaijan from it. This was done, as the official document reads, “on the basis of five criteria (development needs, implementation of development cooperation, bilateral cooperation, cohesion with EU measures and security)” (MDCP 2018, 14). Visibly, security plays an explicit role in Poland’s ODA. This has also been noted in the literature, whereas:

*Poland’s key attitudes and norms underpinning its security and defence policy, including supporting self-determination of other countries, the desire to be seen as a reliable ally and the emphasis on regional security can be identified within the country’s ODA (Chappell, 2021, 249).*

However, whilst the allocation of aid clearly follows these considerations, bilateral ODA, or even development policy in general, has been described as being a “‘niche’ policy area, with limited awareness and understanding across the government” (OECD 2023). This is also visible in the relation between bilateral and multilateral aid that Poland provides, with the latter being clearly more dominant. As such, bilateral ODA follows the logic of strategic security interests, but it is not a particularly pronounced policy area in the government itself. This has also led to missed opportunities for the creation of synergy effects as “the absence of a broader understanding of development assistance in the MFA and a strategic vision for how development co-operation allocations link to Poland’s other foreign policy objectives limits the scope for a joined-up effort including at the country level.” (OECD 2023).

### 3.2.3 Implementation and Partnerships

Whilst the MDCP lays out the priorities for the years to come, the budgeting and exact planning of ODA happens on a year-to-year basis, which has drawn some criticism. In particular, the fact that funds are usually distributed through yearly Call for Proposals, whereas the “DDC selects a list of projects that are then approved by the State Secretary [...] consistently late announcement of calls and slow decision making have led to the late disbursement of funds by the MFA in recent years. This leaves partners with less than six – and sometimes only three – months to implement projects and report, undermining the scope of the results that can be achieved.” (OECD 2023).

One of the “key implementing actors within the Polish Aid system” is the Solidarity Fund (OECD 2023). It was set up in 1997 and aims at “providing support in democratic transition to societies, and by promoting respect for human rights worldwide” (Government of Poland. N.d.a). This explicit thematic focus was described as “unique and highly valued by partners at the country level” (OECD 2023). Its focus is on the four EN countries Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, and it operates through three offices in the latter three countries, where local staff play a significant role (OECD 2023). It runs all bilateral aid provided through “Call for Proposals” of the six EN countries. The fund provides “advice at the legislative level, provision of know-how, and the implementation of specific solutions at the local level, in cooperation with partner local governments (hromadas)” (Government of Poland. N.d.b). This symbolises the strong grassroots character of the fund.

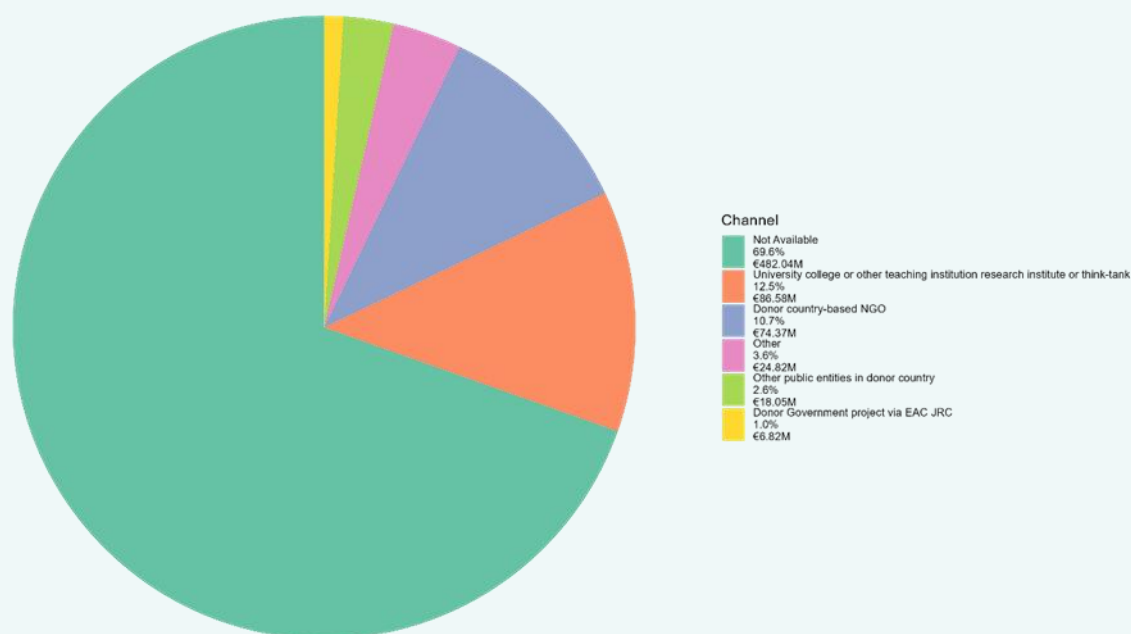
One of the pilot projects of the funds, which served as a blueprint for similar initiatives in other countries and has, simultaneously, been described as one of the “flagship projects” of Polish development assistance in general is the Information Center for Local Authorities in Ialoveni, Moldova (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2019). It “aims at supporting Moldovan local authorities, NGOs, and initiative groups in their actions to strengthen local democracy, in particular in absorbing assistance funds and establishing partnerships with institutions from Poland and other EU Member States” (MDCP, 2018, 16).

The second flagship project as laid out by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself are a range of stipend programmes. These contribute to the high level of education-related expenditures, as laid out in the sectoral expenditure graph on Poland’s bilateral development aid in Figure 4. In many years, these stipends made up the majority of used ODA funds (OECD 2023). The idea behind it is to “enable foreign students to gain education and skills that they may later use to improve the living conditions in their countries” (MDCP 2018: 16). In terms of student numbers, Ukraine and Belarus make up the by far biggest part of scholarship recipients. As the figures of the MFA show for the year 2016/2017, out of 38.974 students from the EN countries, 32.882 were Ukrainians, 5.143 Belarusians, 359 Georgians, 302 Azerbaijanis, 151 Moldovans, and 137 Armenians (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2019). The student numbers therefore roughly mirror the geographic proximity of their countries to Poland. It is worth noting that these are just the figures of the total student body and that not all these students receive scholarships. For instance, the main scholarship programme as put forwards by the MFA in strategic documents, the Stefan Banach Programme, has only given out 19 scholarships for Ukrainians and 16 for Azeris in 2021 (Science in Poland 2021).

The third flagship initiative is the Public Administration Academy of the Eastern Partnership. It was founded in 2012 and its designated goal is “to train a professional cadre of civil servants providing the expert resource necessary in order to implement reforms in Eastern Partnership states” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2021, 4). It therefore has a clear public service focus, whereas up until 2020, over 600 civil servants from the EN countries were trained.

This follows the general logic of Poland’s ODA, which is characterized by a symmetrical nature, that is, mostly focusing on transnational partnerships within the public sector. The share of this type of aid stood at over 80% in the period between 2020 and 2021 (OECD 2023). However, even with its public sector focus, Polish ODA has been criticised as being “implemented in silos of small projects and disconnected from Poland’s often significant high-level political dialogue in its partner countries” (OECD 2023). Despite the strong focus on the public sector, CSOs play a role in Poland’s ODA. However, these “partnerships are constrained by declining funding, predictability and trust” (OECD 2023). The share of CSOs in receiving direct funding from Poland’s ODA was usually around 10% and has in recent years decreased after reaching its peak in 2018 (OECD, 2023). The distribution of Aid channels in the EN region is, however, difficult to assess, as the majority of channels are not designated specifically, as visible in Figure 3.11. Yet, by looking at the entire 2013-2021 period, 10.7% of aid was channelled through NGOs.

Distribution of Aid Channels of Polish ODA in the ENP Region



**Figure 3.11: Distribution of ODA through various channels between 2013 and 2021.**

Poland's development assistance, particularly in its engagement with civil society organisations and implementation of small-scale projects, has therefore encountered challenges that limit its efficacy and cohesion with broader foreign policy aims. The approach has often been fragmented, lacking in strategic integration and synergy with Poland's significant political engagements in partner countries. Additionally, the decreasing predictability of funding and diminishing trust have further constrained the potential for effective partnerships with CSOs.

### 3.2.4 Conclusion

Poland's development cooperation strategy is grounded in the Development Cooperation Act of 2011, which establishes a clear legal and policy framework for the country's aid efforts. This framework emphasises development aid, humanitarian aid, and global education, with a specific focus on promoting democracy, civil society, and economic development. The strategic choice to prioritise the eastern neighbourhood countries reflects Poland's geopolitical, economic, and security interests, driven by a desire to share its experience of democratic and economic transitions to support reforms in these nations.

The analysis reveals that multilateral development assistance is favoured over bilateral aid, indicating particularly a preference for channelling funds through the EU. However, bilateral aid still plays a role, especially for targeted support within the EN region. Education stands out as a dominant sector within bilateral aid, receiving a significant portion of the total aid allocation. This focus on education is aimed at laying a foundation for long-term societal transformation and development in partner countries.

Poland's aid strategy shows a clear geographic focus, with Ukraine and Belarus identified as the primary recipients of bilateral aid within the EN region. This focus is based on their strategic importance to Poland and is evident in the allocation of resources and the design of specific aid projects that support these countries and/or its citizens. On the other hand, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan hold a more peripheral position in Poland's bilateral development aid strategy, receiving less attention and funding. Notably, despite being continuously designated as priority countries, both Moldova and Georgia do not

make it into the list of Poland's top 10 development aid recipients. This overall allocation reflects a deliberate prioritisation based on Poland's strategic interests, not least geographic proximity, and the potential impact of its aid efforts on them.

## 3.3 Estonia

### 3.3.1 Policy Framework and Objectives

Despite its seemingly small size, after regaining independence and especially joining the EU in 2004, Estonia was able to write a success story thanks to high rates of economic growth and digital services, becoming one of the donor countries that contribute to global stability and sustainable development at the international level.

Taking into account the experience of its systemic reforms, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, keeping the focus on the need to support the most vulnerable groups of the partner countries with transition economies, Estonia directs its external aid towards the implementation of two main objectives: development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

The legal foundation for Estonia's development assistance is the government regulation "Conditions and Procedures for Providing Development and Humanitarian Aid" (Government of the Republic of Estonia 2021), which came into force at the beginning of 2022. The regulation itself is based on Paragraph 11 of Article 8.1 of the Foreign Relations Act (2006), according to which the Estonian Government shall "approve and submit to the Riigikogu (Parliament of Estonia) the principles of development co-operation and humanitarian aid, establish by a regulation the conditions and procedure for the provision of development assistance and humanitarian aid" (Parliament of Estonia 2006).

When developing the framework document, the Estonian Government took into account the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (European External Action Service 2016, 9), according to which the EU declares resilience a priority within and beyond the ENP and takes responsibility for supporting various pathways of increasing resilience, paying particular attention to the most critical governmental, economic, societal, and energy fragility. It is not at all surprising that, according to the above-mentioned government regulation, "Estonian development cooperation projects shall apply to humanitarian aid and development cooperation and integration projects for conflict prevention that increase the target country's resilience" (Article 1.3). "Development cooperation is financial or material assistance directly related to the achievement of national or international development goals, aimed at building the capacity of a developing country" (Article 2). Meanwhile, "humanitarian aid is urgent financial or material aid, the purpose of which is to reduce human suffering caused by natural or human activities, as well as assistance aimed at increasing preparedness to respond to them" (Article 2) in developing countries (Article 6.4) (Government of the Republic of Estonia 2021).

Thus, considering the inextricable link between development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, Estonia sets short-term and long-term foreign assistance goals with a set of innovative solutions and preventive measures. In particular, Estonia's humanitarian assistance serves as a component of a short-term process aimed at quickly overcoming the consequences of natural or man-made disasters in transition economies, while development cooperation is intended to be a much longer-term process, since it can be influenced by both political and socio-economic factors.

Responsibility for organising Estonian foreign aid is shared by two institutions — the Department for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Estonian Centre for International Development (EstDev). As a policymaking body, the Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid sets policy for the official foreign assistance programme and develops strategies and action plans, while the EstDev is responsible for managing and implementing Estonia's international development cooperation and humanitarian aid integration projects. Notably, EstDev was created in 2021 as a result of the development cooperation reform and aims to increase the impact and effectiveness of Estonia's foreign aid, as well as participation in international assistance programmes and building strong connections between multiple stakeholders and beneficiaries. Moreover, unlike the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which provides development cooperation subsidies, the maximum amount of which is €15,000 per project (Article 4.2) and is responsible for impact assessments across the entire field, EstDev's goal is to increase the share of foreign funding in order to better link development cooperation to the economic interests of Estonia.

In addition to defining the basic framework for development cooperation, the government decree also stipulates that this cooperation shall be carried out on the basis of programmes and country strategies (Article 4.4).

As a donor country, Estonia first adopted a foreign aid policy in 1998, long before joining the EU. Moreover, a year later, in 1999, Estonia outlined the principles of development cooperation, which were approved in an updated version by the Riigikogu (Parliament of Estonia) in 2003, declaring development cooperation an integral part of Estonia's foreign policy. However, the primacy of the principles of transparency and effectiveness, as well as reforms in the distribution of financial resources, became possible only in 2006, when Estonia's Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2006–2010 was adopted. In accordance with the strategic document, the main objectives were “the development of human potential through education, especially women and children; the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples; the promotion of democracy through the development of good governance, civil society, and the media, use of information and communications technologies (ICT); as well as environmentally sustainable development” (Kool 2007, 3-4). Although this strategy partly lost its relevance after a short time, it identified a number of problems that forced the Estonian government to make corresponding changes at the national level, especially in the legislative field. In particular, following the adoption of Regulation No. 8 “Conditions and Procedure for the Provision of Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid” (Government 2010), the mandate and competencies of the Development Cooperation Committee were clarified (Article 4), as well as macro-financing and co-financing of the European Commission's projects became possible (Article 11).

All subsequent strategies have been significantly influenced by the first strategy. Thus, in the strategies for 2011–2015 and 2016–2020, contributing to the eradication of global poverty was recognized as the overall goal of Estonia's development cooperation. But while the Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2011-2015 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2011, 3-6) “aimed to achieve the 8 UN MDGs and identified all EU ENP countries and Afghanistan as priority partner countries,” the Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2016-2020 made reference to the SDGs adopted at the 2015 UN Summit with a certain emphasis on three interconnected dimensions: “social affairs, economy, and environment” and recognised Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine as priority partners with a country strategy, excluding Armenia and Azerbaijan from the list. However, in its strategy for 2016–2020, Estonia recognised that flexibility is also important for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, demonstrating its readiness to continue long-term cooperation with Afghanistan and Belarus (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2016, 4-5; 12).

### 3.3.2 Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus

Even before the formation of the EU's Eastern Partnership, the countries of Eastern Europe, which are close geographically, in their development visions and priorities, have always been the focus of Estonian foreign policy. For instance, the main beneficiaries of Estonia's foreign assistance in 2006–2010 were Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Thus, in order to achieve the strategic sub-goal of supporting peace, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, a wide variety of projects were carried out with Estonian financial support, including the creation of a stenotype recording system in the Georgian Parliament; organisation of elections and IT systems in Georgia; the counselling of the Tax Inspectorate of Moldova in reforming tax administration; the counselling of Georgian, Moldovan, and Ukrainian police forces in combating vehicle contraband. The lion's share of bilateral development cooperation fell to Georgia. In 2006–2009, Georgia received more aid (€1.85 million) than Ukraine (€0.96 million) and Moldova (€0.83 million) combined (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2011, 13-17).

The assistance allocated to Georgia becomes more visible if a proportional comparison is made of the total amount allocated for development cooperation projects (over €2.94 million) and the beneficiaries, since Afghanistan, Palestine, Kosovo, and Albania also received assistance from Estonia in 2006–2010. Moreover, in terms of overcoming the consequences of a conflict, Estonia demonstrated the fastest and most effective response right after the Russo-Georgian war of 2008, sending sappers from the Estonian Rescue Board to the post-conflict region (Idem, 13-14).

In fact, the geography of Estonia's foreign aid in 2006–2010 was highly dispersed and did not have a unified regional perception. Significant changes in the security and foreign policy of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) took place in January 2011, when the Estonian Eastern Partnership Centre (EIPK) was formed, highlighting the importance of a regional approach and systemic action in the development cooperation strategy. In the new strategy, Estonia planned development cooperation with the EN countries in two directions — supporting the formation of a society with a democratic value system and promoting the organisation of the state based on the best practices of good governance. To achieve all this, Estonia reconfirmed its readiness to continue supporting partner countries in the development of ICT and the need for their successful integration into e-government.

However, the outbreak of another conflict in Eastern Europe in 2014 and the return of full-scale war to Europe forced Estonia to reconsider the structure of its priorities and consolidate resources to address more pressing and vital issues. Although Afghanistan and Belarus remained the target of Estonia's long-term cooperation, almost all financial potential was directed towards supporting Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Suffice it to mention that as a result of the narrowing of the scope of development cooperation between Estonia and Belarus, it was limited to “strengthening civil society, promoting the agenda of continuity of cooperation in the areas of small business, technology, and education” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2016, 12-13). On the contrary, Estonia continued to deepen development cooperation with Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, considering not only the conflict in the region, but also the association agreements signed with the EU in 2014 and the need for their implementation.

Given that Estonia planned to continue development cooperation with Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova in 2016–2020 to promote European integration and reforms, it is not unreasonable to argue that Armenia's exclusion from the list of priority countries was due to its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Although Estonia stated that it accepted the country's responsibility and motivation as a principle of development cooperation to become a priority partner, it was mainly guided by another principle — its own priorities and capabilities. As an argument, it can be noted that the Georgian Dream Party, which had close ties with Russia, took power in 2012, but this did not prevent Georgia from being considered a top-priority country. The same applies to Moldova, which received observer status in the Russia-led EEU in 2017 but remained a priority partner for Estonia. It should be noted that Estonia formulated its response to this disagreement in advance, noting that the choice of priority partners is determined by two factors: “firstly, where the benefit factor and value added by Estonia is the highest and secondly, on the foreign policy goals of Estonia” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2016, 10-11).

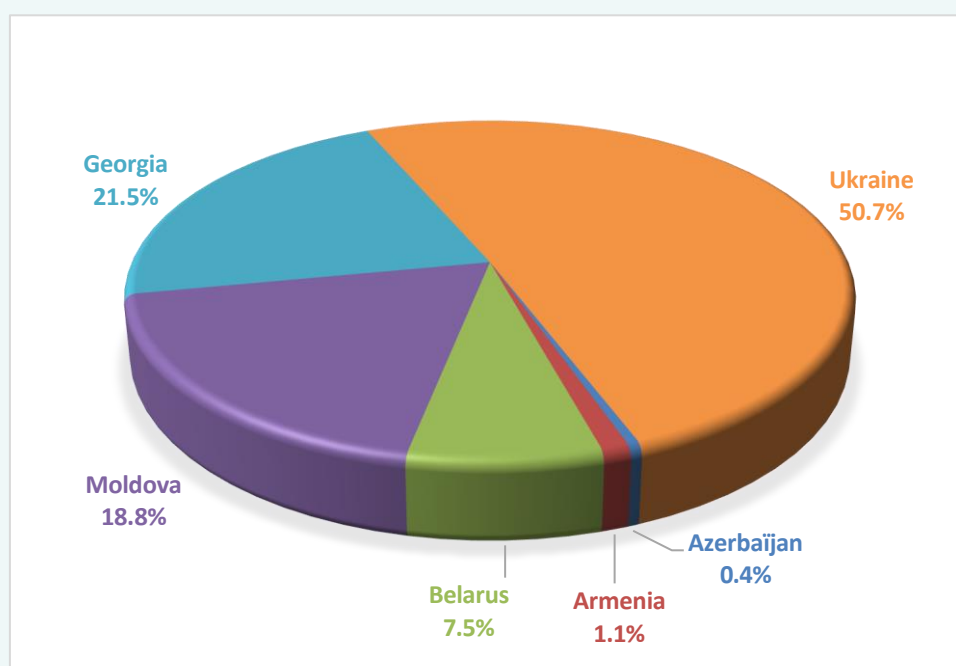
Based on country development cooperation strategies and assisting in the implementation of association agreements, Estonia provided a tailored approach to Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova. In particular, in the case of Georgia, “education, the development of good governance and democracy, and economic and green development were identified as key areas of cooperation” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2016, 11). Within the framework of bilateral development cooperation with Moldova, Estonia paid attention to health care, strengthening democratic government structures, and the empowerment of civil society and rural areas. It is noteworthy that in all areas of cooperation, special emphasis was placed on human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and ICT. In the case of Ukraine, the well-being of Ukrainians and the building of a stable democratic society were set as long-term goals. It is important to note that due to the war, unlike Moldova, Estonia planned both bilateral and multilateral development cooperation with Ukraine (Idem, 12).

In fact, when building bilateral relations with partner countries, Estonia largely refers to its excellent experience in digital transformation. This circumstance is connected not only and not so much with the fact that cooperation in the field of ICT is relatively inexpensive, but with the conviction that, thanks to the development of e-government practices in almost all areas of the public and private sector, Estonian foreign assistance can provide wide institutional coverage and measurable social impact. It is not at all surprising that given Estonia’s support for X-Road data and document holding, mobile-ID, digital signature, digital registries, cyber security, internet-based public services, computerisation of schools, and ICT-related curricula, the NGDO Platform concluded that compared to other Eastern European states, Estonia has been able to both mobilise a relatively large amount of resources for development cooperation and promote a distinctive approach to development thanks to its focus on digital technologies (Zube and Glenn Wells 2017, 17-26).

By becoming a member of the OECD in 2010 and obtaining observer status in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Estonia confirmed its commitment to promoting international development.

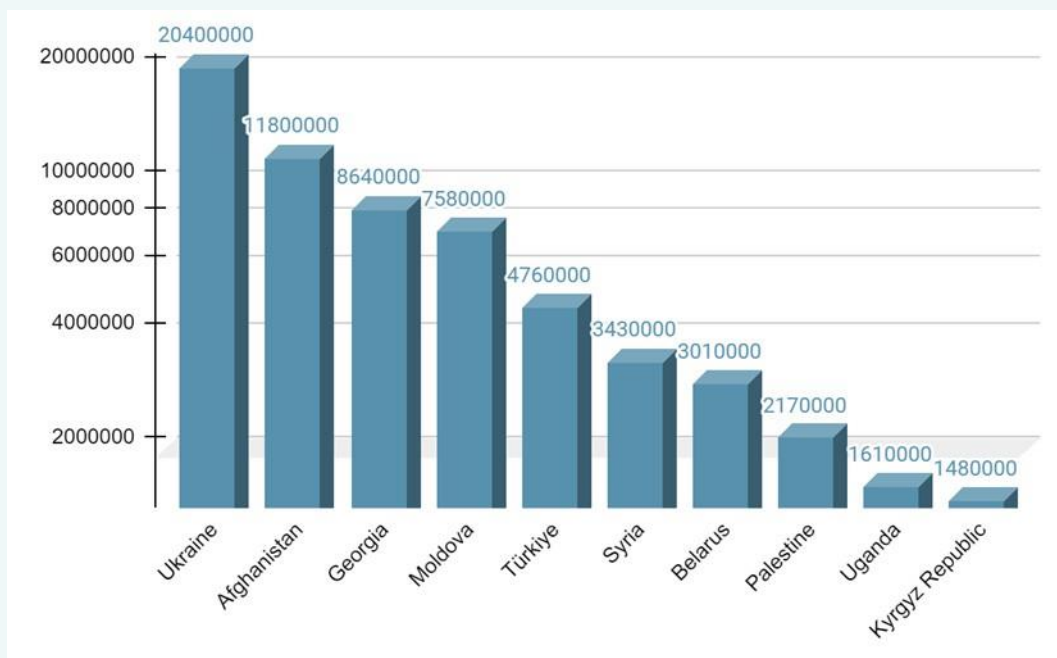
In the period 2006–2020, Estonia provided more than €12 million in development assistance to Georgia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2021a, 17), more than €9 million to Moldova (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2021b, 18), and over €17 million to Ukraine (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2020, 3).

It is noteworthy that more than half of the allocations for the period under review were made between 2014 and 2020. For example, during this period Georgia and Moldova received more than 6 and 5 million euros, respectively. The sharp change in allocations is especially noticeable in the case of Ukraine. As a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war, Estonia provided a total of more than €14 million in development aid to Ukraine between 2014 and 2020. Moreover, although Ukraine as an EN target country was the smallest recipient of Estonian development assistance in 2014, as a result of a fourfold increase in foreign aid, it became the largest beneficiary just a year later, in 2015. The picture is the same in the case of humanitarian aid: if in 2014 Ukraine received assistance from Estonia for €515,000, then in the post-war 2015 the volume of humanitarian aid reached approximately €1,253,000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2020, 14).



**Figure 3.12: Estonian ODA disbursements to the EN countries between 2013 and 2021.**

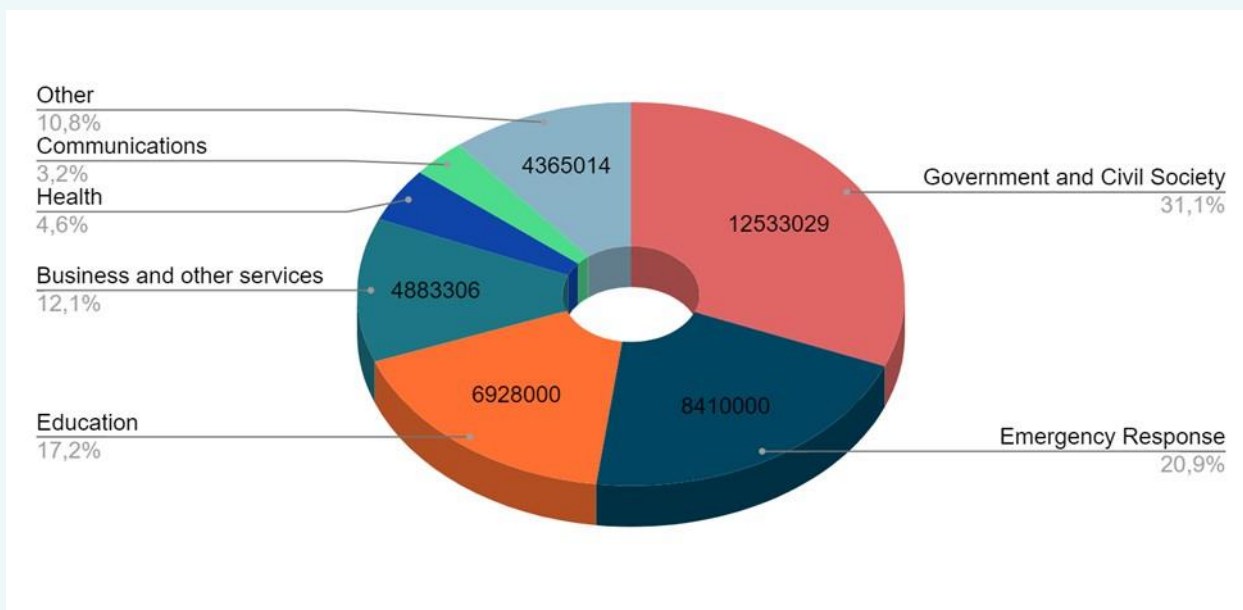
As the assessment of allocations for 2013-2021 shows (Figure 3.12), Moldova is the third largest recipient of Estonian bilateral development assistance. At the same time, unlike Georgia and Ukraine, which have always received multilateral development assistance, Moldova received such aid (about €22,000) only in 2019 as a contribution to the OSCE mission in the framework of parliamentary elections (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2021b, 18). Aid allocated to Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova is also noticeable against the backdrop of total disbursements (Figure 3.13), while aid to Armenia and Azerbaijan does not even account for 2% of all EN allocations.



**Figure 3.13: Top 10 Estonian aid recipient countries between 2013 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank.**

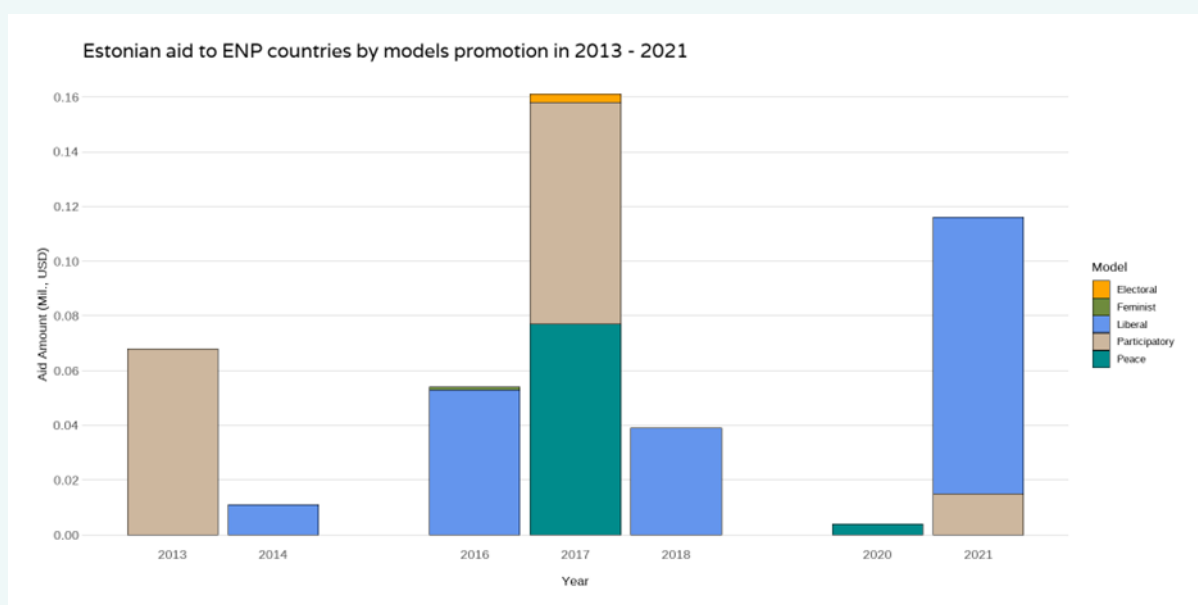
Unlike other Baltic countries, the sectoral distribution of Estonia’s bilateral aid is more proportional. However, the lion’s share has been given to the government and civil society sectors of EN countries, as presented in Figure 3.14. Support for good governance and civil society in the EN countries in 2011-2020 was provided for the implementation of reforms under the Association Agreements with the EU, primarily in the field of e-governance solutions and ICT (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2020, 26). From a strategic point of view, the willingness to support the government and civil society stems from global trends that have found their way into Estonia’s National Security Concept.

In terms of allocations, after the emergency response, the third largest sector is education, which was declared a priority human development sector in the 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 strategies. It is worthy of note that the Estonian development strategy links the development of education to the eradication of poverty. Estonia placed the greatest emphasis on supporting primary and vocational education, as well as ensuring the quality of education through funding programmes aimed at supporting the activities of multilateral organisations in the field of education (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2011, 11–12; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2016, 21–23). Estonia brilliantly combined support for education with its comparative advantage and set a 2020 target of significantly increasing grants for students from developing countries to study predominantly technical and ICT professions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia 2016, 22).



**Figure 3.14: Sectoral distribution of Estonian bilateral aid to the EN region between 2013 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).**

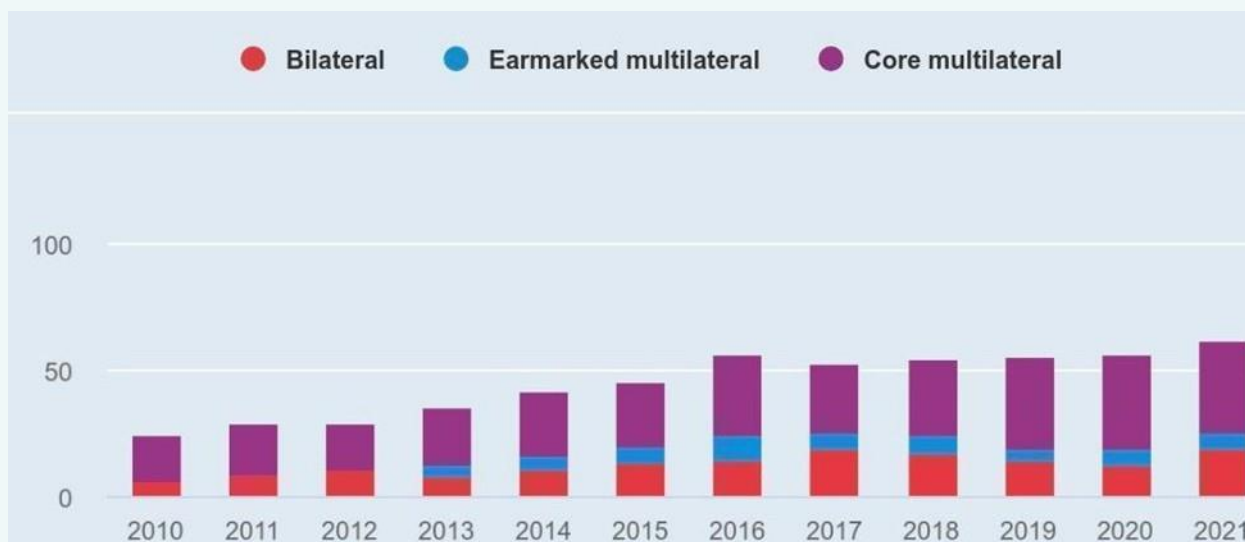
In terms of models of democracy promotion, which are laid out in Figure 3.15 below, variation both across years and between different models for Estonia’s aid to EN countries from 2013 to 2021 are visible. A substantial spike in aid during 2017 is noticeable, with the Peace and Participatory models receiving particularly large attention. The Liberal model has been present throughout most years and appeared four times throughout the assessment period. It became increasingly prominent in later years, especially in 2021, where it dominated the aid allocation. The Participatory model was the second most-frequent one, appearing three times throughout this time. It played a significant role for several years, particularly in 2013 and 2017. The Peace model makes a substantial appearance in 2017 and a smaller one in 2020, indicating periodic focus on conflict resolution or prevention. This diversity in democracy promotion models suggests that Estonia has employed a multifaceted and adaptable approach in its engagement with EN countries. The graph illustrates shifts in focus over time, from an initial emphasis on participatory democracy, through a period of peace-building efforts, to a later preference for liberal democratic models. The sporadic appearance of Electoral and Feminist models in small amounts in 2017 further demonstrates Estonia’s varied approach to democracy promotion in the region.



**Figure 3.15: Estonian aid to EN countries by models of democracy promotion in 2013-2021.**

### 3.3.3 Implementation and Partnerships

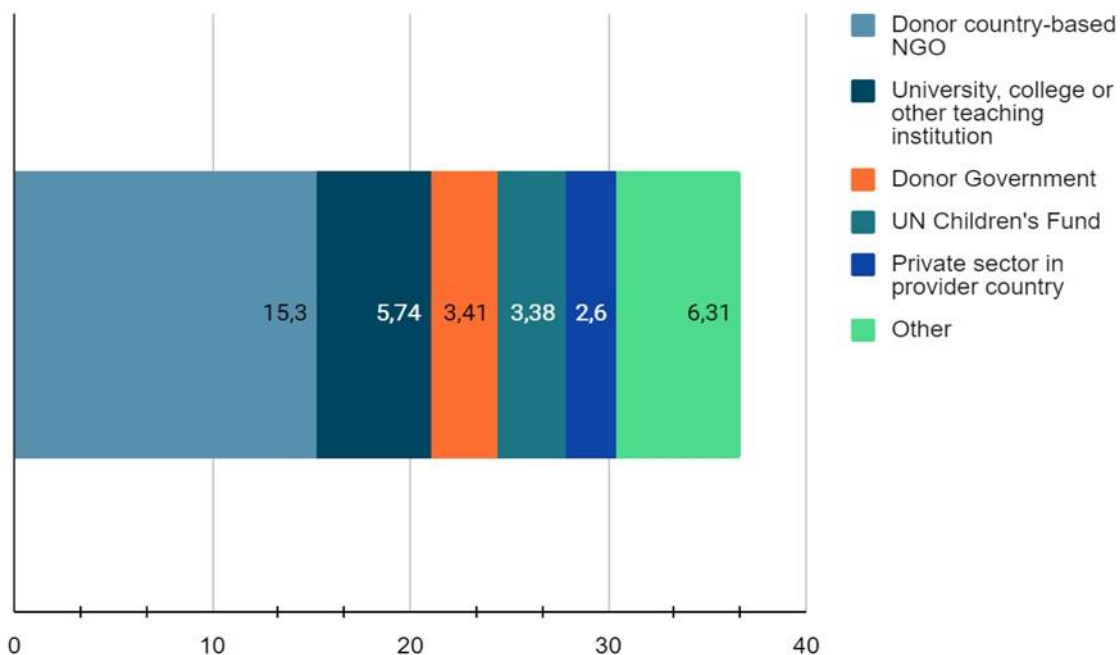
The key actor responsible for the implementation of Estonia’s foreign assistance is the government-funded state agency EstDev. Guided by the values of commitment, professionalism, performance, and cooperation, and striving to become a centre of competence, EstDev develops innovative solutions tailored to the needs of partner countries, in close cooperation with both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Estonian civil society organisations and the expert community of the private sector.



**Figure 3.16: Estonian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024a).**  
All values in millions of USD.

From 2010 to 2021, Figure 3.16 shows a general upward trend in Estonia’s ODA contributions, particularly noticeable from 2013 onwards. Core Multilateral contributions consistently constitute the largest portion of Estonia’s ODA, suggesting a strong commitment to funding through international organizations. Bilateral aid remains relatively smaller and stable throughout the period, indicating a more consistent and possibly targeted approach. Earmarked Multilateral contributions appear minimal but are present, reflecting specific projects or priorities within multilateral frameworks.

As presented in Figure 3.17 the largest portion of aid in the EN region amounting to €15.3 million was channelled through donor country-based NGOs, reflecting Estonia's strong emphasis on civil society involvement. Universities, colleges and other teaching institutions received €5.74 million, highlighting the importance placed on education and knowledge transfer. The Donor Government channel accounted for €3.41 million, while the UN Children’s Fund received €3.38 million. The private sector in the provider country was allocated €2.6 million, and other channels received €6.31 million, showing a diverse approach to implementing ODA across various sectors and stakeholders. This distribution reflects Estonia’s strategic approach to leveraging different actors in its foreign assistance efforts, with a particular emphasis on NGOs.



**Figure 3.17: Distribution of aid channels of Estonian ODA in the EN region between 2013 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).**

### 3.3.4 Conclusion

The main approach of Estonian development cooperation and humanitarian aid is based on its strategic choice of resilience and democratic values in which the country focuses on the Eastern Neighbourhood region. Building on its own experience with digital transformation and governance, Estonia has continued to apply these strengths to support systemic reforms in partner countries, putting emphasis more on prospects such as education, good governance and civil society empowerment. This is confirmed by the largest share of aid directed to the government and civil society sectors, which amounts to 31.1%

Even though Estonia compared to other EU members has limited resources, it has kept a very clear vision for main strategic partners such as Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova aligning its aid efforts with both national interests and broader EU strategies. The creation of EstDev in 2021 only deepened Estonia's focus on improving the efficiency of its foreign assistance with the use of innovation and the involvement of various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. On a whole, the political approach to Estonia's foreign assistance is characterized by a balance between humanitarian and development goals to be achieved.

## 3.4 Latvia

### 3.4.1 Policy Framework and Objectives

Since joining the European Union in 2004, Latvia has transformed from a beneficiary country to a donor country, contributing to global development and supporting developing countries within the framework of national and international commitments. The legal basis for Latvian development assistance is the Law on International Assistance, adopted on April 24, 2008. The law, which came into force a month later, has undergone seven amendments, resulting in the removal of sections on the State Development Cooperation Agency and its functions (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia 2020). However, the law continues to play an important role in defining the objectives, scope of application, responsible bodies, and regulating procedures for the approval of the organisation and implementation of Latvian international assistance. Based on the leading experience and guiding principles of international partners (UN, EU, NATO, OSCE, and DAC), Section 2 of the Law sets out the two main purposes of Latvian international assistance. First, the Law states that the main purpose is to provide high-quality and effective international assistance to recipient countries based on transparent planning and implementation, and second, to develop the skills of local implementers of international cooperation projects and facilitate their participation in the projects carried out by external providers of international assistance (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia 2008). Notably, the Law does not apply to Latvia's obligations to make mandatory annual payments to international organisations (Section 3.4), but, more importantly, the Law does not apply to the provision of humanitarian aid, except in cases of voluntary funding (Section 3.5).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia plays a central role in the systematic organisation of international assistance. In particular, the MFA is responsible for coordinating the Development Cooperation Policy Plan, medium-term policy planning documents, procedures for approving the participation of civil experts in international missions or operations, as well as cooperation with external providers to carry out joint activities for the purpose of providing international assistance or delegated cooperation (Section 6).

It is important to note that Latvia has adopted an inclusive policy of organising, coordinating, and targeting its international assistance, meaning that while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the policymaker, many other actors are also involved in the entire decision-making process. From a planning perspective, the Consultative Council has an indispensable role and importance. As its name suggests, this body provides advice at the highest level and brings together parliamentarians, line ministers, CSOs, and social partners under the same roof.

The legal basis for the Consultative Council is the Regulations on the Development Cooperation Policy Consultative Council, issued in accordance with Article 13 of the Law on State Administration Structure (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia 2002). With the involvement of representatives of state institutions and non-governmental partners, the Council, on the one hand, is responsible for strengthening the role of Latvia as a bilateral donor, and on the other hand, seeks to promote public understanding of the goals of development cooperation as part of the EU's wider development cooperation policy. Council meetings are held regularly, and all major policy documents are discussed with its members. The Council has two main functions: to ensure the cooperation of administrative and other institutions in solving problems of development cooperation policy and to provide recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding activities and directions in the field of development cooperation policy (Cabinet of Ministers 2012).

From the point of view of increasing the efficiency of implementation of development cooperation, the legislative changes of 2021 are especially important. In particular, the Law on International Assistance was amended, introducing the concept of an agency (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia 2021), as a result of which the Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA) became the national development cooperation agency. The CFCA is responsible for coordinating development cooperation projects financed by the EU's external action instruments and other foreign providers of international assistance, supporting state and

local authorities and legal entities in the process of developing and submitting development cooperation project proposals (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia 2008).

In fact, following legal and institutional changes, the scope of activities of the Central Finance and Contracting Agency has expanded significantly. Today, the Agency not only promotes the participation of Latvia in large-scale development cooperation projects but also integrates relevant functions into its work, carrying out assessments of the EU pillars. In addition, the Agency creates conditions for intersectoral cooperation and promotes the establishment of partnerships for development cooperation activities (Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation 2023, 9).

Since the global financial crisis has had a significant impact on Latvian international assistance, the goals set in 2006 have remained virtually unchanged for the next period of validity of the new guidelines. Specifically, Latvia has sought to promote its foreign interests by strengthening Latvia's role as a bilateral donor, raising public awareness, and achieving international development goals by fulfilling international commitments (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 9). Guided by a wide range of international obligations and, in particular, the UN Millennium Declaration, Latvia has attempted to achieve the implementation of the UN MDGs, paying particular attention to human rights and human security aspects. This meant that Latvia not only had to deeply integrate external commitments and follow OECD recommendations into its foreign policy and international cooperation but also pay special attention to the individual needs and national development strategies of partner countries. To this end, Latvia adopted two crucial principles that later determined the nature and modus operandi of its development assistance.

First, Latvia accepted the principle that partner countries were directly responsible for the development process, and second, it was considered important to be guided by consideration of the most important horizontal issues of international cooperation, both in the field of development assistance and in the crafting and implementation of foreign policy in general (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 9-10). This policy of cooperation was quite broad and covered areas such as democracy, human rights, including children and indigenous peoples, good governance, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and the fight against HIV/AIDS and other contagious diseases. It is important to note that, based on the European Development Consensus jointly adopted in 2005, in accordance with the 2011–2015 Strategy, Latvia adopted a policy of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral development cooperation, focusing on those areas in which it has a comparative advantage: human rights, democracy, good governance, the rule of law, support for economic and institutional reforms, human development, including broad access to education and training, social cohesion and employment, state fragility and security, including conflict prevention, overcoming crises, and strengthening administrative capacity, etc. (11).

The conclusions adopted by the Council of the European Union in May 2012 closely influenced the further planning of Latvia's development policy and the determination of directions and priorities for activities. By adopting a human rights-based approach, the EU identified two complementary and mutually reinforcing key pillars of its development cooperation: inclusive and sustainable growth and a shared vision of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and good governance (Council of the European Union 2012, 1-2). And, just as importantly, the EU clearly emphasised the need for optimisation policies aimed at targeting resources and achieving tangible and visible results. One of the best arguments to support this assertion is that the EU decided to focus its bilateral development cooperation on a maximum of three sectors in each partner country, as well as take measures to increase private financing (4). Taking into account this new vision of increased efficiency, the Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines for 2016–2020 declared the main objective to contribute to the implementation of the UN SDGs (Agenda 2030) in Latvia's partner countries by promoting poverty eradication programmes, the rule of law, and good governance (Cabinet of Ministers 2016, 6). Notably, in 2016, in order to have a clear roadmap for the promotion of bilateral cooperation, the Latvian MFA developed six action lines to achieve its policy objective and crafted development cooperation policy plans to make the assistance provided more measurable. In particular, Latvia sought to strengthen the competences of developers and implementers of development cooperation, ensuring transparency and raising public awareness. But more importantly, Latvia took

responsibility to provide maximum support for the sustainable development of the eastern neighbourhood through a comprehensive and coordinated approach (Cabinet of Ministers 2016, 4-5).

Since April 2021, the Latvian MFA has been guided by the updated Guidelines. Taking into account the narrowing of regional and global boundaries, positive (79% of respondents to the April 2020 survey positively assessed the objective of Latvia's development cooperation policy) and negative trends (global pandemic, presidential elections in Belarus, and subsequent waves of violence and persecution), Latvia has gone even further (Cabinet of Ministers 2021, 3-4). Starting in 2021, thanks to increased funding, the geography of Latvian development cooperation has expanded significantly. Now, not only Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, and the post-Soviet states of Central Asia but also African countries are considered priorities. It is not at all surprising that the term "geographical priority" has come to be used to refer to target countries. The purpose of development cooperation has not undergone any major changes, but the Guidelines clearly define the thematic priorities of the eastern neighbourhood. Thus, development cooperation with the eastern ENP countries is aimed at implementing the 4 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 8, 13, 16), within the framework of which it is planned to support public administration (including the rule of law and justice, the fight against corruption and development of social organisations, etc.), the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, the development of educational policies, and the inclusion of the climate change agenda in action policies (8-9).

### 3.4.2 Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus

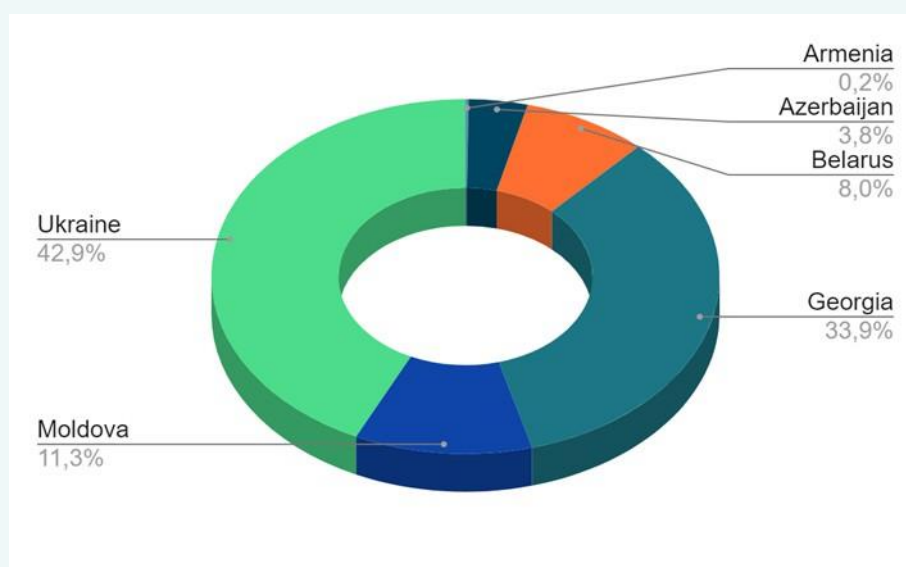
Although Latvia joined the group of donor countries in 2008, it launched a planned development cooperation policy soon after joining the EU. In 2004-2010, Latvia's development cooperation policy was mostly aimed at supporting Eastern European countries. The target group included Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus, as well as Afghanistan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 6). During this period, Latvia's bilateral development cooperation policy promoted the development of a market economy, education, and environment, as well as a programme of sustainable social development with a special emphasis on good governance, civil society, and local government. In fact, as can be seen from the geography of the countries identified as targets and priorities, Latvia attached particular importance to strengthening the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, viewing it as the political and security rehabilitation of the post-Soviet republics. In terms of clarifying the legal framework of development cooperation, an important step was the adoption of the Development Cooperation Strategy 2011-2015 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2024), which included two documents regulating the sector: the Development Cooperation Strategy, which had been adopted before Latvia's EU accession, and Latvia's medium-term (Idem, 8).

However, despite Latvia's ambitious policies as a new donor of development aid and international assistance, the Great Recession in the late 2000s exposed the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the Latvian economy. Although Latvia continued to implement development cooperation projects in its priority countries, due to the financial crisis it was forced to cut its budget and reduce development cooperation activities from 2009 to 2010 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2024, 7).

Compared to the previous guidance document, the 2011-2015 strategy more clearly defined the state's priorities: Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2024, 10-11). It is noteworthy that in the 2011-2015 Strategy, Latvia decided to follow international principles aimed at increasing the effectiveness of aid and provide assistance to a limited number of countries. However, even in this strategic document there was some dissonance in terms of the declaration of priorities, which called into question one of the key principles of the Latvian development cooperation policy, according to which partnership should develop where there is a clear demand for Latvian expertise. In particular, the countries where Latvia had military missions or civilian experts were also declared priority regions for development cooperation (Idem, 11). Another important circumstance is that, although the eastern neighbourhood was considered a priority, there were essentially three partner countries: Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Moreover, in the case of Latvia, the declaration of a priority country was quite relative, since if in 2012-2013 Moldova was considered a priority, then a year later, in the period 2014-

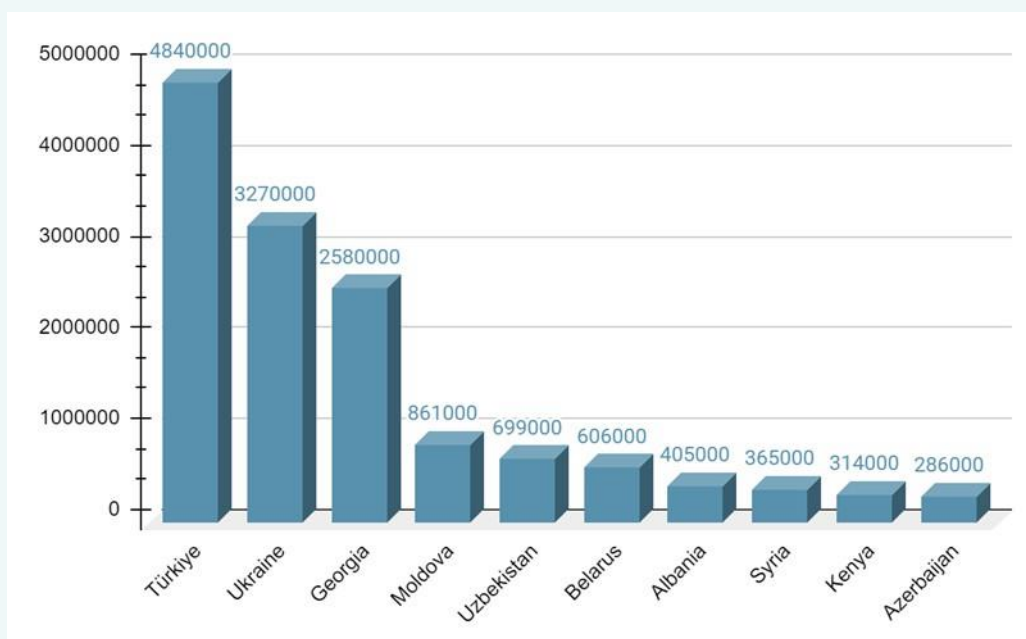
2015, Ukraine became the main partner affected by Russian aggression (Cabinet of Ministers 2016, 21–22). At first glance, it might seem that such a policy in Latvia was a consequence of the ability to react quickly. In fact, the main cause of the problem was the protracted crisis, as a result of which the Latvian economy recovered quite late, and only in 2013 did official Riga get the opportunity to resume tenders for grant projects (Idem, 19).

In the guidelines developed in 2016, there were no changes in the priority partner countries in terms of bilateral development cooperation, and the target of Latvian assistance remained the eastern neighbourhood and Central Asian countries. The strongest aspect of this guidance document was that it not only identified common and unified priority sectors for bilateral and multilateral development cooperation but also localised priority sectors for the eastern ENP countries. At the same time, following its commitments, the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2024, 8-9) selected no more than three priority sectors for all three EN target countries. Thus, according to the 2016 Guidelines, Latvia should support Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine in strengthening the capacity of public administration, paying particular attention to the fight against corruption and democratic participation in the decision-making process. In the case of Georgia and Moldova, the scope of support in the public administration sector would also include the reform of border security structures. In addition, Latvia, based on consultations with partner countries and the priorities of their national strategies, should support Georgia and Moldova in the development of entrepreneurial activity and Moldova and Ukraine in the areas of decentralisation and institutional strengthening of local self-government (Idem, 9).



**Figure 3.18: Latvian ODA disbursements to the EN countries between 2015 and 2021.**

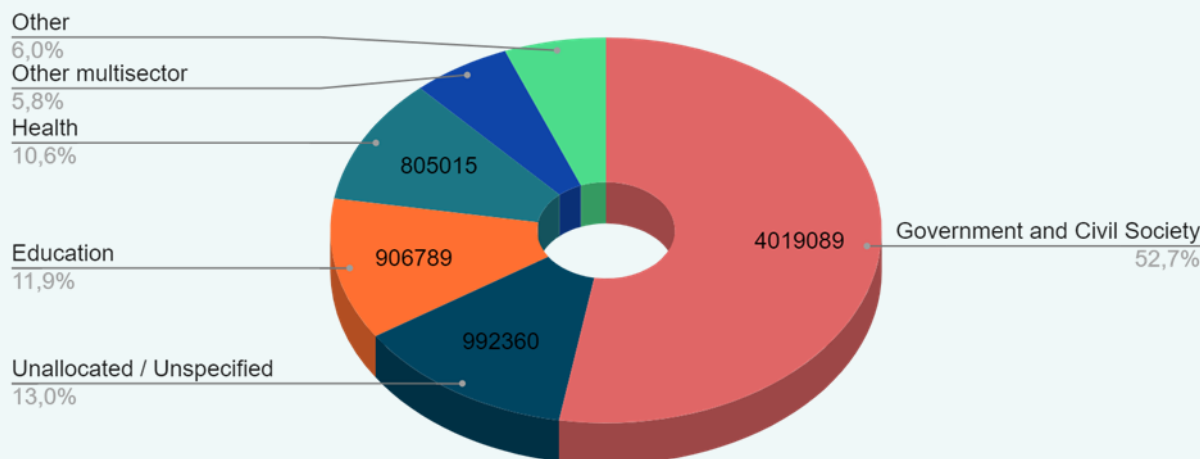
As Figure 3.18 shows, there are significant differences in how Latvian aid is distributed among the eastern neighbourhood countries. Almost 90% of aid was allocated to Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. The formation of such a picture was expected, since during the period under review Latvia’s policy was based on the Development Cooperation Guidelines for 2016-2020. According to Article 4.2, within the framework of the budget programme ‘Development Cooperation Projects and International Assistance’, priority was to be given to supporting programmes implemented in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (9). The uneven distribution is also evident when assessing the total volume of bilateral assistance. As shown in Figure 3.19, Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova are the three largest recipients of Latvian aid after EU candidate Türkiye.



**Figure 3.19: Top 10 Latvian aid recipient countries between 2015 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank.**

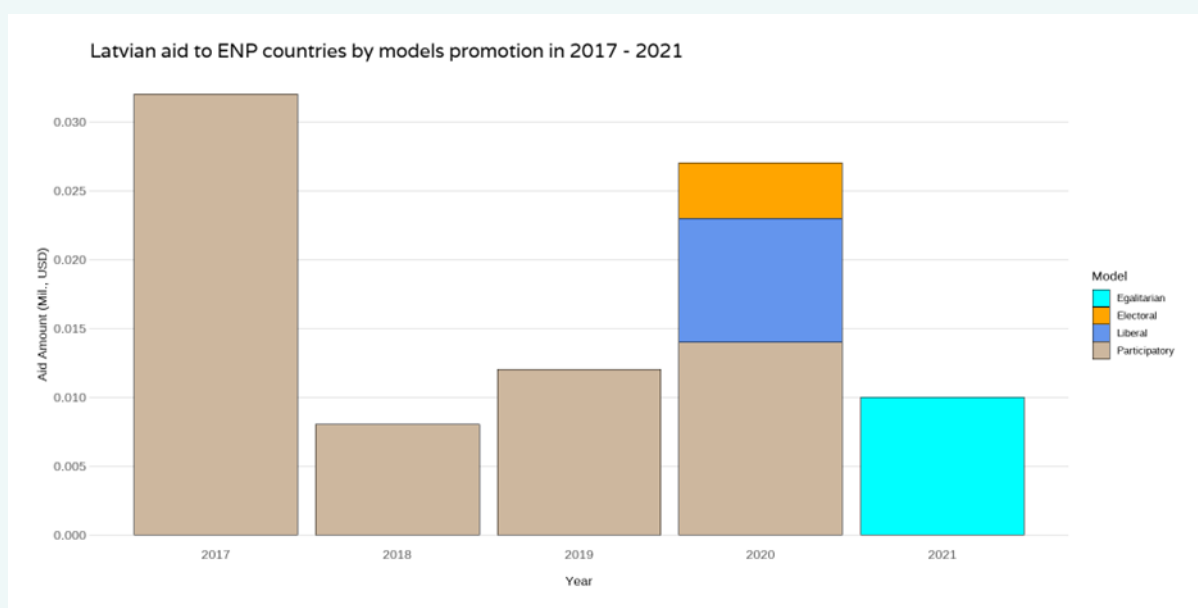
Assessing the specific sectors on which Latvian bilateral aid is focused, a clear dominance of government and civil society is noticeable, as presented in Figure 3.20. More than half of total aid in the period between 2015 and 2021 is spent on projects relating to that sector. The second largest sectoral focus after unspecified allocations, accounting for almost 12%, is education support activities, aimed at developing and managing education policies and supporting improvements in the quality of education (Cabinet of Ministers 2016, 8).

The importance of good governance and civil society is not at all surprising, since Latvia emphasised not only the development of public administration and the promotion of democratic participation but also peace, security, and conflict prevention among the priority sectors of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation in accordance with the 2016 guidelines. To achieve this outcome, Latvia focused on reforms to partner countries' national security systems aimed at supporting improvements in democratic administration and civil supervision (Idem, 8). This holistic approach was consistent with Latvian conceptual documents. According to the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia (2012, 9), the National Armed Forces of Latvia should also provide support to state institutions of other countries, such as the police, border guard, fire and rescue service, etc. Moreover, the National Security Concepts of 2011, 2015 and 2019 also had a significant impact on Latvian foreign policy and development cooperation during the period under review. For example, Latvia, having analysed the scale of national interests and threats, concluded that although the EU and NATO are security guarantees, external responses to challenges in the neighbouring environment are necessary to reduce internal vulnerabilities. It is for this reason that Latvia has built its security system on the basis that Russia's threats are not limited to invading Ukraine and violating the principles of peaceful coexistence, since Russia has also waged a hybrid war against Latvia. From the point of view of supporting democracy, this circumstance is important in the sense that Latvia considered ensuring the unity and cohesion of civil society and, no less important, its involvement in political processes to be key in the fight against hybrid warfare (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia 2015). It is in this context that Latvia's interest in supporting the government and civil society in the EN countries should be explained.



**Figure 3.20: Sectoral distribution of Latvian bilateral aid to the EN region between 2015 and 2021 (amounts in euros).**

In terms of models of democracy promotion, which are laid out in Figure 3.21, variation both across years and between different models for Latvia’s aid to EN countries from 2017 to 2021 are visible. Overall, the Participatory model received particularly large attention. The Participatory model has been present throughout almost all years and appeared five times throughout the assessment period. It dominated the aid allocation in 2017, 2018, and 2019, and remained a significant component in 2020. The Liberal model made an appearance in 2020, where it formed a substantial part of the aid allocation alongside the Participatory and Electoral models. The Electoral model also only appeared once, in 2020, indicating a specific focus on election-related democracy promotion in that year. The Egalitarian model makes its sole but substantial appearance in 2021, dominating the aid allocation for that year. The graph illustrates shifts in focus over time, from an initial, exclusive emphasis on participatory democracy, through a period of mixed approaches including liberal and electoral models, to a final year dominated by egalitarian efforts. This pattern demonstrates Latvia’s varied and evolving approach to democracy promotion in the region, adapting its focus to potentially changing needs or priorities in the EN countries.



**Figure 3.21: Latvian aid to EN countries by models of democracy promotion in 2017-2021.**

### 3.4.3 Implementation and Partnerships

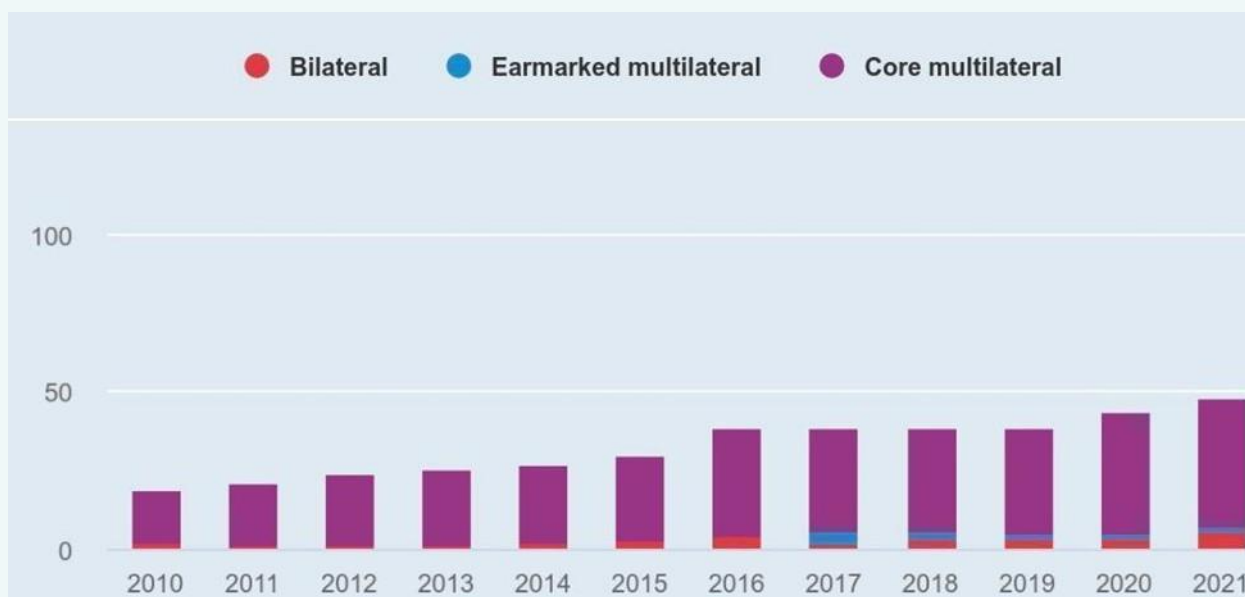


Figure 3.22: Latvian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024b). All values in millions of USD.

A steady increase in Latvian Official Development Assistance allocations can be observed from 2010 to 2021, particularly in core multilateral aid, which consistently accounts for the largest share of total ODA (Figure 3.22). Bilateral aid remains relatively small and stable, with a modest rise from 2015 onwards. Earmarked multilateral contributions are minimal but start to appear more regularly after 2016. This upward trend, especially in core multilateral aid, underscores Latvia's growing commitment to supporting international development through multilateral channels.

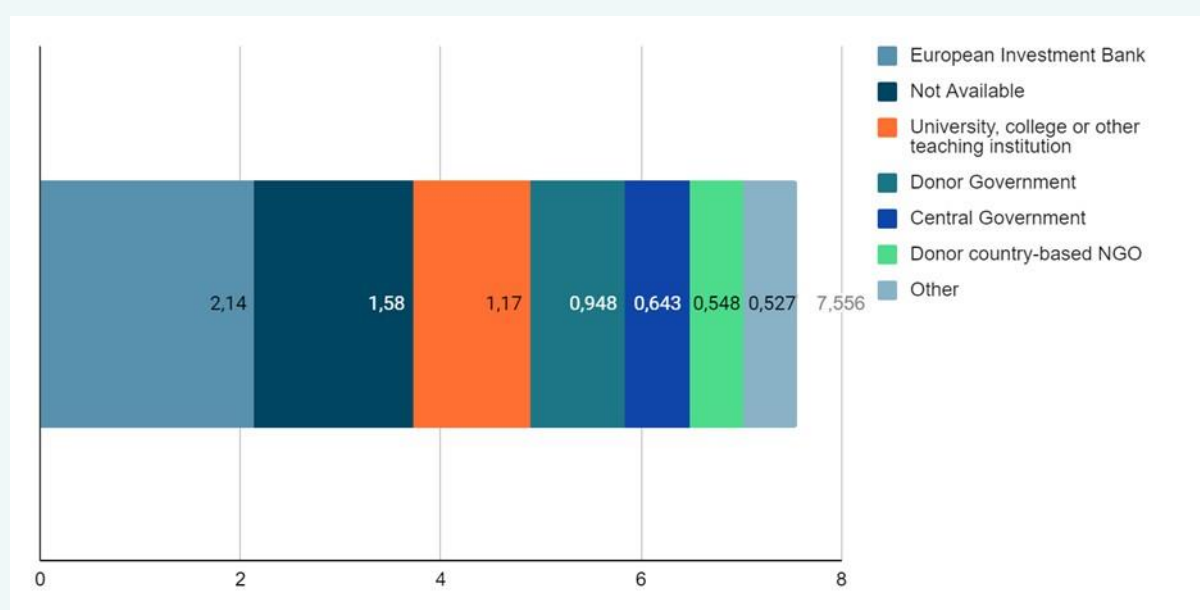


Figure 3.23: Distribution of aid channels of Latvian ODA in the EN region between 2015 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).

As illustrated in Figure 3.23 the largest share of Latvian aid, totalling €2.14 million, was allocated through the European Investment Bank, indicating a strong focus on financial instruments for development. Other significant channels include universities and other teaching institutions (€1.58 million), donor governments (€1.17 million) and central governments (€0.948 million). Unlike Estonia, relatively smaller portion of aid in the EN region amounting to €0.643 million was channelled through donor country-based NGOs.

To summarize the implementation and partnership approaches of Latvian aid, it can be mentioned that Latvia's strategy is characterized by a strong emphasis on multilateralism and financial instruments. Overall, Latvia's implementation methods and partnerships aim to promote sustainable development and stability in the EU region in line with its broader foreign policy objectives.

### 3.4.4 Conclusion

Latvia rightly notes that contemporary geopolitical challenges in Europe are acquiring a localised context. In particular, due to lasting and debilitating political instability and socio-economic inequality, the states of the immediate neighbourhood do not have adequate self-dependence and resilience, which directly leads to a wide range of problems in Latvia, from the security system to welfare. For this reason, Latvia has consistently recognised the EN countries as a priority during the period 2011-2021, proclaiming the rule of law and good governance as the objective of development cooperation within the broader foreign policy agenda.

However, limited human and financial resources, the scale of conflicts in Eastern Europe, economic crises and pandemics, and very general and broad priorities in the areas of development cooperation, on the one hand, deprive Latvia of the proper level of bilateral cooperation with the EN countries, and on the other hand, impede the equal distribution of allocations within the eastern neighbourhood region. As a result, the main characteristic feature of Latvian development cooperation and international assistance is that it often does not achieve its goals, and the implementation of many goals is set as a task for the next period of a new strategy. For instance, the implementation of the goals of the 2006 Development Cooperation Programme was also relevant in 2015 due to the financial crisis.

## 3.5 Lithuania

### 3.5.1 Policy Framework and Objectives

Since becoming a member of the European Union in 2004, Lithuania has transformed from an aid recipient to a donor country, making development cooperation and democracy promotion an integral part of its foreign policy. Despite the extensive experience of foreign assistance, as Lithuania has been providing regular development cooperation assistance since 2002, the legal basis for Lithuania's development cooperation and humanitarian aid policies were formed rather late, when the Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid was adopted on May 16, 2013. This law defines the basic principles of development cooperation, instruments, and methods of implementation, as well as financing and coordination issues. According to Article 3, Lithuania's development cooperation shall contribute to global efforts to reduce poverty in developing countries; support democracy, security, stability, and sustainable development; promote human rights and gender equality; strengthen political, economic, and socio-cultural ties with partner countries; and inform the Lithuanian society about the challenges and attainments of development assistance aimed at achieving wider acceptance and support (Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania 2016).

On the one hand, the development cooperation methodology is based on the provision of bilateral and multilateral aid, and on the other hand, on the Lithuanian society's understanding of the objectives and results of development assistance within the scope of Lithuania's international obligations (Article 6.1). According to the law, instruments for Lithuanian development aid are bilateral and multilateral projects and programmes, such as technical assistance, delegated cooperation, financing of the trading system, and the private sector of partner countries, as well as co-financing of projects and programmes implemented with funds from other countries (Article 6.2). The law was amended twice, in 2016 and 2020, strengthening the role of the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordinating development cooperation. But more importantly, the implementation of development cooperation and aid policies has become more inclusive and transparent, expanding the range of institutions involved in the process. Besides the MFA, another important decision-making body is the Lithuanian Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of development cooperation policy with international financial institutions, as well as planning funds for contributions for membership in international financial institutions (Article 7.2).

2016 was a turning point in the sense that the Lithuanian government approved the Inter-institutional Action Plan on Development Cooperation and initiated the process of involving the Special Investigation Service and local self-government bodies in the implementation of the Action Plan. According to Article 1, the Inter-institutional Action Plan on Development Cooperation was aimed at forming the main directions of the development cooperation policy for 2017-2019 and clarifying the means and measures of implementation (Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2016). Based on its foreign and security policy priorities, as well as international commitments to implement the UN 2030 Agenda, Lithuania sought to contribute to the implementation of the six sustainable development goals (SDGs 1, 4, 5, 13, 16, 17) in developing countries (Article 5).

Lithuania reaffirmed that the exchange of experience in reforms in the field of democracy, development of a market economy, as well as integration into international structures is a key priority for bilateral cooperation with partner countries, declaring Eastern Europe, countries of migration origin and transit as geographical targets (Articles 6–7). This was explained not only by the fact that Eastern Europe was geographically close and was considered a priority for the EU but also by the historical, cultural, and socio-economic ties between Lithuania and Eastern Europe. Moreover, Lithuania was familiar with the political systems of these countries, the complexities of their transformation and ways to overcome them. Therefore, narrowing the regional scope of its priorities and seeking to increase the visibility of aid for recipient countries, Lithuania took on the donor commitments for the eastern neighbourhood countries, guided by the EU ENP policy and the declarations of the Vilnius and Riga summits (Article 8). It is noteworthy that in 2017–2019 Lithuania planned to organise events, visits, and consultations in the areas

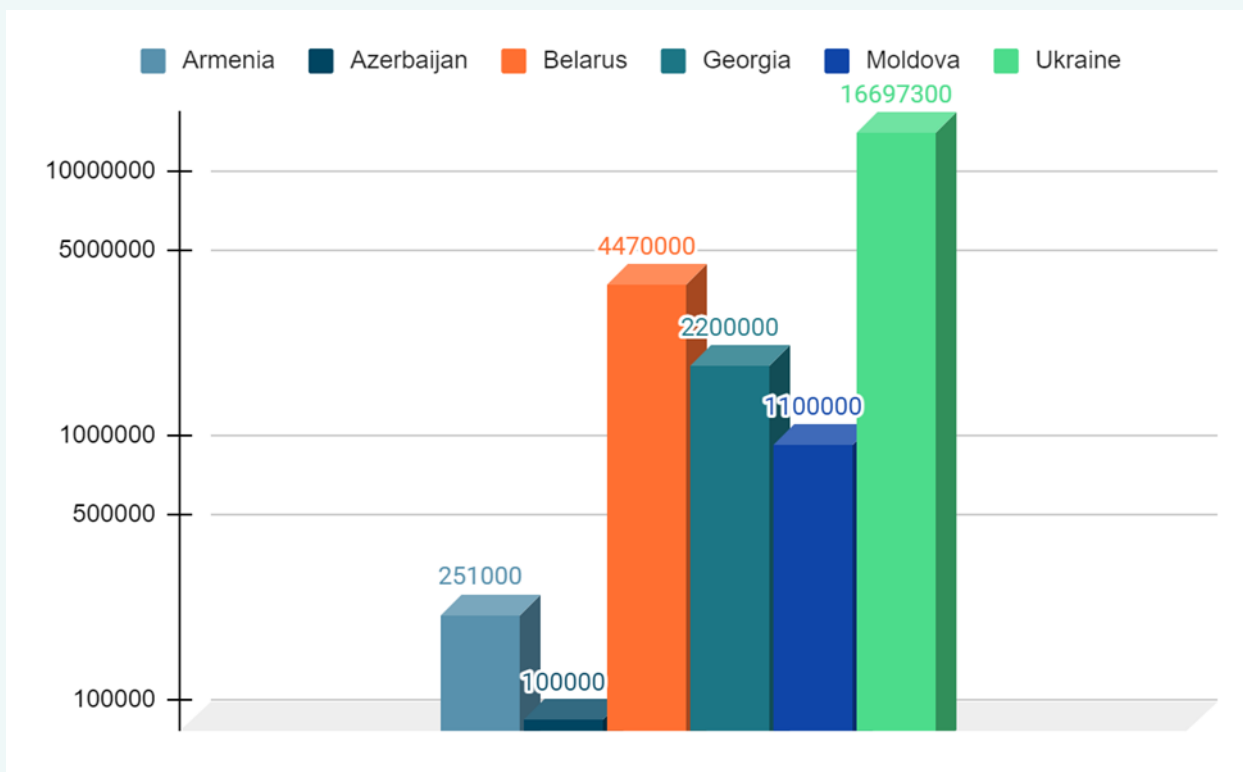
of social security (SDG 10), financial supervision, and fight against corruption (SDG 16), as well as to implement projects in the fields of agriculture, animal breeding, land management and administration, geodesy, and cartography (SDG 2) for the EN countries (Chapter II).

The next action plan was developed for 2019-2021 but it has not undergone major changes. In terms of supporting bilateral development cooperation, the eastern ENP countries, in particular Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, continued to be a priority for Lithuania (Jones et al 2019, 3). This reality was most likely due to the fact that, both in the Action Plans for 2017-2019 and 2019-2021, Lithuania recorded a desire for uninterrupted and effective activities aimed at building the image of a reliable and responsible donor country (Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2016). In fact, in case of changing the scope of priority recipient countries, the principle of continuity and efficiency would be violated.

Since its approval by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021, the document “Strategic Directions for Development Cooperation 2022–2025” has become an important milestone in supporting the development assistance of Lithuania. For the first time, in a guidance document on development cooperation, Lithuania stated that a more coherent and rational strategy was needed as “Development cooperation must become a priority area of Lithuania’s foreign policy.” (Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2021). Although the format of cooperation in the new document has not changed, the geography of priority countries has been significantly expanded, since the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia have joined the EN countries in their strategic importance. Minor changes have been made to the thematic areas of development cooperation, resulting in the addition of a SDG for affordable and clean energy. In addition, Lithuania has expressed its readiness to support digitalisation, women’s empowerment, and fight against corruption in partner countries for structural changes.

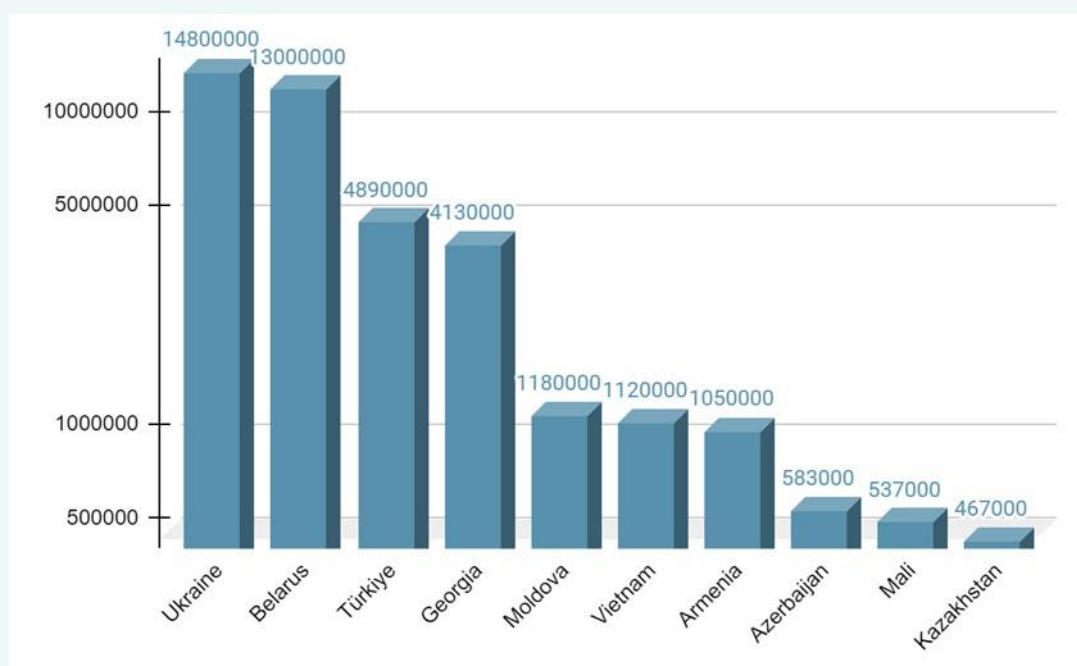
### **3.5.2 Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus:**

Ukraine is Lithuania’s most important partner in terms of development cooperation, and it is not at all surprising that it has received the lion’s share (Figure 3.24) of assistance for the purpose of political association and full economic integration with the EU. Between 2005 and 2020, Lithuania implemented 198 development cooperation projects in Ukraine, which were aimed at addressing issues of education, health, combating disinformation, gender equality, and women’s empowerment. Given the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war since 2014 and its dire consequences for the Ukrainian side, many projects were also aimed at preserving historical and cultural heritage.



**Figure 3.24: Aid Provided by Lithuania to EN Countries for Development Cooperation Projects in 2002–2020 (amounts in euros). Own work based on profiles of LDC partner countries.**

Although Belarus is the second-largest recipient of Lithuania’s assistance, the largest number of development cooperation projects have been implemented in Belarus. Taking into account the individual needs of Belarus, the Programme of the Government of Lithuania, as well as the priorities of the EU ENP policy, for the implementation of 351 projects during 2002–2020, Lithuania provided Belarus with about €4.5 million aimed at creating an open civil society, with special emphasis on independent media, education and gender equality. Moreover, in the case of Belarus, Lithuania has pursued a proactive policy and provided assistance not only in the form of projects but also created a platform for the reorganisation of higher education, which had suffered from politically motivated domestic policies of the Belarusian authorities. The best example of this is the European Humanities University, which was reopened in Vilnius, restoring the violated rights of students (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2009, 9). Ukraine and Belarus are not only the two largest recipients of Lithuania’s assistance among EN countries but also among all recipient countries (Figure 3.25).



**Figure 3.25: Top 10 Lithuanian aid recipient countries between 2014 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank.**

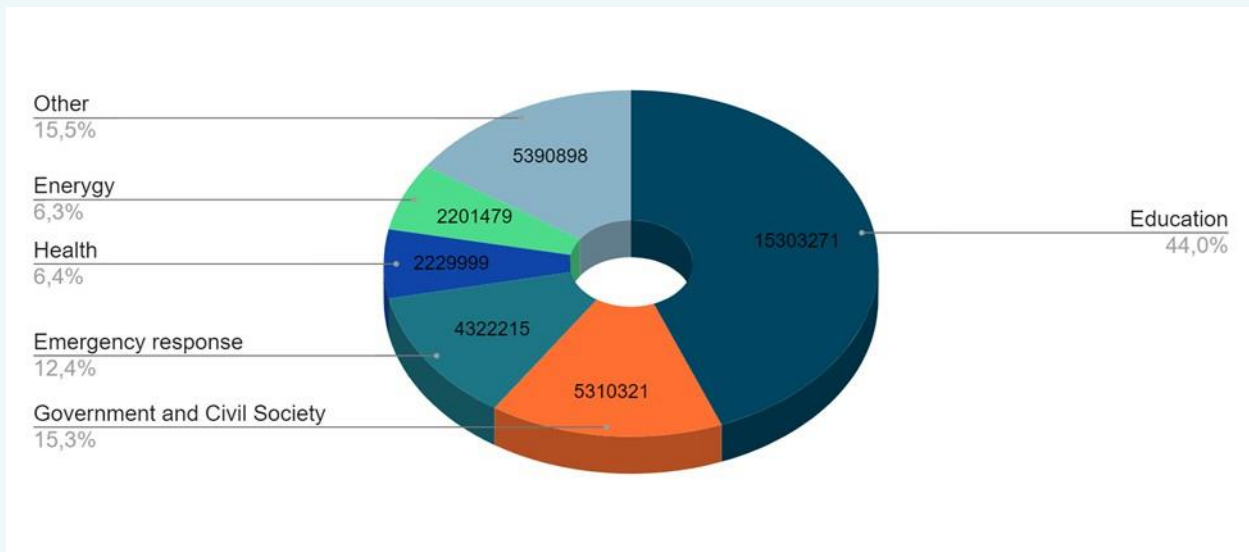
Georgia, which is the third-largest recipient of Lithuania’s aid among the eastern neighbourhood countries (Figure 3.24) and the fourth-largest among all recipient countries (Figure 3.25), received twice as much aid as Moldova between 2014 and 2021. Taking into account the importance of supporting reforms implemented within the framework of the Association and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement, Lithuania implemented 171 projects in Georgia during the reporting period, focusing on strengthening administrative and institutional capacity, the judicial system, the environment, social activity and economic entrepreneurship, as well as agriculture and food security. Given the 2008 war, as well as the urgent need to support Georgia’s rapid recovery from the political and moral fallout, Lithuania has also taken active steps to support displaced people, especially children with PTSD, along with projects aimed at strengthening the competencies and social capabilities of Georgian municipalities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2010, 10). The last relatively large beneficiary is Moldova, cooperation with which is based on institutional support for reforms related to the Association Agreement. During the period 2005–2020, Lithuania, as a donor country, implemented 142 projects in Moldova aimed at strengthening good governance, democracy and civil society, as well as countering disinformation, gender equality, and women’s empowerment.

All EN countries are among the top ten largest recipients of Lithuanian aid, which underlines Lithuania’s focus on supporting the eastern neighbourhood region (Figure 3.25).

Thus, as can be seen from the comparative analysis of multilateral allocations, although all EN countries were identified as priorities in accordance with the development cooperation policy directions for 2019–2021 outlined in the Inter-Institutional Action Plan on Development Cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2021), the main recipients were Ukraine and Belarus.

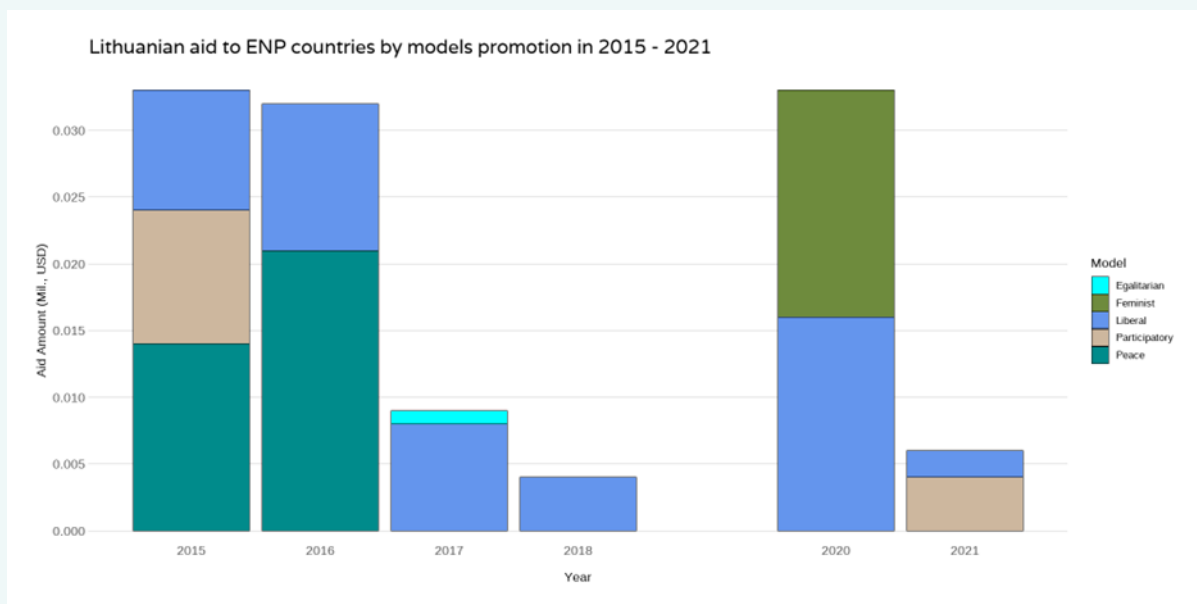
When assessing the specific sectors targeted by Lithuania’s bilateral assistance, there is a clear dominance of education, as shown in Figure 3.26. Almost half of total aid in the period between 2014 and 2021 is spent on projects relating to that sector. The second largest sectoral emphasis, at over 15.3%, is on activities to support government and civil society, which are clearly related to democracy support. In addition to the dominant focus on education and support for government and civil society, significant resources were also allocated to emergency response, accounting for 12.4% of the total aid. Health and energy sectors also received notable attention, with 6.4% and 6.3% of the aid directed towards these areas, respectively,

reflecting Lithuania's commitment to addressing a broad spectrum of development needs in the Eastern Neighbourhood region.



**Figure 3.26: Sectoral distribution of Lithuanian bilateral aid to the EN region between 2014 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).**

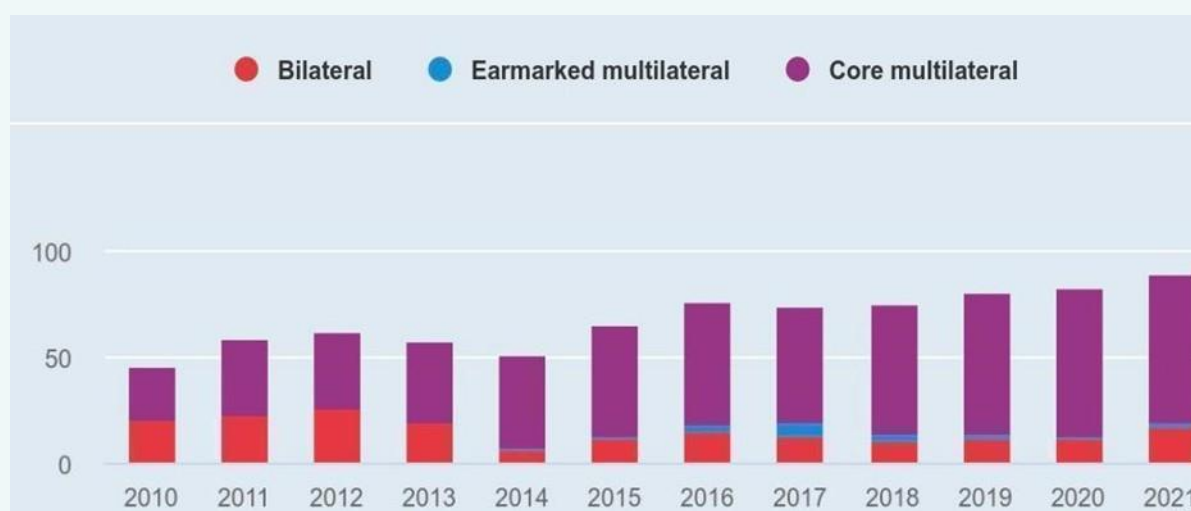
In terms of democracy promotion models outlined in Figure 3.27, Lithuania’s aid to ENP countries from 2015 to 2021 exhibits notable fluctuations and shifts in focus. The early years of 2015 and 2016 saw a significant emphasis on Peace-oriented initiatives, complemented by substantial Liberal model contributions. This period marked the highest overall aid allocation across the timeframe. As the years progressed, a clear transition emerged. The Liberal model gained prominence, becoming the primary focus in 2017 and 2018, albeit with reduced total aid amounts. This shift suggests a potential recalibration of Lithuania’s democracy promotion strategy. Interestingly, the latter part of the assessed period introduced new priorities. The year 2020 stands out with an appearance of the Feminist model. This was followed by a more balanced approach in 2021, incorporating Participatory and Liberal elements. Throughout the assessed period, Lithuania demonstrated a willingness to adapt its democracy promotion tactics. The Participatory model, while not dominant, made meaningful appearances in both 2015 and 2021. The Egalitarian model’s brief emergence in 2017, though modest, further illustrates Lithuania’s multifaceted approach. This evolving pattern of aid distribution reflects Lithuania’s responsive and diverse strategy in supporting democratic development in the EN countries. From initial peace-building efforts to later focus on liberal institutions and feminist perspectives, the data highlights a diverse picture of Lithuanian assistance.



**Figure 3.27: Lithuanian aid to EN countries by models of democracy promotion in 2015-2021.**

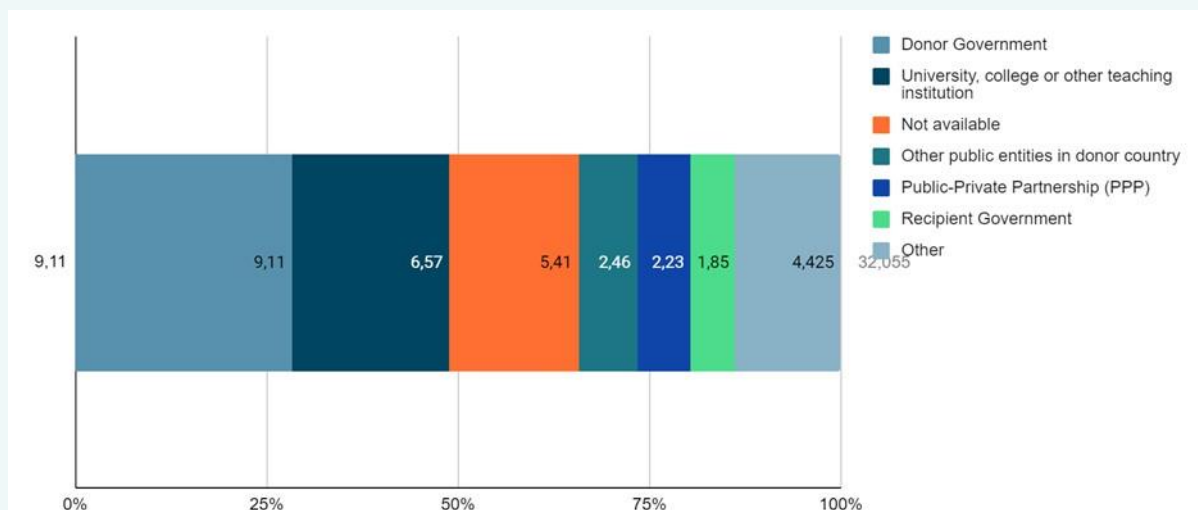
### 3.5.3 Implementation and Partnerships

As shown in Figure 3.28, for Lithuania, bilateral development assistance covers a much smaller share than aid channelled through multilateral organisations especially since 2014, when a steady increase in multilateral allocations has become more visible. Notably, multilateral assistance has been provided through mandatory and voluntary allocations. On a regular basis, most of the voluntary aid has been allocated to SIDA for the implementation of the Programme regarding the support to the European Humanities University (EHU). In this way, in 2019, aid was also provided to the Foundation for Expert Deployment for Governance and Economic Growth in Ukraine to support the Professionals for Reform Support Mechanism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2019), the Democracy Promotion Fund and the European Endowment for Democracy for the provision of support for citizens of Belarus in 2020 (Ministry of Foreign affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2020), and the Democracy Fund and the National Democratic Institute in 2021 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2021).



**Figure 3.28: Lithuanian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024c). All values in millions of USD.**

The largest shares of Lithuanian aid were channelled through the donor government (€9.11 million) and university, college or other teaching institutions (€6.57 million). The distribution presented in Figure 3.29 underscores Lithuania's strategic focus on direct governmental and educational collaborations, while also maintaining a diversified approach through partnerships with public and private sectors and other unspecified channels.



**Figure 3.29: Distribution of aid channels of Lithuanian ODA in the EN region between 2014 and 2021 (amounts in million euros).**

Since 2014, the Lithuanian MFA has been carrying out development cooperation and humanitarian aid activities through the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Provision Commission, headed by the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Fund for the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid is also of key importance in terms of making the implementation of assistance more flexible, responsive, and results-oriented. The actual secretariat of the Fund is the Central Agency for Project Management, which, as a separate body, is part of the Governing Board along with line ministries and non-governmental organisations. In this context, it is important to note that the Council of the Fund has an obligation to allocate funding to projects and programmes selected on a competitive basis, to direct funding and ensure national co-financing of programmes and projects financed by international donors (Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2022). Two documents adopted by the Lithuanian government in 2017 are of great importance in terms of clarifying the entire process of implementing development cooperation, as well as project applications, selection procedures, and financial requirements: Description of Procedure for the Implementation of Development Cooperation Activities and Provision of Humanitarian Assistance by State and Municipal Institutions and Agencies, and the Description of Procedure of the Implementation of the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme (Jones et al 2019, 2).

### 3.5.4 Conclusion

The approaches of Lithuania regarding the development cooperation policies have changed significantly since its entry into the European Union in 2004, transforming it from an aid recipient to a proactive donor country. The adoption of the Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in 2013 laid the legal foundation for these efforts, emphasizing global poverty reduction, democracy promotion and the strengthening of ties with partner countries as key objectives (Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania 2016). Throughout the years, Lithuania has increasingly concentrated its development assistance on eastern neighbourhood countries, with a particular focus on Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia, which receive the majority of its bilateral aid.

In line with its strategic objectives, Lithuania has prioritized education as the primary sector for its bilateral aid to EN countries, allocating 44% of its total aid to this sector. Additionally, significant resources have been directed toward government and civil society and emergency response.

Distribution of aid channels of Lithuanian ODA in the EN region also reflects a strategic emphasis on governmental and educational partnerships, supported by a diversified approach that includes collaborations with public entities, private sector partnerships, and other channels.

## 3.6 Romania

### 3.6.1 Policy Framework and Objectives

The legal basis for Romania's development assistance is the Law on International Cooperation for Development and Humanitarian Aid of November 9, 213/2016 (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016). This Law provides the legal basis for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance activities in Romania. It entered into force on 11 November 2016 and sets out the overall framework for development assistance activities. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania has a key role, as the national coordinator of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance policies (Idem 2016). Law No. 213/2016 established strategic integration goals for the EN countries, program and institutional frameworks, as well as conditions for financing and implementing cooperation.

Romania's development support to EN countries focuses on poverty eradication and security by promoting good governance, and social and economic sustainability. Romania's cooperation to support the eastern neighbourhood countries has established a legal framework to regulate the programmatic and institutional structure (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2024; Romanian Agency for International Development Cooperation 2019). The Romanian Agency for International Development Cooperation (RoAid) began its work in 2017 and began implementing assistance activities in 2018.

The Multiannual Strategic Program on the International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance for the period 2020-2023, and the 2024-2027 Multiannual Strategic Programme of International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance set out the main goals of Romania (Romanian Agency for International Development Cooperation 2019; Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2023). These include supporting EN countries in transition, providing humanitarian assistance, collaborating with CSOs and the private sector, as well as promoting transparency, strengthening resources and consolidating capacity.

The strategic programs address Romania's integration priorities and interests in the EN countries, such as good governance, the rule of law, peace and security, sustainable economic development, education and youth promotion (Ion and Done 2021). For example, education is the focus of bilateral assistance of Romania to develop the education systems of the EN countries, the goal of which is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and training in partner countries (Volintiru and Zgut-Przybylska 2024).

Assistance for the purposes of strategic development as stated in Article 3 (Point b) of Law on International cooperation for development and humanitarian aid, refers primarily to "Promoting and supporting peace and security, the development of democracy and the civil society, including the development of the rule of law, the principles of good governance and observance of human rights" (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016). However, it is worth noting that development assistance consists of several dimensions including broadly understood measures to promote democracy within the Romanian aid programme.

The development cooperation mechanism has many dimensions, involving in its activities many structures within the framework of public administration and foreign policy of Romania. The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the coordinator of international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance policy for Romania and thus implements several priorities (Article 5). To carry out basic tasks, the Agency for International Development Cooperation is created under the command of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Article 5.2).

Romania's aid policy for the EN countries aimed to develop the EU's political and democratic capacity to resolve crises and prevent conflicts at the international level (Tsygankov et al 2023). The EN countries are weakened by many crises, active and latent conflicts, which directly or indirectly affect their interests. In particular, the Russian hybrid war, is one of the biggest problems in recent times, affecting the escalation of

humanitarian and political crises in the EN countries, as well as the EU member states and their resilience (Moga et al 2022; Solik and Graf 2023; Graef 2023).

Romania currently has two such “multiannual strategic programmes,” as they are officially called. The first was from 2020 to 2023 under the coalition government of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL) party (OSCE/ODIHR 2020; OSCE/ODIHR 2021). Based on the principles of the rule of law, respecting the values of democracy and fundamental human rights and freedoms, Romania supports and contributes to ensuring the national security of the eastern ENP countries, including by sharing its experience in the above-mentioned areas (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2023). In this context, it is important to note the key role of Romania, with whose support Moldova was able to most effectively carry out internal reforms and consistently implement a policy of further deepening European integration (Cărbune 2021; Damian and Toma 2022). Romania’s active policy on the European integration of Moldova has helped in many ways to solve Moldova’s geopolitical dilemma related to the priority direction of foreign and security policy, as well as achievements in the abolition of the visa regime with the EU and the implementation of necessary reforms in the country (Solik and Graf 2023; Beacháin 2022).

A sharp deterioration of the international situation (the civil war in Syria, the growth of international terrorism, the migration crisis, Russia’s hybrid war and the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine since 2013, the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022, the Russian-Euro-Atlantic confrontation, challenges to Moldova’s membership in the EU), and the deployment of the American missile defence system on the territory of Romania also increases the salience of the research topic. The geopolitical position of Romania, which has access to the Black Sea, especially in light of recent events taking place in close proximity to the EU borders, increases the importance of the regional aspect of the country's foreign policy.

### 3.6.2 Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus

Figures 3.30 and 3.31 show that among the ENP countries in 2014-2021, Romania’s ODA was mainly focused on Moldova and Ukraine. Considering the uniqueness of the emergence and development of the CSDP, Romania provided full support to the two EN countries in this area (Maksymenko and Grabina 2024; Akhvlediani 2022). It is appropriate to note that a comparative analysis of the main coordinates of the evolution of European integration of Moldova and Ukraine indicates that Romania pays special attention to defence and security policy in order to ensure European and national security. In addition, the role of the Romanian state in shaping the security concept of Moldova is considered. In this regard, further consideration of the factors influencing the political and diplomatic relations between Romania and Moldova, which are analysed in the context of strengthening constructive cooperation between the two countries and changing foreign policy priorities, is of particular importance. In addition, recently the relations between Romania and Moldova, which have been on the periphery of political issues and international diplomacy for more than ten years, have become the subject of study by many scientists.

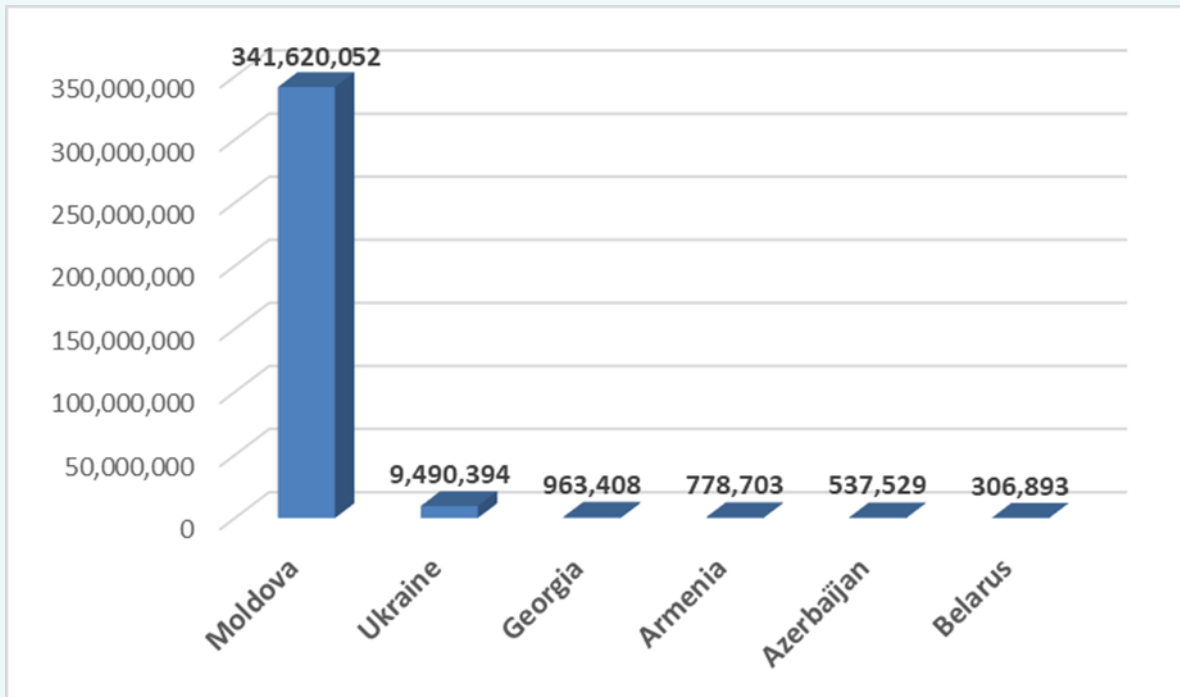


Figure 3.30: Romanian ODA disbursements to the EN countries between 2014 and 2021. All figures in euro.

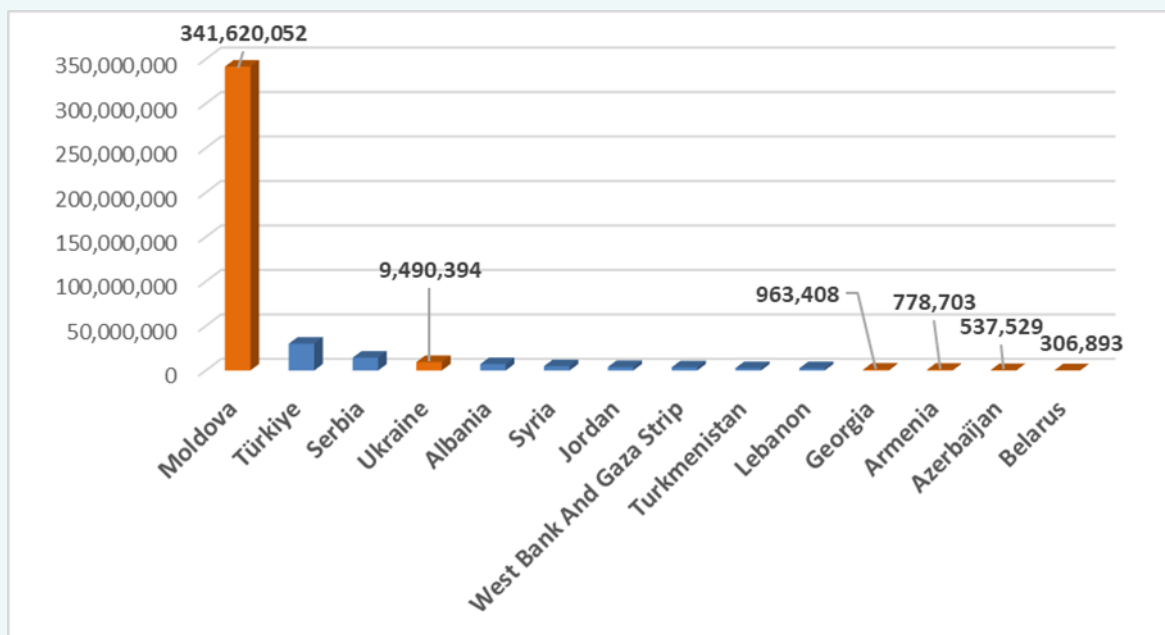
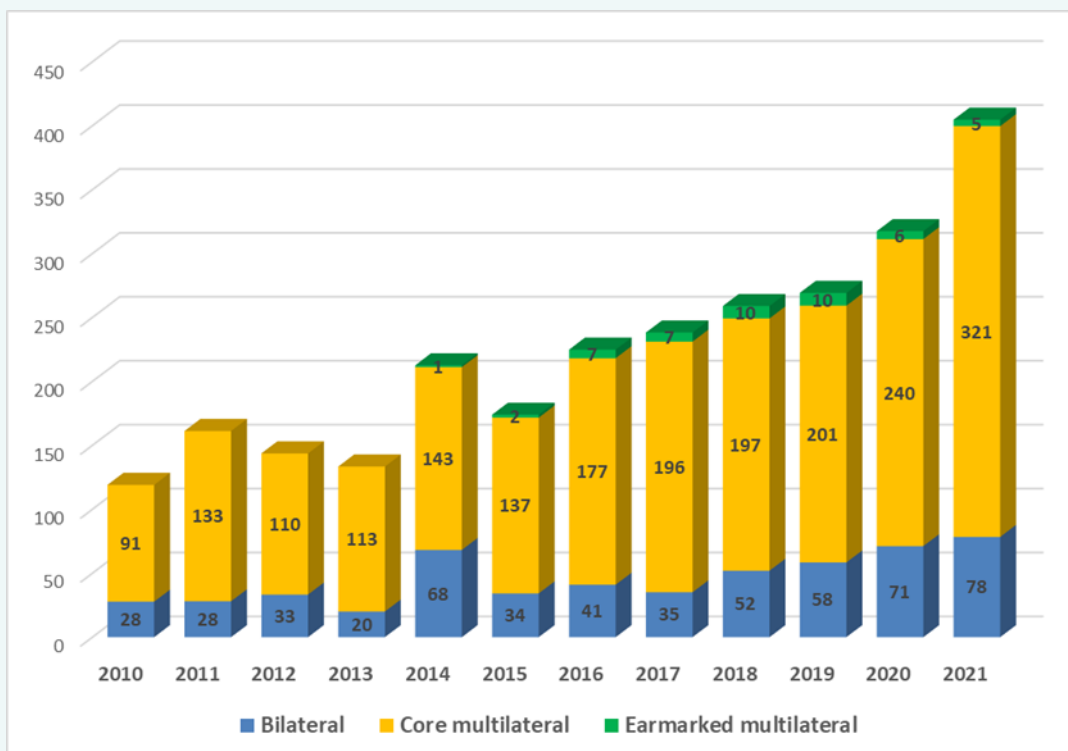


Figure 3.31: Top 10 Romanian aid recipient countries between 2014 and 2021 and the remaining EN countries with their respective rank. All figures in euro.

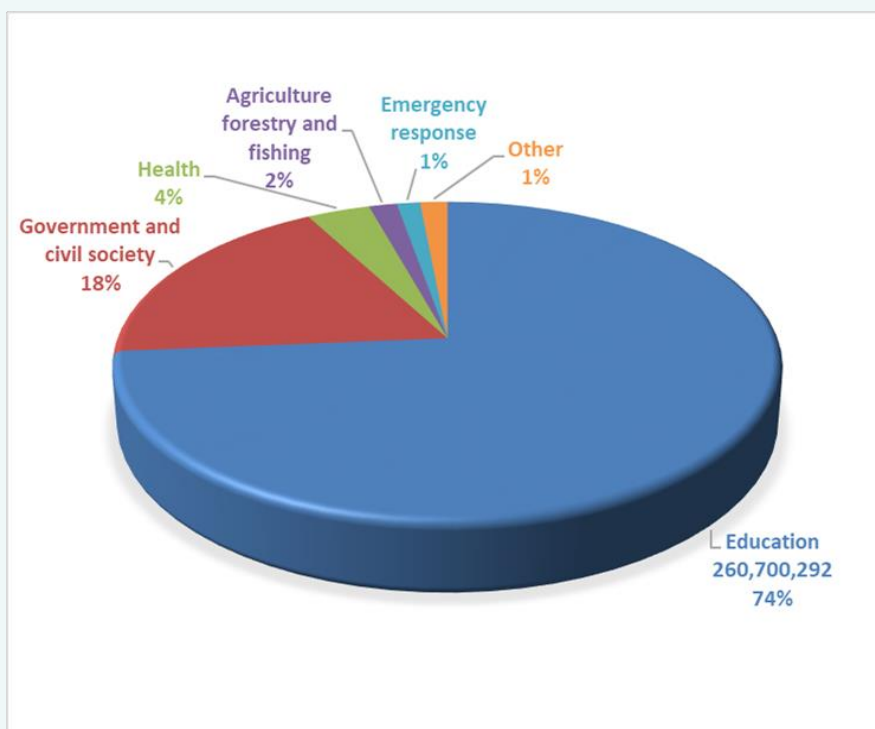
### 3.6.3 Implementation and Partnerships

Figure 3.32 shows the support in 2010-2021 Romania's ODA was both bilateral and multilateral. In this context, the dominance of multilateral support shows the combination and complementation of the assistance provided (OECD 2024d).



**Figure 3.32: Romanian Bilateral and Multilateral ODA allocations between 2010 and 2021 (OECD 2024d). All values in millions of USD.**

Figure 3.33 shows that almost 74% of Romania’s total investments in 2014-2021 were allocated to support education development and reforms. During this period, the second most important financial assistance was almost 18% provided for public administration reform and civil society organisations in the EN countries.



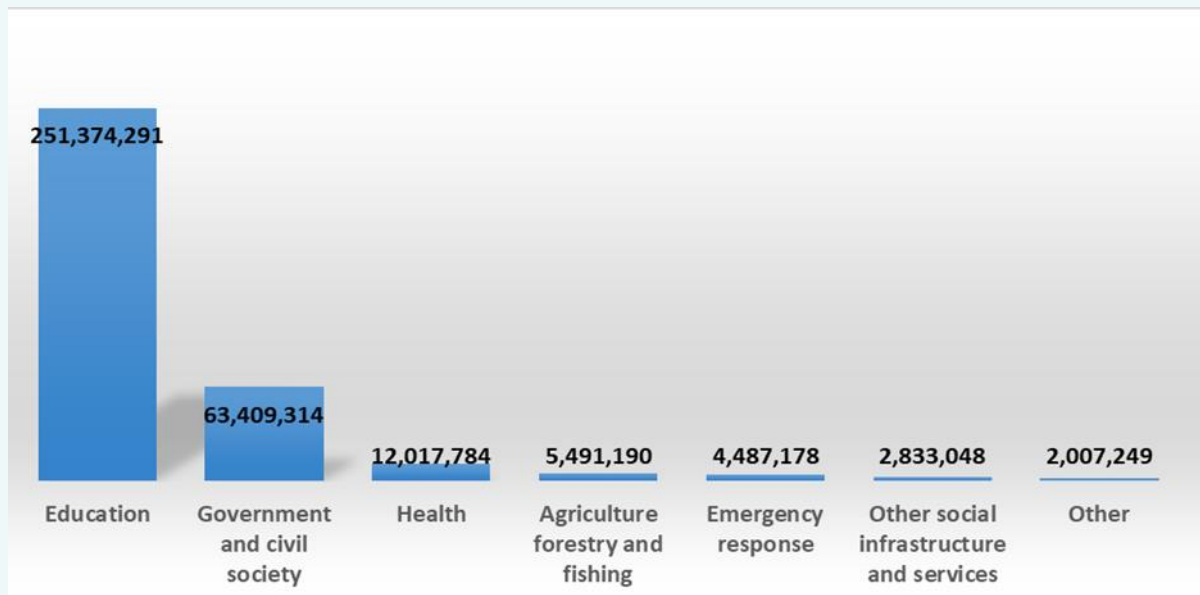
**Figure 3.33: Distribution of support by main sectors of the EN countries in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.**

In this context, it is important to note that with Romania’s accession to the EU, Moldova's assistance has acquired another dimension and importance, increasing the need for more active Romanian participation in its solution, since Transnistria is located only 100 km from the EU border. Starting in 2014, when the EU

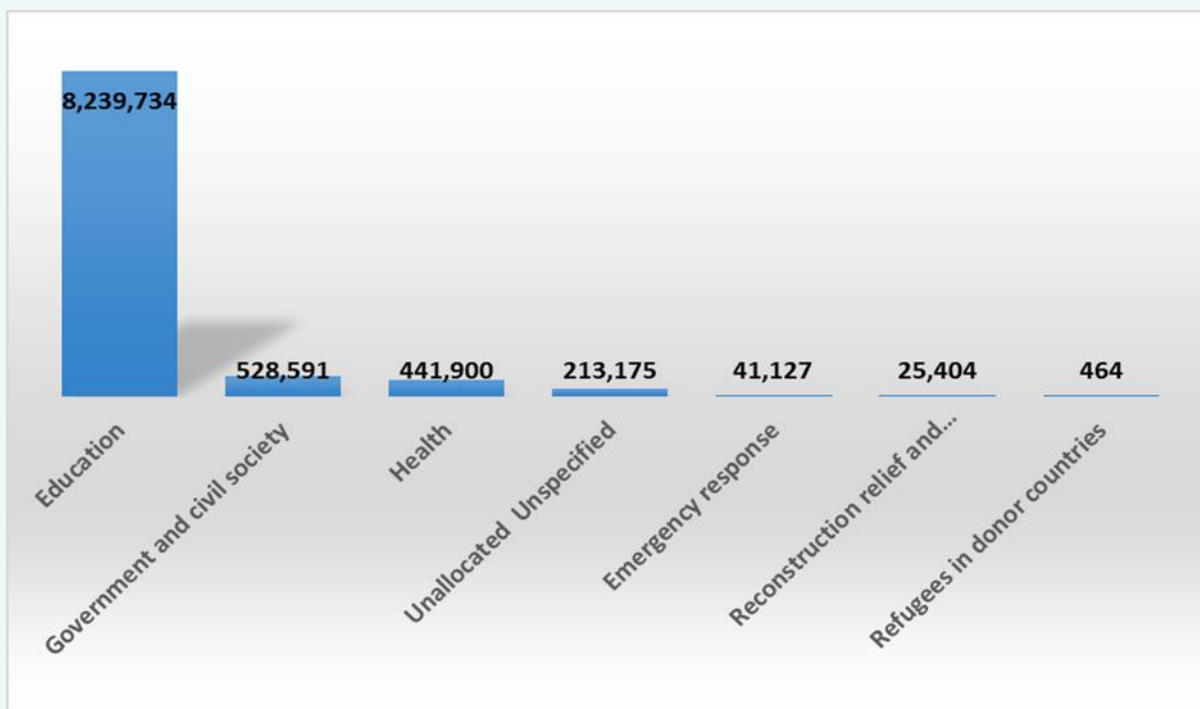
Association Agreement with Moldova was signed, one of the obligations assumed by Moldova was to improve relations with Transnistria with a view to a possible and peaceful resolution of the conflict. For Romania, the Europeanisation and membership of Moldova in the EU in the future is of great importance, taking into account the cultural and linguistic commonality of the two countries.

However, the priority of interests for the EU in the region remains the withdrawal of Russian peacekeeping forces from the region, which requires great efforts from Romania. This takes into account that Russia does not fulfil its commitments, which were adopted at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999 and confirmed by the 10th OSCE Ministerial Council in Porto in 2002, thereby manipulating the current status quo of Transnistria. Since 2014, Romania has actively supported the sustainable development of Moldova and participated in the conflict resolution, continuing to play a significant role in what can be called a contribution to a viable solution to the Transnistrian conflict.

Figures 3.34 and 3.35 show that there are three key sectors in relations with Moldova and Ukraine, which are most supported by Romania. This increases the effectiveness of the EU Neighbourhood Policy from the perspective of membership for Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the fact that the EU takes into account the specifics of these and other ENP states.

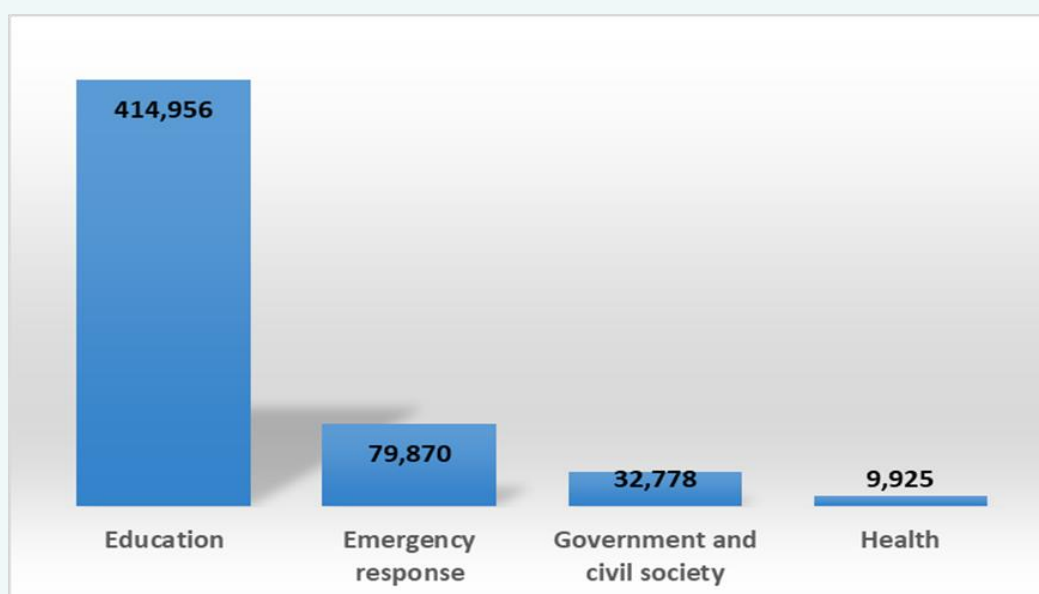


**Figure 3.34: Distribution of support by main sectors of Moldova in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.**

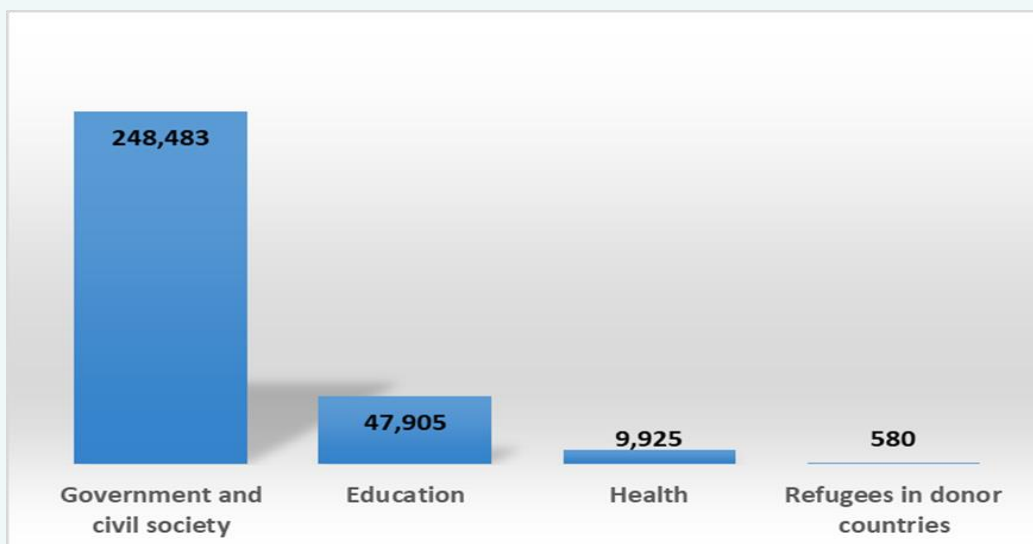


**Figure 3.35: Distribution of support by main sectors of Ukraine in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.**

Figures 3.36 and 3.37 show that in the case of Azerbaijan and Belarus, Romania’s support is a reflection of the complex processes of transformation of these countries, which not only gives the EU new impetus for the development of these countries, but also poses a number of problems for it. The EU Neighbourhood Policy in this case represents, on the one hand, an external response to the internal problems of Azerbaijan and Belarus. On the other hand, Romania’s attempt to maintain the attractiveness of the European model for these states from the perspective of membership through a qualitative deepening of cooperation draws attention to the fact that the EU has difficulty in creating a strategy in relation to those countries that are not interested in developing cooperation with it, such as Belarus and Azerbaijan. This complicates the role of both the EU and Romania in supporting these countries, as they pursue inconsistent policies and take different positions from the EU.

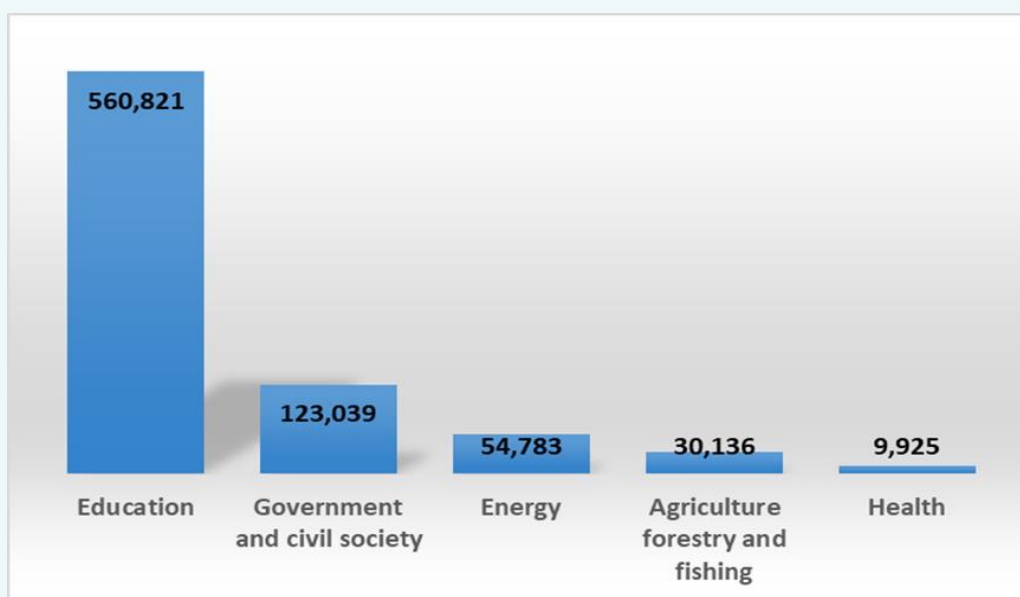


**Figure 3.36: Distribution of support by main sectors of Azerbaijan in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.**

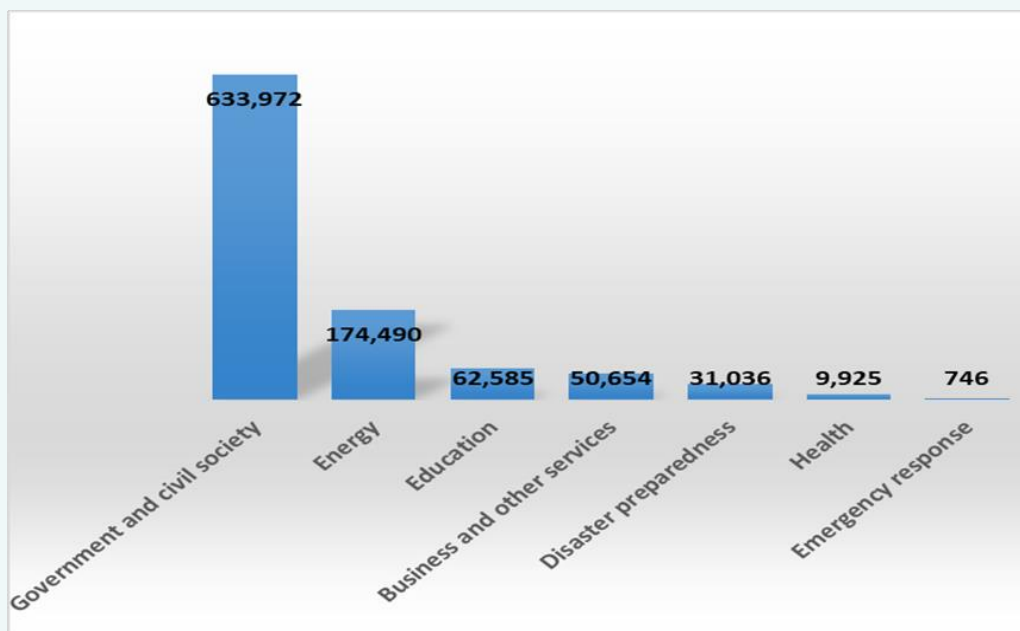


**Figure 3.37: Distribution of support by main sectors of Belarus in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.**

Figures 3.38 and 3.39 show that in the case of Armenia and Georgia, Romania’s support goes to education, civil society and public administration reform. Romania considers Georgia’s special geographical location to support its energy sector.



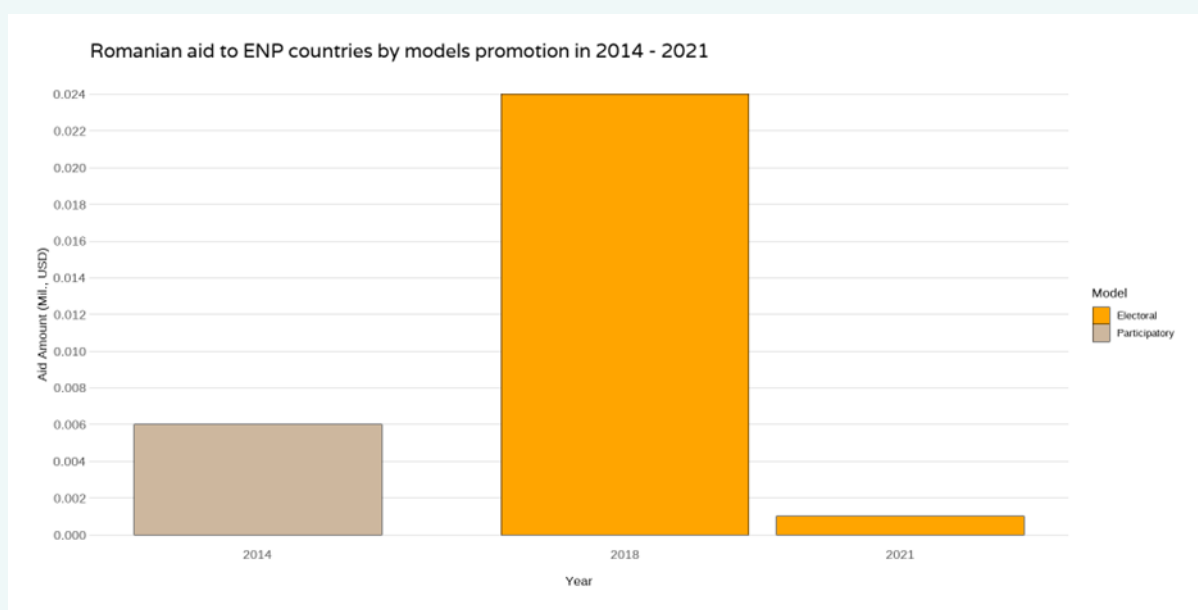
**Figure 3.38: Distribution of support by main sectors of Armenia in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.**



**Figure 3.39: Distribution of support by main sectors of Georgia in 2014-2021. All figures in euro.**

This is the special significance of the region that Armenia and Georgia represent for the EU, which are linked by close economic, social and cultural ties. Due to this, changes in one of the states are automatically reflected in the other.

In terms of democracy promotion models, which are depicted in Figure 3.40, Romania's aid to EN countries from 2014 to 2021 shows limited diversity and very few data points, making it challenging to draw comprehensive conclusions. The available data reveals that Romania's aid focuses on only two models: Participatory in 2014 and Electoral in 2018 and 2021. There's a significant spike in aid through the Electoral model in 2018, followed by a sharp decrease in 2021. The overall aid amounts are relatively small, with the highest point reaching only about \$0.024 million in 2018. Considering Romania's size and economic capacity, especially when compared to smaller Baltic states, the diversity and scale of its democracy promotion efforts appear limited. This narrow focus on electoral and participatory models, coupled with the sporadic nature of the aid, suggests a less comprehensive approach to democracy promotion in EN countries than one might expect from a country of Romania's stature in the region.



**Figure 3.40: Romanian aid to EN countries by models of promotion in 2014-2021.**

### 3.6.4 Conclusions

Since the adoption of the Law on International Cooperation for Development and Humanitarian Aid in 2016 (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016), Romania has established a strong legal and institutional framework, focusing on key areas such as good governance, education and public administration reform. Moldova and Ukraine have emerged as the primary beneficiaries of Romanian aid, reflecting Romania's commitment to supporting their European integration and addressing security challenges in the region.

In the concept of European integration policy of the EN countries, democratisation, the rule of law and the system of human rights occupy a central place in the issue of security. Romania developed and perceived national security and defence in two different periods, especially in relation to Moldova and Ukraine. Moreover, throughout this period, the problem of Romanian national security was considered as part of the European and Euro-Atlantic security system.

Recent events in Moldova and Russia's war against Ukraine clearly show that issues of European integration and defence of the eastern neighbourhood countries are taking on a new dimension, especially from a political point of view. In the new context, when the security paradigm in Europe is undergoing changes, Romania is called upon not only to increase its defence budget but also to participate more actively and effectively in the formation of the European security system and the development of regional defence in expanding the democratic zone of cooperation, prosperity and security. Romania, as an EU member, shares its strategic views on policies in this region. Thanks to Romania's significant support, Moldova's Europeanisation process can counter and effectively defend itself against Russia's open hostility.

The evolution of Moldovan-Romanian relations was accompanied by several short periods of pragmatism, which always arose after long-term cooperation and dialogue between the authorities of Chisinau and Bucharest. Having adopted the concept of pragmatism, Moldova and Romania intend to gradually work to resolve complex political issues. Ethnolinguistic policy in Moldova is inseparable from the country's European integration policy, and the official adoption of the Romanian language as the state language of Moldova brought it closer culturally to Romania.

## 3.7 Sweden

### 3.7.1 Policy Framework and Objectives

Discussing the case of Sweden and its ODA, it is necessary to mention that in 1975, Sweden became the first country to comply with the UN target by allocating 0.7% of its GNI to development assistance (OECD 2019). The assistance and allocations by the Government of Sweden remained consistently above this threshold since then. However, in 2022, its new right-wing government announced that the country would put a stop to spending at least 1% of GNI on foreign development aid (Donor Tracker 2023). The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs is the main responsible body to oversee the country's development cooperation policy and budget.

Sweden is recognised as having a long tradition of promoting international and regional development aid. The Swedish Government has established institutions and issued a number of documents to promote official development assistance (ODA) cooperation. The International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is the main institution established by the Swedish Government to promote support for and cooperation with governments, private and civil society sectors in countries around the world. Through SIDA, the Swedish Government has established bilateral cooperation with some 35 countries, helping to fight poverty and contribute to the development of societies around the world. SIDA has been commissioned by the Government to implement strategies: geographical and thematic (mainly, focusing on human rights, democracy and the rule of law). SIDA's work is guided by the government's strategies (Government of Sweden 2016). The cooperation dynamics between the Government and SIDA is facilitated by SIDA staff, who draft the strategy for cooperation (usually for a five-year period, based on analysis and evaluation of former performance and consultations with the Government). The draft strategy is submitted for the confirmation of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by the final decision of the Government (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency 2024). The cooperation between the Government and SIDA can be considered rather horizontal, considering that the highest management body of the Agency: its governing board consists of members appointed by the Government (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency 2024).

It must be mentioned that the Swedish Government has also been vocal in terms of the importance of promoting the principle of coherence, and especially so in terms of encouraging development aid cooperation. The Government has prioritised shared responsibility by promoting the Policy Coherence for Development, in the larger scope of its policy for global development (for example, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2012). Previously, the Government has issued the "Policy for global development in the implementation of the 2030 (UN Sustainable Development Goals, SDG) Agenda", taking on responsibilities and recognising the leading role of the Government in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, both nationally and internationally (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2018). Recognisably, Sweden has built its prosperity on trade (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2024a). Considering that, and according to the same and latest statement of Government Aid Policy, trade remains an important aspect linked to Swedish ODA.

Sweden has had an explicit and systematic focus on poverty (OECD 2019). Human rights, democracy and the rule of law appear as guiding principles throughout the entire Swedish foreign policy (Schaffer 2021). The policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance sets out the main objective of Swedish aid policy, namely, to provide help towards better living conditions for populations in poverty and under oppression; to save lives, alleviate suffering and uphold human dignity – especially in the regions and countries prone to conflict, natural disasters or other similar situations (Government of Sweden 2016).

Promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law stands high on the Swedish Government's agenda. It is important to mention regarding the case of Sweden, that in the context of its ODA and offering economic investments, the Government recognises the importance of demanding countries' progress on

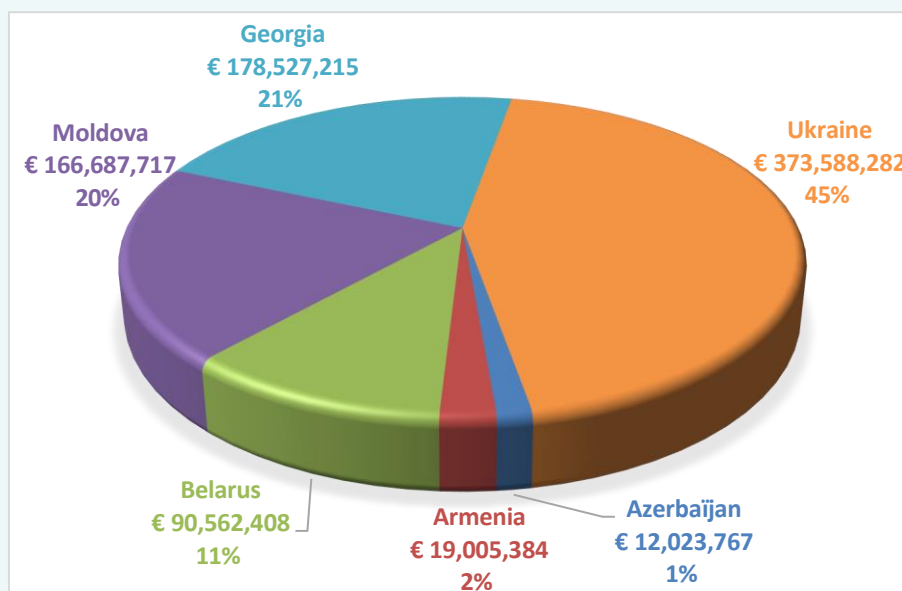
human rights and democracy (Government of Sweden 2016). The Swedish Government recognises the rights perspective (based on human rights and democracy) as fundamental to Swedish development aid and cooperation. In fact, Sweden's ambitions on human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law are considerably higher than those agreed upon in the 2030 Agenda (Government of Sweden 2016, 19). Referring to the promotion of international aid, the Government's strategies and policy documents highlight the linkage between the promotion of democracy and assisting poverty alleviation, as the first variable supports the later, in terms of making people living in poverty able to also improve their living conditions and defend their human rights (ibid.).

To reiterate, Swedish development cooperation is considered among the best in the world, as, for example, over the years, the country has scored high on the results of its development cooperation in OECD evaluations (Government of Sweden 2016). Swedish development assistance has undergone some changes, described as follows. In the period 2012-14, the Government has been focused on implementing the Policy of Coherence for development, focusing on the issues identified as global challenges since 2008, including economic exclusion (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2012). In 2013, the Government put forward the Aid policy framework, setting out the direction of Swedish aid deriving from the rights-perspective, and with the clear hierarchy of objectives. The Aid policy framework took its point of departure from Sweden's Policy for Global Development (adopted in 2003), with the overarching objective of contributing to equitable and sustainable global development (Government Offices of Sweden 2013). In 2015, to adapt to global changing conditions, new challenges and needs around the world, Sweden established a new development agenda along with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change (Government of Sweden 2016). The world agreed on new priorities with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015, and with the new agenda the Swedish Government sought to respond to it, by aligning with changes and identifying synergies between the country's own development agenda and global needs. The main perspectives integrated into the new development plan focused on: poverty (the lives of the poor), a rights perspective, a conflict perspective, a gender-equality perspective and an environmental and climate perspective.

In 2016, Sweden put forward a policy framework for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance recognising that the country's bilateral aid should be orienting towards the lowest-income and most vulnerable countries (Donor Tracker 2023).

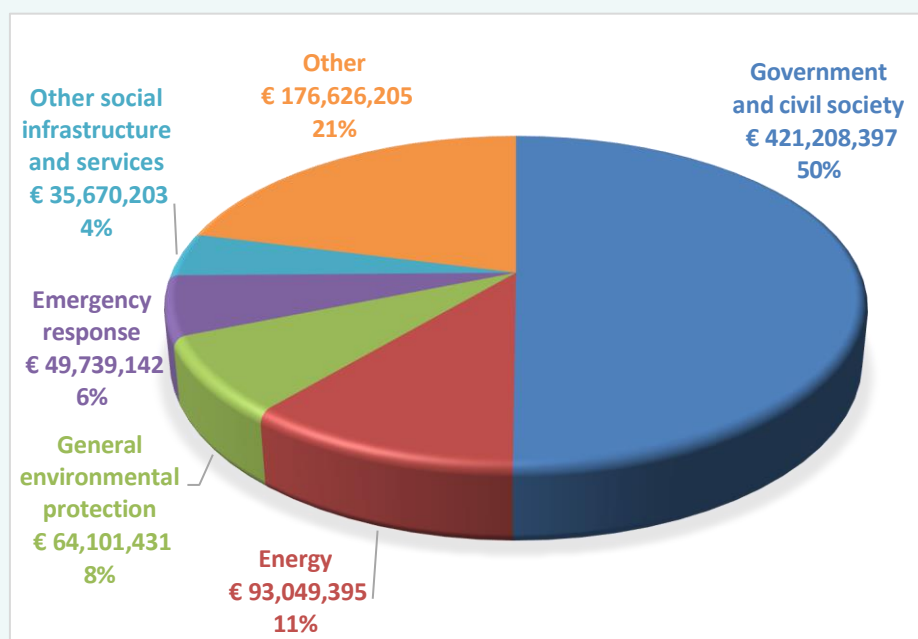
### 3.7.2 Geographical, Strategic, and Financial Focus

It warrants highlighting that the EaP has been a Swedish and a Polish initiative, launching the Partnership framework in 2009, aiming to bring the six partner states in Eastern Europe closer to the European standards of governance, by also exercising a stable eastern borderline. Although Sweden has played a significant role in the establishment of the EaP and promoting cooperation with the eastern partners, it is important to highlight that regarding its geographical engagements, other regions have been prioritised. Sweden has provided support to the EN countries, since the establishment of the framework with Eastern partners. In the period 2009-2021, Swedish net disbursement to the six eastern neighbours totalled €841.5 million, see Figure 3.41 for details. The Figure shows that during the period under consideration in this research, Sweden has provided more assistance to the three so-called front-runner countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova), which have also been offered (and accepted) the EU Association agenda.



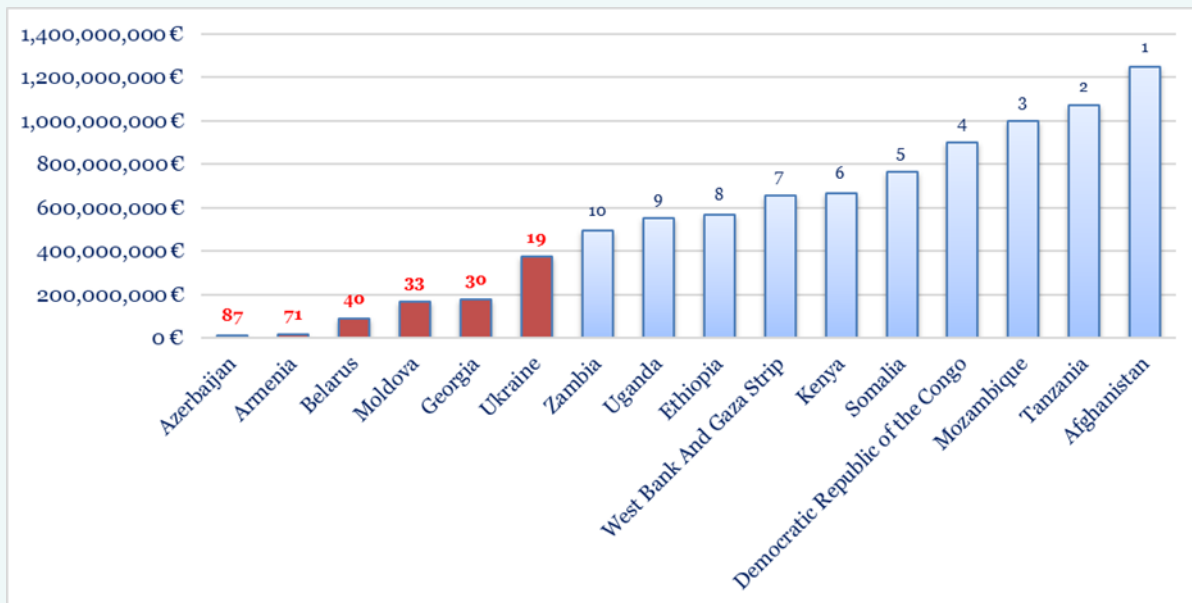
**Figure 3.41: Swedish ODA Disbursements to the EN countries between 2009 and 2021.**

Regarding the support provided to the EN region by sector the data is as per Figure 3.42. The main sector supported for development in the EN countries has been “Government and civil society”, identifying an effort to support countries’ democratisation and development of institutions, among others by means of civil society. Support for education has been included in the top seven areas, having received the most net disbursements by Sweden towards EN partners.



**Figure 3.42: Sectoral allocation of total Swedish bilateral aid (2009-2021)**

To provide an understanding of Swedish support to the EN region, it is interesting to view this in comparison to the country’s overall bilateral support provided to the top ten countries receiving the highest amounts of aid (see, Figure 3.43). The data shows that the eastern neighbourhood has not been among the geographical priorities for Sweden. Ukraine seems to have had the most attention, whereas Azerbaijan and Armenia have received the least assistance.



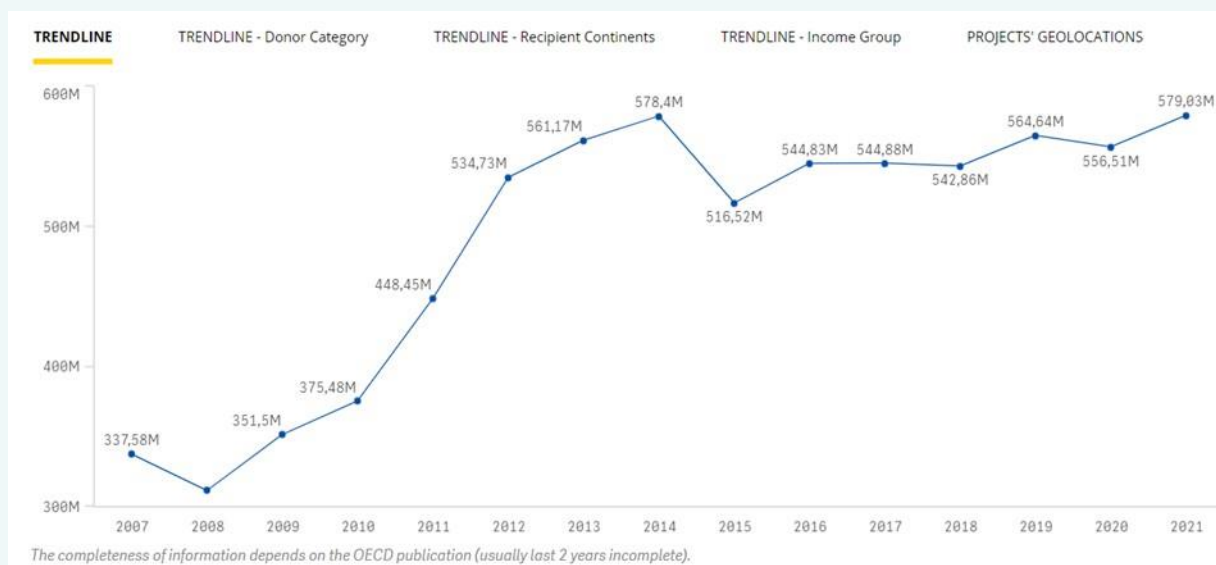
**Figure 3.43: Top 10 Swedish aid recipient countries between 2009 and 2021 and the EN countries with their respective rank.**

Regarding Swedish policy towards individual EN countries, the data shows that the largest recipient has been Ukraine, which received from Sweden a total of €374 million in the period 2010-2021. In that period and based on the total amount of ODA, Sweden has been the fifth main donor-entity supporting Ukraine, after the EU Commission, Germany, the European Investment Bank and Poland. “Democratic participation and civil society” have been the third largest sector prioritised in Swedish support towards Ukraine. Among the EN countries, the next largest recipient has been Georgia (€179 million). Sweden’s aid policy towards Georgia has been mainly conditioned by recognising the importance of supporting reforms that would help the country move closer to EU entry, mainly with knowledge and resources (SIDA 2024). Meanwhile, Moldova, comes third on Sweden’s EN-recipient list in the same period (a total of €167 million). Swedish policy has been somewhat changing, with rises and falls, conditioned by the EU’s more unfavourable attitude/Moldova’s more negative image in the EU, compared, for example, to Ukraine and Georgia (Cenuşa 2016). The main sector supported by Sweden in Moldova in the period under consideration has been “Democratic participation and civil society”, with intentions to help Moldova move closer to the EU, by complying with the EU Association agenda in a timely and rigorous manner. Sweden has provided up to €91 million to Belarus, with the main top sectors being “Democratic participation and civil society” and “Education” . In the period considered, the year that Belarus has received the highest amount of aid was 2011 (€15 million). Since then, Sweden’s assistance to Belarus has been somewhat decreasing, it may be assumed due to the lack of the country’s performance and a lack of actual political will to implement reforms and development. Armenia has received a total of €19 million in ODA (2009-2021). After Armenia’s revolution (2018), Sweden has openly demonstrated its increased interest in supporting the country on its way to democratic transformation. The Swedish government increased its support to Armenia to undertake democratic reforms. As a result, the countries established a bilateral programme for Sweden’s development cooperation with Armenia designating targeted funding for areas of institutional development, anti-corruption mechanisms, development of civil society and media (Embassy of Sweden in Armenia 2019). Among the EN countries, Azerbaijan has received the least aid from Sweden (€12 million).

The Swedish bilateral dimension with the eastern neighbourhood has been focused on supporting the countries towards their EU Association Agenda (Eduards 2013). Some specific examples of Swedish implementation initiatives in individual countries are as follows. For example, in partnership with UNDP, Sweden supports an initiative to address the weak justice system and the problematic conditions for women, through the “Strengthening Efficiency and Access to Justice” project, initiated in 2020, with Moldova. In Georgia, during the period under consideration in this research, the Swedish Government has supported the two phases of the initiative addressing the challenges of gender equality (in partnership with UN Agencies).

The Swedish Government, through SIDA, has supported women’s political and economic empowerment, contributed to elimination of violence against women, and the realisation of sexual and reproductive rights. Human rights, democracy and gender equality have similarly been the core focus of Swedish support to Armenia. SIDA has contributed to assisting the implementation of essential reforms for the country’s democratic development, the rule of law and accountability, by supporting the country’s parliament and the judiciary (in partnership with UNDP and the Swedish Judicial Authority). Swedish support to Armenia is also channelled through the establishment and representation of the Swedish Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Armenia. The Institute in Europe only has offices in Armenia beyond its Swedish headquarters, with the only representation in the European region. In addition to focusing on the promotion of human rights, it is notable to mention the availability of the EN regional network (Forumciv): a platform for civil society actors, a CSO-umbrella entity engaged among others with the eastern neighbourhood partners. The Swedish civil society engages to build joint advocacy efforts for policy and political strategies in diverse areas. The network prioritises cooperation with civil society, academia and think tanks across the EN region.

Swedish ODA for the eastern neighbourhood partners has been facilitated by the understanding and the need to support countries’ physical, institutional and mental infrastructures, to help the societies progress, by overcoming the lack of democratic relations, reforming failed practices, and leaving behind the Soviet heritage (Eduards 2013). Democracy promotion has become the main aim in Sweden’s foreign policy based on its ODA disbursement (Schaffer 2021). Swedish aid is uniquely generous, and Sweden has become an “outlier in democracy promotion through development aid” (Schaffer 2021). Within the scope of democracy promotion, the distinctive targets of Swedish development assistance have been democratic participation, civil society, and human rights (Ibid.). Additionally, Swedish foreign policy of development aid disbursement has been facilitated based on the values and principles of solidarity, social democracy, and equality prevalent also in their society.



**Figure 3.44: Sweden's ODA disbursement for democracy promotion (Government and civil society) 2007-2021.**

Human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are priority areas within Swedish global development assistance (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2024a). It was even argued that the use of development aid in Swedish politics has become something resembling a nation branding strategy, with democracy and human rights as its defining features (Schaffer 2021). Swedish development policy is strongly focused on supporting democracy building and civil society and gender equality (OECD 2023a). Sweden’s policy priorities are also coherent with its thematic support through development assistance, as the country allocates assistance strongly focusing on democratic governance (Ibid.). Figure 3.44 shows Sweden’s

disbursement of ODA related to democracy promotion (Sector: Government and civil society, with sub-sectors including: anti-corruption organisations and movements, democratic participation and civil society, elections, human rights, legal and judicial development, media and free flow of information, public sector policy and administrative management, women's rights organisations and movements).

As the recent available data suggests, the focus of Swedish ODA includes humanitarian support, democracy, climate action, gender equality, trade, migration and support to Ukraine. Sweden's main strategic focus remains on poverty reduction and the region of the sub-Saharan Africa. Swedish total ODA increased in 2022 due to in-donor refugee costs (OECD 2024e). The concerns that have driven Swedish ODA have been concentrated on the following three questions: "How can development assistance create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression? Does the design of Swedish development assistance take account of current understanding of how aid should be targeted? How can official development assistance interact with or complement other sources of finance?" (Expert Group for Aid Studies 2019).

The OECD's data suggests that in 2021, Swedish bilateral ODA was primarily focused on Africa, followed by the Middle East. Africa was also the main regional recipient of Sweden's earmarked contributions to multilateral organisations (OECD 2024e).

After Russia's war in Ukraine, the perceptions of security in the larger neighbourhood started to shift, also among the EU members. Thereby, security has become an even greater focal point for the Government's strategic interests. Most recently, following Sweden's accession to NATO, the Government recognised that the development in Sweden's neighbourhood will become more predictable and its neighbours will become more secure (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2024b).

In terms of democracy promotion models, shown in Figure 3.45, Sweden's aid to EN countries from 2009 to 2021 demonstrates a diverse and evolving approach, with significant variations in both the models employed and the overall aid amounts over time. The Participatory model forms a consistent base throughout most of the period, indicating Sweden's ongoing commitment to grassroots democratic engagement. However, the prominence of other models fluctuates considerably year by year. In the early years (2009-2011), there's a mix of Egalitarian, Participatory, Liberal, and Peace models, suggesting a broad initial approach. The middle period (2012-2016) sees a shift towards greater emphasis on the Liberal and Participatory models, with a notable spike in Electoral support in 2014. The latter years (2017-2021) show the most diversity and the highest overall aid amounts. This period is marked by the strong emergence of the Feminist model, which becomes a dominant component of Sweden's aid strategy. The Liberal model also gained significant traction during these years, often complementing the Feminist approach. This data paints a picture of Sweden as a dynamic and committed supporter of democracy in EN countries, willing to adapt its strategies and increase its financial commitment over time. The diversity of models employed and the substantial growth in aid amounts suggest a sophisticated and diverse approach to democracy promotion.

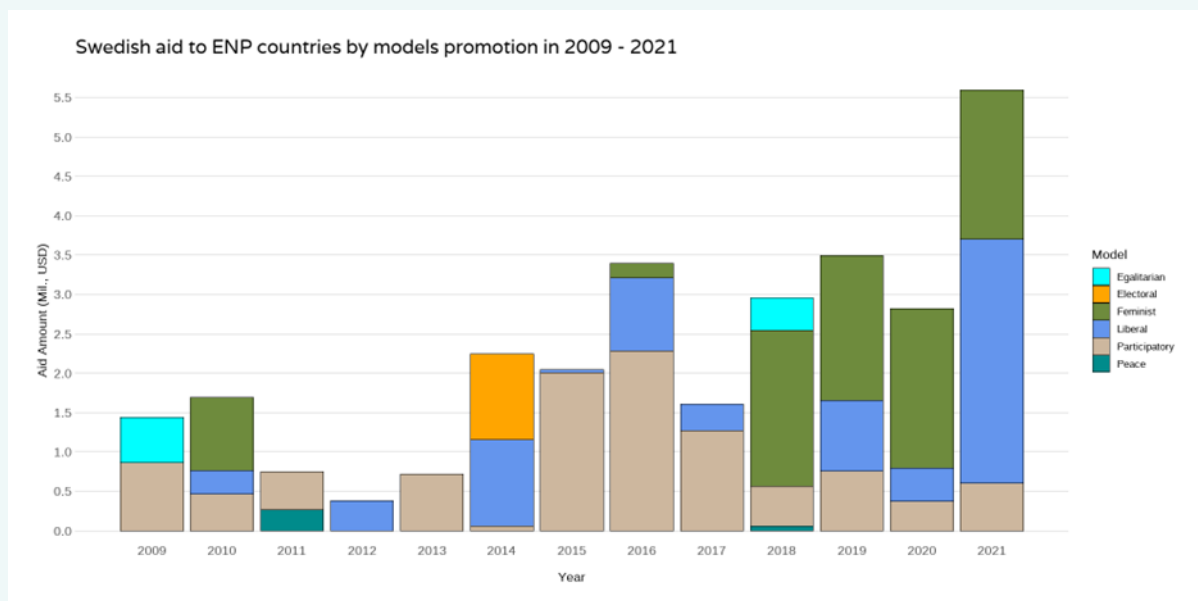


Figure 3.45: Swedish aid to ENP countries by models of democracy promotion in the years 2009-2021.

### 3.7.3 Implementation and Partnerships

The main government institutions in Sweden through which the ODA is disbursed are the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Folke Bernadotte Academy (for peace, security and development), and the Swedish Institute (data from 2021, European Commission 2024). As of 2022 data, Sweden is the ninth country-donor in the world based on the largest shares of aid allocation (or total development spending) (ibid.). Figure 3.46 shows that over a number of years Sweden’s aid allocation has been consistent, with Sweden favouring bilateral development assistance rather than multilateral cooperation (either through bilateral direct funding or bilateral funding earmarked through multilateral cooperation) (Donor Tracker 2023).

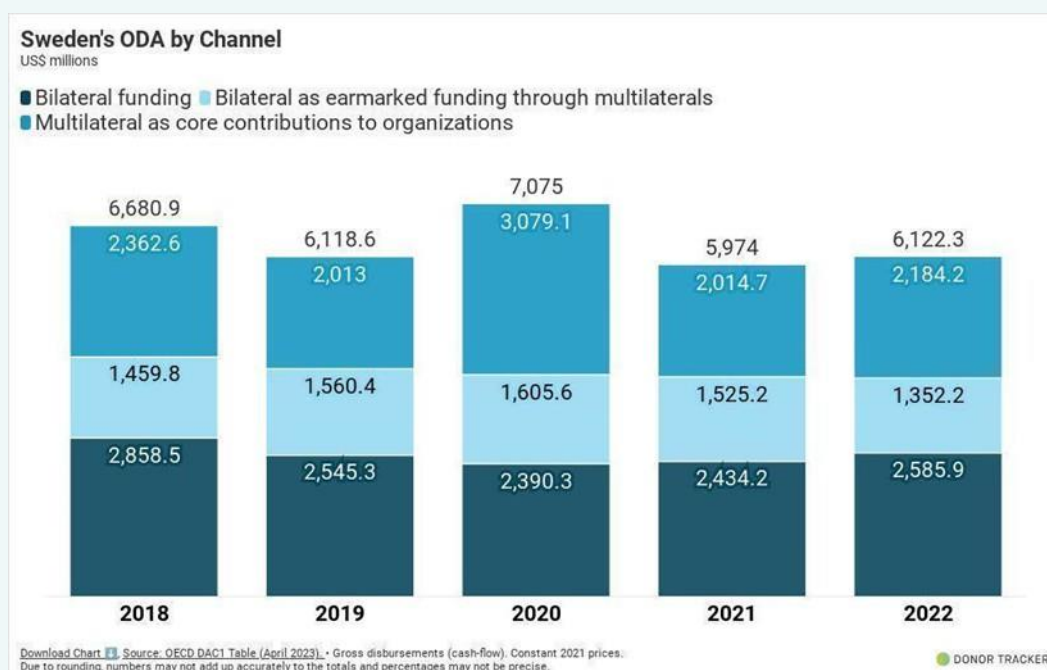


Figure 3.46: Sweden's development assistance by channel, figures in USD (2018-2022) (Donor Tracker 2023).

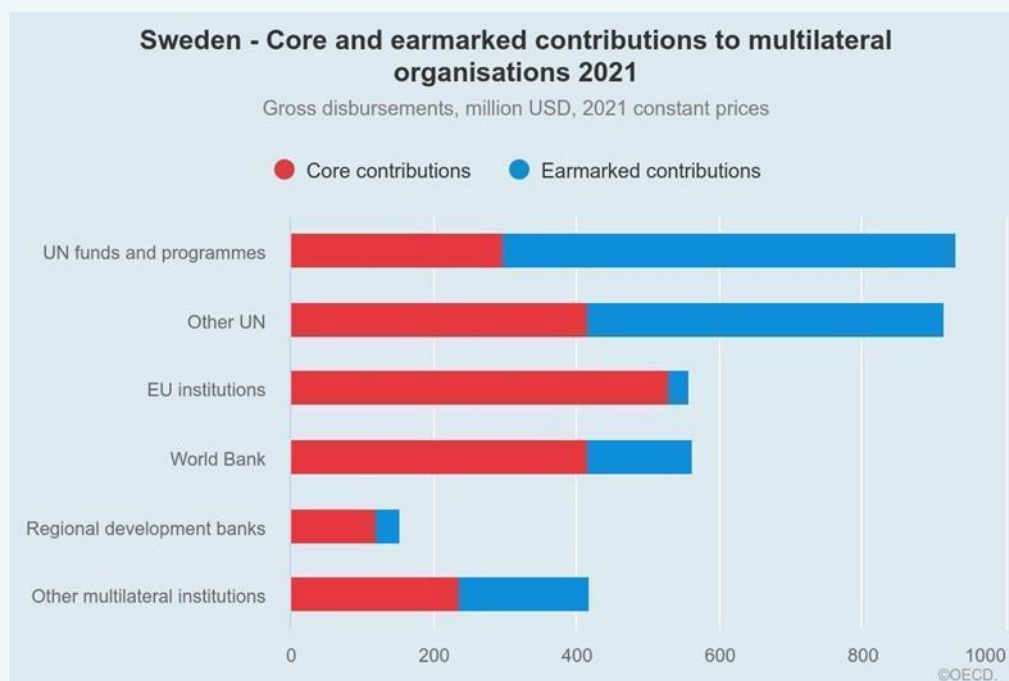
Sweden’s bilateral assistance for the past years has been primarily focused on Africa, which has also been the leading regional recipient of Swedish earmarked contributions through multilateral assistance (OECD

2023a). Sweden’s bilateral and multilateral assistance sector-based support seems to have been coherent. For example, in 2021, almost half of Sweden’s contributions through bilateral aid was allocated to social infrastructure and social services (see, figure 3.42). The main investments in this area referred to provision of support to government and civil society, education and health sectors (OECD 2023a). Similarly, the earmarked multilateral assistance was focused on supporting, firstly, the governments and civil society, followed by emergency response and education.

Regarding Sweden’s multilateral assistance, the three main stakeholders to employ this function are the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SIDA and Swedish Embassies in partner countries. The main sources (international organisations) through which the Swedish multilateral assistance is disbursed, are: The International Development Association, The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and The African Development Fund. The latest, also demonstrates Sweden’s geographical priority of providing development assistance to the African continent (Donor Tracker 2023).

The data shows that in the period 2009-2021, Sweden has provided ODA to the eastern partners through diverse resources and types of engagements, including financial and non-financial assistance, by supporting countries’ resource, physical, and mental infrastructure. The main channel of cooperation in the region on behalf of Sweden has been the Government donor support implemented through funding projects in the six eastern neighbours. The second main channel of cooperation has been international NGOs, followed by the EN region’s country-based civil society. The additional cooperation channels include UNDP, EBRD, multilateral organisations and the academic sector.

Swedish development cooperation is organised in partnership with diverse actors, including governments, EU institutions, UN agencies, international financial institutions and civil society actors (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2023). The role of local and international stakeholders has been crucial in channelling the country’s multilateral assistance. For example, in 2021, Sweden channelled its bilateral ODA especially and mainly through multilateral organisations and NGOs. The main two international partners in cooperation are: the UN system, the EU institutions, and the World Bank, in descending order. Figure 3.47 shows Sweden’s core and earmarked contributions (as of 2021) to the international partners, within the EU and international organisations (OECD 2024e).

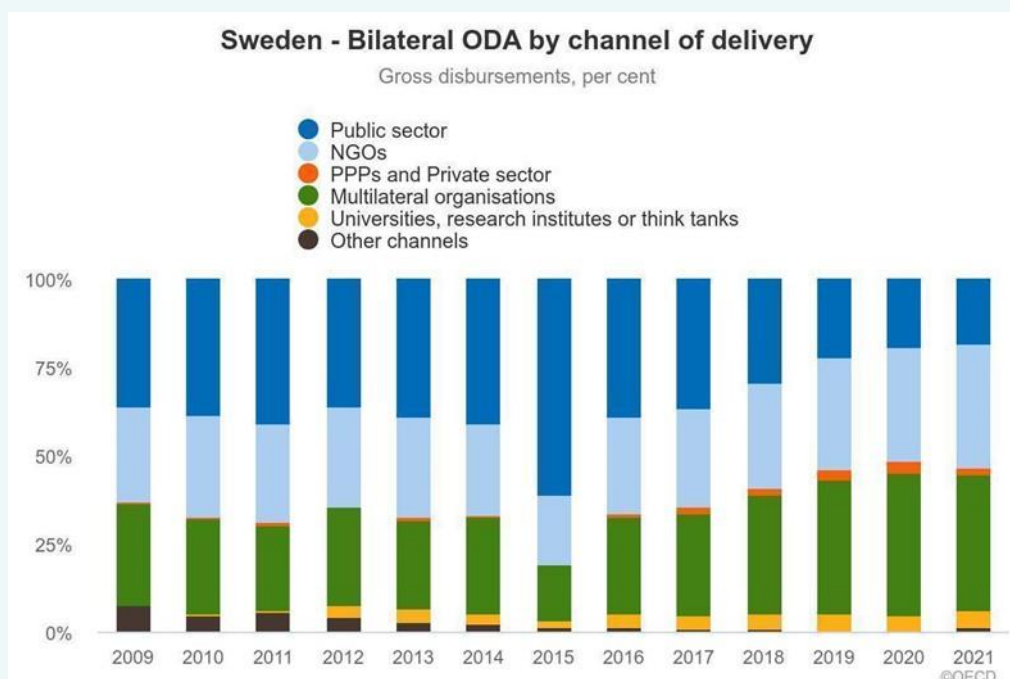


**Figure 3.47: Sweden's contributions to multilateral organisations 2021 (OECD 2024e).**

In 2017, Sweden introduced new guidelines for development cooperation strategies to clarify the roles between the government agencies (mainly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA), including in terms of

ODA delivery. The update of the strategy also included the aim to improve regular communication on humanitarian aid leading to more joined-up programming. These reforms are said to have contributed to Sweden being able to deliver a more cohesive and coherent programme (OECD 2019).

Sweden works with a number of different actors including the public sector, NGOs, private-public partnerships, multilateral organisations as well as the academic sector, including universities, research institutes and think tanks. Figure 3.48 shows the percentage of bilateral ODA channelled by these sources from 2009-2021. From the data, we can infer that the majority of bilateral assistance has been channelled through local stakeholders (compared with the percentage for multilateral organisations). For example, in 2021, the share of the bilateral ODA channelled through multilateral organisations was 38.5% out of the total bilateral ODA (OECD 2024e).



**Figure 3.48: Sweden's bilateral ODA through local and multilateral stakeholders (2009-2021) (OECD 2024e).**

### 3.7.4 Conclusion

Sweden has a long tradition of promoting international and regional development aid. The country has developed a number of institutions and adopted a number of documents to promote ODA. The ODA aspect of Swedish foreign policy is based on Sweden's long tradition rooted in the values and principles of solidarity, social democracy, and equality. Regarding the approaches to uphold ODA it is relevant to stress that the Swedish Government has prioritised the rights perspective and the principle of coherence, whereby both are recognised as fundamental for Swedish development aid and cooperation. Human rights, democracy, and the rule of law democracy promotion have become priorities in Swedish foreign policy considering its ODA disbursement. Swedish foreign policy is characterised by select distinctive aspects (in the scope of ODA), which include an explicit and systematic focus on poverty, democracy and the rule of law.

In the scope of this research, it warrants reiteration that the EaP has been a Swedish and a Polish initiative, launching the Partnership framework in 2009. Looking forward, the Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe (2021–2027) identifies the eastern neighbourhood as the main framework for promoting democratic governance, human rights, the rule of law, and also gender equality (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2021). While the EN does not represent the region of geographical ODA priority for Sweden, it however does appear to be the region prioritised in terms of democracy development, rule of law, human rights, and civil society.

Regarding the policy towards the eastern partners, the recent data shows unprecedented provision of support to Ukraine (among the six eastern neighbours), with the next two largest recipients being Moldova and Georgia. The role of local and international stakeholders has been crucial in channelling the country's multilateral assistance. For example, in 2021, Sweden channelled its bilateral ODA especially and mainly through multilateral organisations and civil society.

## 4 Analysis

This section synthesises and compares the democracy promotion strategies of the seven key European donors presented in this working paper, namely Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Sweden, in the EN region. Building upon the detailed case studies presented in Section 3, which examined each country's unique approach, objectives, and implementation methods, this section offers a comprehensive comparative analysis. The analysis begins with a detailed table that systematically compares these countries across the dimensions explored in all country cases, including their legal frameworks, guiding principles, strategic foci, and implementation methods. In this way, the paper identifies patterns, similarities, and distinctive features among the donors' strategies.

Following the comparative table (Table 4.1), the section presents a series of concise yet comprehensive summaries for each country. These summaries distil the essential elements of each donor country approach, highlighting their primary objectives, key strategies, and unique contributions to democracy promotion in the EN region. They also examine the implications of each country's approach, both for the donor itself and for the recipient countries. Furthermore, these summaries analyse how each country's strategy stands out compared to other donors, providing a nuanced understanding of the diverse landscape of democracy promotion efforts. By comparing these different approaches, the analysis provides valuable insights into how each country leverages its resources, experiences, and priorities to support democratic processes and institutions in EN countries. This comparative perspective illuminates not only the individual contributions of each donor but also offers a broader understanding of the collective impact of these varied approaches on democratic development in the region. Through this systematic comparison and detailed summary, the section aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges of promoting democracy in this area, as well as the different ways in which donor countries adapt their strategies to the unique contexts of the EN countries.

	Estonia	Germany	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Romania	Sweden
Norms							
Legal and policy framework [How does practical ODA policy look like based on the legal framework – what are its principal actors and mechanisms]	<p>Conditions and procedure for providing development and humanitarian aid, adopted in 2021 on the basis of § 8 (1) point 11 of the Foreign Communications Act (2006)</p> <p>The MFA is responsible for developing international development aid policies, state strategies and action plans.</p> <p>The Estonian Centre for International Development (ESTDEV, established in 2021) is responsible for implementing the international development cooperation strategy of the MFA.</p>	<p>No designated development cooperation law</p> <p>Development policy coordinated by Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</p> <p>Multifunctional Cross-sectional approach involving multiple ministries</p> <p>BMZ responsible for planning and political management of German development cooperation</p> <p>Implementation carried out by various state institutions and independent actors</p> <p>Key actors: KfW (financial cooperation), GIZ (technical</p>	<p>Law on International Assistance (2008)</p> <p>The unified consulting and support centre for applicants for development cooperation projects is the Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA), which is a direct management institution subordinated to the Minister of Finance.</p> <p>The functions of Development Cooperation Agency are performed by the CFCA in close cooperation with the MFA, which ensures the development and implementation of Latvia's development cooperation policy.</p>	<p>Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (2013)</p> <p>The multi-stakeholder forum led by the MFA (the National Development Cooperation Commission, established in 2014), is responsible for PCD in development cooperation.</p> <p>The MFA implements development cooperation activities and organises the provision of humanitarian aid through the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Provision Commission (established in 2014).</p> <p>Since 2017, the functions of the development cooperation project management have been</p>	<p>Development Cooperation Act from September 16, 2011 as legal foundation</p> <p>Three spheres: development aid, humanitarian aid, and global education</p> <p>Multiple entities involved, including public and private sectors</p> <p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) responsible for coordinating development cooperation</p> <p>Multi-year programmes specify geographical and thematic goals</p> <p>Yearly plans set up by MFA for specific budget allocations</p> <p>Development</p>	<p>Law on International Cooperation for Development and Humanitarian Aid of November 9, 2016 as legal foundation</p> <p>Three spheres: development aid, humanitarian aid, and global education</p> <p>Multiple entities involved, including public and private sectors</p> <p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for coordinating development cooperation and humanitarian assistance</p> <p>Romanian Agency for International Development Cooperation (RoAid) implements</p>	<p>Strategies, policy documents &amp; government communication papers designating &amp; evaluating international development cooperation, including 2013: Aid Policy Framework. The Direction of Swedish Aid; 2016: Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, and recent 2023: Development Assistance for a New Era Freedom Empowerment and Sustainable Growth.</p> <p>Development policy coordinated by Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Multifunctional Cross-sectional approach involving Ministry of Foreign Affairs, partnerships with international institutions, locally</p>

		cooperation)  Political foundations play significant role in democracy promotion		partially transferred to the Central Project Management Agency (CPMA).	Cooperation Programme Board in consultative role	assistance activities since 2018  Multi-year strategic programmes specify goals and priorities	established Agencies, civil society actors  ODA disseminated via the main international agency created for this purpose (SIDA): ODA strategy: geographic and thematic.  Key actors: Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SIDA, Folke Bernadotte Academy, The Swedish Institute.
<b>Guiding principles</b> [What are the guiding principles of a country's ODA policy. What are its main normative principles]	Contributing to the reduction of poverty and achievement of the MDGs (2011-2015)  Contributing to the reduction of poverty and achievement of the SDGs (2016-2020)	International solidarity  Germany's own interests (foreign policy and economic)  Alignment with global development agendas (e.g., UN SDGs)  Emphasis on fair trade and sustainable private investments	When implementing the MDGs, Latvia focused on the aspects of human rights and human security (2011-2015).  Alignment with global development agendas (e.g., UN SDGs)	Alignment with global development agendas (e.g., UN SDGs, in particular SDGs 1, 4, 5, 13, 16, 17)  Compliance with the objectives of the EU's Eastern Partnership policy and the Vilnius and Riga summit declarations	Promotion of democracy, human rights, and good governance  Economic development and general well-being of population  Sharing Poland's experience of democratic and economic transition  Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals and EU development agendas	Strong emphasis on democracy promotion, human rights, and good governance  Economic development and poverty eradication  Sharing Romania's experience of democratic and economic transition  Alignment with EU development agendas and security interests	International solidarity, a long tradition of promoting international and regional development  Alignment with global development agendas (e.g., UN SDGs)  Emphasis on poverty, human rights, promoting democracy, rule of law, and sustainable development
<b>Emphasis on democracy</b>	Supporting human development; peace,	Good governance featured	Democracy, human rights, good governance, the rule of	Gender equality and empowerment of all	Central recurring theme in	Central recurring theme in strategic	Democracy promotion, rule of law, human

<p><b>promotion and good governance</b> [how prominently are democracy promotion and good governance feature within the principles and strategies of a country's ODA?]</p>	<p>human rights, democracy, and the rule of law (2011-2015)</p> <p>Contributing to safeguarding peace and stability; supporting the development of democracy and the rule of law, introduction of good governance practices and guaranteeing human rights (2016-2020)</p>	<p>prominently in recent strategy documents</p> <p>Democracy promotion not explicitly prioritized, but incorporated in other sectors</p> <p>Focus on strengthening civil society and expanding partnerships with private sector</p>	<p>law, support to economic and institutional reforms, promoting involvement of the non-governmental sector and other representatives of the community and strengthening of local governments (2011-2015).Development and strengthening of the capacity of public administration, Development of entrepreneurship and strengthening of export capacity, prevention and solving of conflicts, peace and security, Promotion of democratic participation and development of the civil society, education (2016-2020)</p>	<p>women and girls; promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (2017-2019)</p>	<p>multiannual programmes</p> <p>Explicitly listed as horizontal issues in development projects</p> <p>Focus on systemic transformation and building modern state institutions</p> <p>Emphasis on subsidiarity and involvement of local partners</p>	<p>programmes</p> <p>Listed as first priority in development assistance activities</p> <p>Focus on the rule of law, civil society development, and state institutions</p> <p>Emphasis on security and conflict resolution, particularly in Moldova and Ukraine</p>	<p>rights featured prominently in recent strategy documents.</p> <p>Democracy is prioritised and recognised as an 'outlier' in Swedish ODA (along with pursuing geographical strategy and poverty reduction support)</p> <p>Focus on strengthening cooperation and expanding partnerships with civil society, academia</p>
<p><b>Focus on the EN and aid allocation patterns</b> [how important is the EN for each country]</p>	<p>Eastern neighbourhood (EN) region designated as primary geographic focus</p> <p>Strong emphasis on Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine</p> <p>Limited engagement with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus</p> <p>Afghanistan included as a non-EN priority partner</p>	<p>EN countries not top recipients in absolute terms, but prominent in per-capita aid</p> <p>Georgia and Armenia stand out as top per-capita recipients globally</p> <p>Ukraine receives significant absolute aid, especially after 2014</p>	<p>EN countries are priorities</p> <p>Apart from Armenia, all other EN countries are the largest recipients of aid (2015-2021)</p>	<p>Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova were priorities as neighbouring countries that have signed association agreements with the EU, including agreement parts on creation of deep and comprehensive free trade areas as well as implementation of these agreements and related reforms (2016-2021)</p>	<p>EN region designated as primary geographic focus area in both absolute and per capita terms</p>	<p>EN region designated as primary geographic focus</p>	<p>EN countries not top recipients in absolute terms</p> <p>Only Ukraine is the largest recipient of aid, but not because of Sweden's EN policy, but recently, due to war</p> <p>Among EN: the majority allocated to Associated countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova)</p>

				All EN countries are among the largest recipients in absolute terms (2014-2021)			
<b>Focus within the EN</b> [how is aid distributed within the EN?]	Strong emphasis on Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine  Limited engagement with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus	Varied focus across EN countries  Strong emphasis on South Caucasus countries (Georgia, Armenia)  Increased support to Ukraine post-2014  Limited engagement with Belarus, focus on civil society support	Varied focus across EN countries  Strong emphasis on two EU Associated countries: Ukraine and Georgia (2015-2021)  Limited engagement with Azerbaijan and almost no engagement with Armenia	Varied focus across EN countries  Strong emphasis on two Eastern European states (Ukraine, Belarus)  Limited engagement with Azerbaijan	Varied focus across EN countries based on specific needs and Poland's interests  Strong emphasis on Ukraine and Belarus (93% of total bilateral aid to EN) due to geographic proximity and security concerns  Georgia and Moldova also prioritized, but receive significantly less funding  Armenia and Azerbaijan given lower priority since 2016	Strong emphasis on Moldova and Ukraine  Limited engagement with other EN countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia)  Varied focus across EN countries based on specific needs and Romania's interests  Moldova and Ukraine receive most attention due to geographic proximity and security concerns  Emphasis on European integration for Moldova and Ukraine	Varied focus across EN countries  Strong emphasis on EU Associated countries: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova (recently increased support to Ukraine: an outlier country)  Limited engagement with Azerbaijan
<b>Sectoral priorities of ODA policy in</b>	Education as a key sector, especially in	Higher education as dominant sector	Government and civil society as dominant sector (53% of	Education as dominant sector (44% of total aid)	Education as dominant sector (nearly 50% of total	Education as dominant sector (nearly 74% of	Government and civil society as dominant

<p><b>the EN</b></p>	<p>Georgia</p> <p>Good governance and democracy promotion across priority countries</p> <p>Tailored approach for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine based on country strategies</p> <p>Focus on European integration and implementation of EU association agreements</p> <p>Emphasis on conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, especially in Georgia and Ukraine</p> <p>Economic development and green growth, particularly in Georgia</p> <p>Healthcare support, especially in Moldova</p> <p>ICT and e-governance solutions as a cross-cutting theme</p>	<p>Legal and judicial reform</p> <p>Public finance management</p> <p>Local governance and decentralisation</p> <p>Civil society development</p>	<p>total aid)</p> <p>Education (12% of total aid)</p> <p>Health (10% of total aid)</p> <p>Varied focus across ENP countries in terms of sectoral priorities:</p> <p>Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution (Ukraine, Georgia)</p> <p>Covid-19 control (Moldova)</p> <p>Elections (Armenia)</p> <p>Education (Azerbaijan)</p> <p>Human rights (Belarus)</p>	<p>Government and civil society (15% of total aid)</p> <p>Varied focus across EN countries in terms of sectoral priorities:</p> <p>Focus on Education policy and Higher education and (Belarus, Azerbaijan)</p> <p>Material relief assistance and services (Ukraine)</p> <p>Focus on Solar energy for centralised grids (Georgia, Moldova)</p> <p>Covid-19 control (Armenia)</p>	<p>aid)</p> <p>Government and civil society support (about 15% of total aid)</p> <p>Focus on decentralisation and local governance, particularly in Ukraine</p> <p>Support for independent media, especially in Belarus</p>	<p>total aid)</p> <p>Government and civil society support (about 18% of total aid)</p> <p>Focus on public administration reform</p> <p>Support for energy sector in some countries (e.g., Georgia)</p>	<p>sector (50% of total aid)</p> <p>Energy and environmental protection (11% of total aid) (Ukraine)</p> <p>Focus on democratic participation and civil society (Moldova, Georgia, Belarus, Armenia)</p>
<p><b>Strategic interests that drive ODA policy</b></p>	<p>Promoting stability and security in the region</p> <p>Supporting European integration of partner</p>	<p>Security interests, particularly in South Caucasus</p> <p>Economic interests</p>	<p>Contribution to international security to reduce or completely avert the possibilities of armed</p>	<p>Attention to the region of Eastern Europe is determined by historic, economic, and cultural</p>	<p>Security interests, particularly concerning immediate</p>	<p>Security interests, particularly concerning immediate</p>	<p>Explicit and systematic focus on poverty, human rights, democracy and the rule</p>

	<p>countries</p> <p>Sharing Estonia's transition experience and digital expertise</p> <p>Countering Russian influence in the region</p>	<p>(Germany as a 'trading nation')</p> <p>Regional stability</p> <p>Conflict resolution (e.g., Transnistria, Eastern Ukraine)</p>	<p>conflicts (The State Defence Concept 2012)</p> <p>Internal security; threats posed by foreign intelligence and security services; military threats; threats to the cohesion of the civic society; threats to Latvia's information space; economic threats; threats of international terrorisms; and cybersecurity (National Security Concept 2015)</p>	<p>links to the countries of the region.</p> <p>Lithuania is familiar with the political system of the neighbouring Eastern countries as well as their economic, social, and cultural characteristics and specific issues.</p> <p>Capacity of Russia to use military and economic, energy, information and other non-military measures in combination against the neighbouring countries, ability to exploit and create internal problems of the states located in the eastern neighbourhood (National Security Strategy 2017)</p>	<p>neighbours</p> <p>Promotion of Poland's international standing and brand</p> <p>Economic interests and trade linkages</p> <p>Desire to be seen as a reliable ally in the region</p>	<p>neighbours</p> <p>Promotion of European integration for Moldova and Ukraine</p> <p>Resolution of frozen conflicts (e.g., Transnistria)</p> <p>Countering Russian influence in the region</p>	<p>of law as guiding principles throughout ODA strategy.</p> <p>ODA strategic interest towards countries prone to conflict/natural disasters.</p> <p>Rights-perspective fundamental ODA cooperation.</p>
--	---	---	---	--	--	---	--

<p><b>Models</b></p>	<p>The Liberal model has been present throughout most years and appeared four times throughout the assessment period. It became increasingly prominent in later years, especially in 2021, where it dominated the aid allocation.</p> <p>The Participatory model was the second most-frequent one, appearing three times throughout this time. It played a significant role in several years, particularly 2013 and 2017. The Peace model makes a substantial appearance in 2017 and a smaller one in 2020, indicating periodic focus on conflict resolution or prevention.</p>	<p>Consistent emphasis on Participatory and Liberal models throughout the period, forming the foundation of Germany's approach.</p> <p>Significant fluctuations in total aid amount, with major peaks in 2015 and 2020-2021, indicating responsive adjustments to regional events or priorities.</p> <p>Diverse engagement across all six models, with a notable shift towards the Egalitarian model in 2021, suggesting an evolving strategy that adapts to changing needs in the region.</p>	<p>Initially exclusive emphasis on participatory democracy, through a period of mixed approaches including liberal and electoral models, to a final year dominated by egalitarian efforts.</p>	<p>Significant shift in focus from Peace-oriented and Liberal models in early years (2015-2016) to predominantly Liberal model in subsequent years (2017-2018).</p> <p>Introduction of new priorities in later years, including the Feminist model in 2020 and a more balanced approach incorporating Participatory and Liberal elements in 2021.</p>	<p>Diversity in democracy promotion models.</p> <p>Initial emphasis on participatory democracy to a later preference for liberal democratic models, while maintaining some commitment to egalitarian principles throughout the period.</p> <p>A notable feature is the substantial spike in aid during 2016, with the Participatory model receiving particularly large attention.</p> <p>The Feminist model appears sporadically, with a small but noticeable contribution in 2017.</p>	<p>Limited diversity and very few data points, making it challenging to draw comprehensive conclusions.</p> <p>Romania's aid focuses on only two models: Participatory in 2014 and Electoral in 2018 and 2021</p>	<p>Complex pattern of support across multiple democracy promotion models.</p> <p>In the early years (2009-2011), there's a mix of Egalitarian, Participatory, Liberal, and Peace models. The middle period (2012-2016) sees a shift towards greater emphasis on the Liberal and Participatory models, with a notable spike in Electoral support in 2014.</p> <p>The latter years (2017-2021) show the most diversity and the highest overall aid amounts. This period is marked by the strong emergence of the Feminist model, which becomes a dominant component of Sweden's aid strategy. The Liberal model also gains significant traction during these years, often complementing the Feminist approach.</p>
----------------------	---	--	--	---	---	---	--

Instruments	Estonia	Germany	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Romania	Sweden
<b>Nature of aid delivery</b> [bi or multilateral focus]	<p>Strong preference for bilateral aid, especially in priority countries</p> <p>Multilateral aid mainly for specific missions or election support</p>	<p>Strong emphasis on bilateral aid (58.7-65.5% of total ODA)</p> <p>Increasing engagement with multilateral channels</p> <p>Growing use of earmarked multilateral contributions</p>	<p>Strong emphasis on multilateral development assistance</p> <p>Use of earmarked multilateral contributions since 2017</p>	<p>Strong emphasis on multilateral development assistance</p> <p>Use of earmarked multilateral contributions since 2014 (increase observed in 2017)</p>	<p>Strong preference for multilateral aid (mainly through EU channels)</p> <p>Bilateral aid used for targeted support within EN region</p> <p>Yearly Call for Proposals system for project selection</p>	<p>Combination of bilateral and multilateral aid</p> <p>Dominance of multilateral support (mainly through EU channels)</p> <p>Bilateral aid used for targeted support within EN region</p>	<p>Bilateral ODA primarily focused on Africa &amp; Middle East.</p> <p>Bilateral ODA prevail multilateral cooperation (either through bilateral direct funding or bilateral funding earmarked through multilateral cooperation).</p> <p>Coherent bilateral and multilateral ODA.</p>
<b>Patterns of aid distribution channels</b> [through whom and how is aid channelled]	<p>Significant focus on public sector partnerships</p> <p>Increasing role of civil society organisations and private sector experts</p> <p>EstDev as key implementing agency for bilateral projects</p>	<p>Public sector as primary recipient (over 50% of aid)</p> <p>Increasing role of multilateral organisations</p> <p>Growing engagement with research institutions</p> <p>Slight increase in private sector involvement since 2016</p> <p>Stable share for NGOs</p>	<p>Aid channels:</p> <p>European Investment Bank - 28%</p> <p>University college or other teaching institution research institute or think-tank -15%</p> <p>Donor Government - 12%</p> <p>Central Government - 8%</p> <p>Donor country-based NGO- 7%</p> <p>OSCE - 4%</p>	<p>Aid channels: Donor Government -26%</p> <p>University college or other teaching institution research institute or think-tank- 19%</p> <p>Other public entities in donor country- 7%</p> <p>Public-Private Partnership - 6%</p>	<p>Over 80% of aid channelled through public sector partnerships</p> <p>About 10% of aid channelled through NGOs</p> <p>Decreasing funding and engagement with civil society organisations</p> <p>Solidarity Fund as key implementing actor for bilateral aid in EN countries</p>	<p>Significant focus on education sector</p> <p>Support for public administration reform and civil society organisations</p> <p>Varied distribution based on country-specific needs and priorities</p>	<p>Multilateral ODA through three main stakeholders (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SIDA and Swedish Embassies in partner countries); international organisations: International Development Association, UN WFP, African Development Fund</p> <p>Aid channels:</p> <p>8.6%- Donor Government</p> <p>8.3%- International NGO</p>

							7.8%- Developing country-based NGO 7.5%- Donor country-based NGO
<b>What role do partnerships with the civil society sector play</b>	<p>Collaboration with Estonian civil society organisations in project implementation</p> <p>Support for civil society development in partner countries, especially Belarus</p> <p>Emphasis on NGO involvement in various sectors, including education and healthcare</p>	<p>Preference for German-based CSOs</p> <p>Increasing engagement with international CSOs since 2016</p> <p>Limited role for local NGOs in recipient countries</p>	<p>Limited role for NGOs (Bilateral ODA, managed by the MFA, in which civil society of the partner country participates, decreased from 76% in 2015 to 55% in 2019)</p>	<p>According to the 2016 law, civil society, including NGOs, participates in the implementation of the development cooperation policy, as well as in informing and educating the public on development cooperation issues.</p> <p>The National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations' Platform brings together 16 Lithuanian development cooperation organisations. It aims to formulate and implement Lithuanian and EU development cooperation policy, strengthen the capacity of its member organisations and raise public awareness and knowledge of development</p>	<p>Limited and decreasing role of CSOs in receiving direct funding</p>	<p>Engagement with civil society organisations mentioned in strategic documents</p>	<p>Important channel of cooperation: international NGOs (followed by ENP's country-based civil society)</p>

				cooperation.			
<p><b>Temporal adaptations and responsive-ness</b> [how did the ODA policy change over time – did it react to new circumstances, such as the AA with three EN countries?]</p>	<p>Increased focus on Ukraine after 2014 conflict</p> <p>Adaptation to changing geopolitical circumstances (e.g., Russian aggression in Ukraine)</p> <p>Shift from dispersed aid to more focused approach on priority countries</p> <p>Responsive to partner countries' EU integration processes and reform needs</p>	<p>Clear temporal component in aid allocation</p> <p>Increased support following pro-democratic changes (e.g., Ukraine, Armenia)</p> <p>Responsive to political developments (e.g., protests in Belarus)</p> <p>Shift towards SDG focus after 2015</p> <p>Diversification of aid channels since 2016</p>	<p>Increase in political instability, social inequality, instability of the financial and capital markets, and migration flows.</p> <p>The direct and indirect impact of the Covid-19 pandemic</p> <p>The course of the Belarusian presidential election in 2020 and subsequent events have created the need to review the previous cooperation between Belarus and Latvia</p>	<p>The Association Agreements (AA) signed between the EU and Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine in 2014 further shaped Lithuania's ODA priorities.</p> <p>Since the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis, Lithuania's ODA policy has demonstrated flexibility in response to emerging political and security circumstances, adjusting its priorities and aid modalities to meet growing needs in Eastern Europe, intensifying its development cooperation efforts in Ukraine, to support stability, governance reforms, and economic development.</p>	<p>Shift towards alignment with UN SDGs and EU development agendas</p> <p>Increased focus on security aspects in aid allocation over time</p> <p>Reduction in number of priority countries within EN region since 2016</p> <p>More flexible approach to selecting priority countries in latest multiannual programme (2021-2030)</p>	<p>Increased focus on security aspects in aid allocation over time</p> <p>Adaptation to changing geopolitical circumstances (e.g., Russian aggression in Ukraine)</p> <p>Alignment with EU policies and priorities in the region</p> <p>Responsive to political developments in recipient countries</p>	<p>2012-14: focus on Policy of Coherence for development, based on global challenges (since 2008) incl. economic exclusion; followed by shift towards rights-based perspective, and in 2015: adapting to global changing conditions, new challenges and needs around the world, a new development agenda aligned with 2030 UN Agenda.</p>

**Table 4.1: Comprehensive and comparative overview of the case study analysis. Own presentation.**

Comparing Estonia to other cases, the country has followed a focused democracy promotion strategy in the EN region concentrating its resources on Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. This narrow focus allows Estonia to maximise its impact despite its relatively small aid budget. Estonia's strategy emphasises e-governance and digital solutions across various sectors as a way to increase transparency and minimise corruption, reflecting its own digital experience and desire to operate in an important niche of international development policy. Estonia has implemented country-specific strategies for each priority partner, primarily through direct knowledge transfer and small-scale projects that leverage Estonian expertise. Bilateral aid makes up a bigger share than that of comparable countries in size. Estonia's unique contribution in digital expertise, offering e-governance solutions cannot be matched by that of larger donors. However, this concentrated approach means Estonia is much less focused on other EN countries, distinguishing it from donors with broader regional engagement, such as Germany. While this concentration allows for deeper engagement with priority partners, it also limits Estonia's influence in the wider EN region. In terms of models of democracy, the Estonian policy emphasised mostly participatory and liberal democracy promotion actions, such as ICT infrastructure for digital governance and projects around civil society organisation support.

Germany's approach to the EN is broader and more comprehensive than that of other EU Members, reflecting its larger aid budget and wider geopolitical interests. While the EN region is not as central to Germany's overall development policy as it is for some Eastern EU members, Germany engages significantly with Armenia alongside Ukraine and Georgia, setting it apart from most other donors in the region. Germany's primary objectives are to promote good governance, support sustainable economic development, and foster European integration in these countries. Germany implements large-scale, long-term projects across diverse sectors, distinguishing it from smaller donors. Its aid budget is predominantly bilateral, which further sets it apart from most other countries in this working paper. Germany utilises a wide range of implementation tools, including development banks, allowing for more diverse aid modalities such as concessional loans alongside grants. This approach aims to strengthen democratic institutions, support economic reforms, and enhance the overall resilience of EN countries. For Germany, this strategy allows it to maintain a significant influence across the entire EN region while pursuing its broader foreign policy objectives. For the recipient countries, Germany's approach offers substantial and diverse support, potentially helping to accelerate their development and European integration processes. However, the breadth of Germany's engagement might sometimes result in less country-specific tailoring compared to more focused donors. Germany's strategy stands out among donors for its comprehensive nature and its significant engagement with Armenia. Unlike many other donors, Germany's approach balances democracy promotion with economic development, reflecting its broad strategic interests in the region. In terms of democracy promotion models, Germany shows the most diversity, incorporating liberal, participatory, egalitarian, and peace initiatives. This multi-faceted approach, combined with Germany's substantial resources and long-standing development expertise, allows it to address a wide range of issues in EN countries. However, it may sometimes lack the specific regional insights that Eastern EU members can offer based on their own recent transition experiences.

Latvia has adopted a focused approach to democracy promotion in the EN region, prioritising Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine while largely overlooking other EN countries. This strategy allows Latvia to concentrate its limited resources on countries where it believes it can have the most impact. Latvia's primary goal is to share its own recent experiences with EU accession and economic transition, aiming to support these countries in their European integration processes and democratic development. Latvia implements small-scale, directly targeted projects focusing on public administration reforms, which seeks to decrease corruption and increase trust in the target countries. The implications of this policy for Latvia are multifaceted: by focusing on sharing its EU accession and transition experience, Latvia positions itself as a valuable partner in the region despite its relatively small size and limited resources, allowing it to punch above its weight in foreign policy and development assistance. However, the narrow geographic focus may limit Latvia's broader influence in the EN region as a whole. For the recipient countries, Latvia's approach offers targeted support in key areas of governance and reform, though the small scale of Latvia's projects

may limit their overall impact on broader democratic development. Latvia's approach stands out compared to other donors in several ways: unlike larger donors such as Germany or Sweden, Latvia's aid delivery is almost exclusively multilateral, contrasting with the more varied approaches of larger donors. This heavy reliance on multilateral channels may reflect Latvia's strategy to amplify its limited resources through broader EU initiatives. In terms of democracy promotion models, Latvia's bilateral policies have a largely participatory character, which distinguishes it somewhat from donors who may emphasise other models such as liberal or electoral democracy. Another distinctive feature is Latvia's strong focus on sharing its own recent transition experience, which allows it to offer insights that may be more directly relevant to the current challenges faced by EN countries than those offered by longer-established Western European democracies.

Lithuania's EN strategy uniquely focuses on Belarus alongside Ukraine and Georgia, reflecting its geographical proximity and historical ties. The country's primary objective is to share its EU accession experience, which it views as its central value proposition for the region. Lithuania implements its aid primarily through multilateral channels, with bilateral assistance often executed through its own government institutions. Since 2016, civil society institutions have been explicitly embedded in the implementation of and information on development assistance, with the country possessing a designated "National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations' Platform". This approach aims to strengthen democratic institutions and civil society in target countries, with a particular emphasis on Belarus despite challenging political circumstances. This strategy allows Lithuania to leverage its recent transition experience and maintain influence in its immediate neighbourhood, particularly in Belarus where other donors have scaled back engagement making it an important conduit of information for the EU. For the recipient countries, Lithuania's approach offers valuable insights into the EU accession process and support for civil society development, though the effectiveness of its efforts in Belarus may be constrained by the political situation. Lithuania's strategy stands out among donors for its continued prioritisation of Belarus and its strong emphasis on sharing EU accession experience. However, the strong focus on Belarus may limit Lithuania's impact in other EN countries. Unlike many other donors, Lithuania's development assistance is mostly focused on the liberal and peace models of democracy promotion, with an instance of a feminist project that distinguishes it from other new EU member states. The country's use of its own government institutions for bilateral aid implementation and its explicit incorporation of civil society in development assistance are also distinctive features. This approach allows Lithuania to maintain engagement in challenging political environments and offer specialised expertise in EU integration processes, setting it apart from both larger Western European donors and other Eastern EU members.

Poland's ENP strategy is heavily focused on Ukraine and Belarus, reflecting its immediate geopolitical concerns and historical ties. The country's primary objectives are to promote democracy, support civil society development, and foster European integration in these nations. Poland places a strong emphasis on scholarship programs and educational exchanges, aiming to build long-term ties and influence through people-to-people contacts. A distinctive feature of Poland's approach is its focus on media support in Belarus, particularly through funding for Belsat TV, which sets it apart from other donors in the region. This media strategy aims to provide alternative information sources in a restrictive environment, supporting democratic discourse and civil society development. Poland implements its strategy through the unique Solidarity Fund, reflecting its own historical experience with democratic transition. This approach allows Poland to leverage its transition experience and maintain significant influence in its immediate eastern neighbourhood. However, the strong focus on Ukraine and Belarus may limit Poland's impact in other ENP countries. For the recipient countries, particularly Ukraine and Belarus, Poland's approach offers valuable support for civil society, education, and alternative media outlets, though the effectiveness of its efforts in Belarus may be constrained by the political situation. Poland's strategy stands out among donors for its continued prioritisation of Belarus despite political challenges, its strong emphasis on media support, and its use of the Solidarity Fund for democracy promotion. Unlike other big donors, such as Germany, Poland mostly uses multilateral aid channels, indicating a strategy to focus on a few key countries to leverage its direct influence in a concentrated manner. In terms of democracy promotion models, actions under the liberal and participatory label are clearly spearheading Poland's strategy. The country's historical ties with Ukraine and Belarus, combined with its recent EU integration experience, allow Poland to offer relevant

insights and support, distinguishing it from both Western European donors and other Eastern EU members. This focused approach enables Poland to maintain engagement in challenging political environments and offer specialised expertise in democratic transition and European integration processes.

Romania's EN engagement is notably narrow, focusing almost exclusively on Moldova and to a lesser extent on Ukraine, reflecting its immediate regional interests and historical ties. While the EN region is explicitly mentioned as the primary focus area, Romania's approach to Moldova is particularly intense, driven by historical, linguistic and cultural ties. The country's primary goals are to support European integration processes, promote democracy, and contribute to conflict resolution, particularly regarding Transnistria. Romania places a strong emphasis on education, which accounts for the bulk of its distributed aid, and public administration reform. These initiatives aim to strengthen democratic institutions, improve governance, and foster a pro-European outlook in the target countries, especially Moldova. For Romania, this strategy allows it to exert significant influence in its immediate neighbourhood and position itself as a key player in Moldova's development and European integration process. However, the narrow geographic focus limits Romania's broader impact across the EN region. For Moldova, Romania's approach offers substantial support in key areas of development and reform, potentially accelerating its European integration process. Yet, this intense focus might also complicate Moldova's relations with other regional actors. Romania's strategy stands out among donors for its unique emphasis on conflict resolution in Transnistria and almost exclusive focus on Moldova. Unlike many other donors, Romania heavily relies on multilateral channels, especially EU mechanisms, for aid delivery. This approach may reflect Romania's strategy to amplify its influence through broader EU initiatives while maintaining a strong bilateral relationship with Moldova. In terms of democracy promotion models, Romania places a strong emphasis on electoral democracy initiatives. The country's linguistic and cultural ties with Moldova allow for deeper engagement and potentially more effective knowledge transfer, giving it a comparative advantage vis-a-vis other donors in the region. This focused approach enables Romania to offer specialised expertise and sustained support to Moldova's development and European integration efforts, albeit at the expense of wider regional engagement.

Sweden's ENP strategy is marked by its strong emphasis on values-based development cooperation, particularly in the areas of human rights and gender equality. While the EN region is not among the key recipients of Swedish ODA, the country focuses on Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, maintaining some presence in other EN countries. Sweden's primary objectives are to promote democratic governance, support human rights, and foster gender equality in these nations. Unlike most other donors in this working paper, Sweden's assistance is not primarily focused on the education sector but rather on civil society and government sectors. This approach aims to strengthen democratic institutions, empower civil society, and promote inclusive development in target countries. For Sweden, this strategy allows it to project its values and maintain influence in the region while pursuing its broader foreign policy objectives of promoting democracy and human rights globally. For the recipient countries, Sweden's approach offers valuable support for civil society development and governance reform, with a unique emphasis on gender equality that may foster more inclusive democratic processes. Sweden's strategy stands out among donors for its strong bilateral ODA character, contrasting with the multilateral preference of many Eastern EU members. In terms of democracy promotion models, Sweden shows significant diversity, with a strong feminist influence alongside liberal and participatory approaches. This sets Sweden apart from other donors in the region, particularly in its emphasis on gender equality as a core component of democracy promotion. Sweden's approach allows it to address issues that may be overlooked by other donors, potentially fostering more inclusive and equitable democratic development in EN countries. However, the relatively lower prioritisation of the EN region in Sweden's overall ODA strategy may limit its impact compared to donors who focus more intensively on these countries. Nonetheless, Sweden's distinctive approach adds valuable diversity to democracy promotion efforts in the EN region, complementing the strategies of other donors.

To summarise, a key commonality among all countries is their focus on the EN region, although the degree of prioritisation varies considerably. For Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania, the eastern neighbourhood region is central to their development assistance strategies. These countries, all relatively

new EU members, view engagement with the EN as a critical aspect of their foreign policy and a way to leverage their own recent experiences with democratic transition and EU accession. In contrast, while Germany and Sweden maintain significant engagement with the EN region, it does not hold the same central position in their overall development assistance portfolios. This difference reflects their broader global development agendas and larger aid budgets.

Democracy promotion is universally emphasised as a key component of engagement in the region, though the specific approaches and models vary. Actions classified under liberal and participatory models of democracy promotion are the most common across all countries, but there are notable variations. For instance, Lithuania and Sweden incorporate feminist approaches, while Romania places a strong emphasis on initiatives under the electoral model. Germany stands out for the diversity of its democracy promotion models, including liberal, participatory, egalitarian, and peace initiatives.

Education emerges as a primary focus area for most countries in their EN engagement: Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Germany prioritise educational initiatives, often through scholarship programmes and educational exchanges. Estonia, Latvia and Sweden, in contrast, place greater emphasis on civil society and government sectors in their assistance programs.

Geographic focus within the EN region varies significantly among the donor countries. Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden prioritise Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Lithuania uniquely emphasises Belarus alongside Ukraine and Georgia. Poland's strategy is heavily tilted towards Ukraine and Belarus, while Romania focuses almost exclusively on Moldova and Ukraine. Germany maintains the broadest engagement, including significant focus on Armenia alongside Ukraine and Georgia.

The scale and scope of interventions differ markedly. Germany, with its substantial resources, is able to implement larger-scale, comprehensive projects across diverse sectors. In contrast, smaller donors like Estonia and Latvia choose to focus on small-scale, targeted interventions that leverage their specific expertise or experiences.

Each country brings unique elements to its EN engagement. Estonia emphasises e-governance and digital solutions, reflecting its own development experience. Poland's use of the Solidarity Fund for democracy promotion, especially in Belarus, is distinctive linking to the Polish Solidarity democratisation movement. Romania's focus on conflict resolution, particularly regarding Transnistria, sets it apart. Sweden's strong emphasis on gender equality and human rights across its programs is notable and reflects the high priority of gender equality in its own agenda.

Aid delivery channels also vary. Germany, Sweden, and to some extent even Estonia, favour bilateral aid, allowing for more direct control over project implementation. Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania rely more heavily on multilateral channels, often working through EU mechanisms.

Despite these differences, there are some unifying threads. All countries frame their assistance within the context of supporting European integration processes in the EN countries. To that end, they become communicants of the wider spirit of the ENP strategy of the EU, and their active presence adds on to the leverage of the EU in the region. More importantly, the case studies show a common emphasis on supporting civil society development, which is an effective tool in democratisation processes as it empowers the citizens and the development of grassroots democracy support. Finally, almost all cases are connected through their common post-socialist past and processes of democratisation (including the German reunification experience) allowing the free exchange of experiences of democratic transition, more strongly so among the Eastern EU Member States.

In conclusion, while all examined countries engage in democracy promotion in the ENP region, their approaches reflect a diverse range of priorities, capacities, and strategic interests. This is an important finding contrasting with the EU's approach during the same period. The EU has showcased a largely singular logic in the ENP strategy towards its eastern neighbourhood and consideration of one-size-fits-all solutions

for the region. The diversity of approaches at the Member State-level however, shows that Member States can become key drivers of more targeted and bespoke support at the country-level. The varying degrees of focus on the EN, from central to important but not primary, illustrate the different roles this region plays in each country's broader foreign policy and development assistance strategies.

## 5 List of references

- Akhvlediani, Tinatin. 2022. 'Geopolitical and Security Concerns of the EU's Enlargement to the East: The Case of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia'. *Intereconomics* 57 (4): 225-228. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-022-1067-0>.
- Andersen, Uwe. 2021. 'Entwicklungspolitik'. In *Handwörterbuch des politischen Systems der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* 265-271.
- Ashoff, Guido. 2014. 'Mehr als 60 Jahre deutsche Entwicklungspolitik: noch keine Aussicht auf den Ruhestand'. Die aktuelle Kolumne, 04.09.2014. Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).
- Beacháin, Donnacha Ó. 2022. "Moldova-Transnistria Conflict." In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies*, edited by Oliver P. Richmond and Gëzim Visoka, 830–37. Cham: Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77954-2\\_49](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77954-2_49).
- Belsat. 'The first independent television channel in Belarus'. Accessed 30/09/2024. <https://dokweb.net/database/organizations/about/fd29844d-d862-4305-babb-bd2cb75116a7/belsat-tv>
- Berghof Foundation. N.d. 'History dialogue as basis for normalisation of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict'. <https://berghof-foundation.org/work/projects/history-dialogue-in-georgia-and-abkhazia>
- Bohnet, Michael. 2017. 'Politische Ökonomie der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit: Bestimmungsgründe, Akteure und Allokationsmuster'. Discussion Paper. No. 20/2017. Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).
- Cabinet of Ministers. 2012. 'By-laws of the Consultative Council for Development Cooperation Policy'. *Latvijas Vēstnesis* 70, May 8. <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/247343>.
- Cabinet of Ministers. 2021. 'Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines for 2021–2027'. *Latvijas Vēstnesis* 73, April 16. <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/322455-development-cooperation-policy-guidelines-for-2021-2027>.
- Cabinets of Ministers. 2016. 'Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines for 2016–2020'. *Latvijas Vēstnesis* 180, September 14. <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/284775-development-cooperation-policy-guidelines-for-2016-2020>.
- Cărbune, Anatolie. 2021. 'Building Resilience Through Cross-Border Cooperation Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine. A Comparative Analysis Between Euroregions "Upper Pruth" and "Lower Danube"'. *Global, Regional and Local Perspectives on the Economies of Southeastern Europe*, online first: 19-32. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57953-1\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57953-1_2).
- Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSR DG). 2022. 'Financial Statement for the Year Ended December 31, 2022, and Independent Auditors' Report'. JOINT Research Paper. JOINT Project. <https://www.csrdg.ge/storage/files/doc/Audit%20Report%202022-CSR DG.pdf>
- Cenușa, Dionis. 2016. 'Sweden's Attitude to Eastern Partnership and to Moldova'. IPN Press Agency. April 25. [https://www.ipn.md/en/swedens-attitude-to-eastern-partnership-and-to-moldova-7978\\_1026843.html](https://www.ipn.md/en/swedens-attitude-to-eastern-partnership-and-to-moldova-7978_1026843.html).
- Chappell, Laura. 2021. 'Polish foreign policy: From 'Go To 'player to territorial defender. In *Foreign Policy Change in Europe Since 1991*, edited by Joly Jeroen, and Tim Haesebrouck. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham., 233-258.
- Council of the European Union. 2012. 'Council conclusions: Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change'. 3166th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting. Brussels, May 14. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/130243.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/130243.pdf)
- Damian, Alexandru, and Bianca Toma. 2022. 'Romania Versus Russia: Black Sea Region Ambitions'. *Russia and the Future of Europe*, online first: 89-92. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95648-6\\_22](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95648-6_22).

- Donor Tracker. 2023. 'Donor Profile: Sweden'. [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/sweden#politics-priorities](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/sweden#politics-priorities).
- Eduards, Krister. 2013. 'A Swedish Eastern Europe Regional Strategy – A Strategic Review: Final Report'. SIDA. <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61599en-a-swedish-eastern-europe-regional-strategy-a-strategic-review---final-report.pdf>.
- EEAS. '10th Anniversary of Euromaidan'. 20 February, 2024. European Union, 29 seconds, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/10th-anniversary-euromaidan-20022024\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/10th-anniversary-euromaidan-20022024_en)
- Embassy of Sweden in Armenia. 2019. 'Sweden Intends to Steps up Its Assistance to Support Armenia's Reform Agenda'. Sweden Abroad. <https://www.swedenabroad.se/hy/embassies/armenien-jerevan/ընթացիկ-ներուփոխներ/nyheter/ahead-of-ministerial-visit-to-yerevan-sweden-steps-up-its-assistance-to-support-armenias-reform-agenda/>.
- European Commission. 2024. 'EU Aid Explorer'. <https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/>.
- European External Action Service. 2016. 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe - A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy'. <https://www.coe-civ.eu/kh/a-global-strategy-for-the-european-unions-foreign-and-security-policy>.
- Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA). 2019. 'Expert Group'. <https://eba.se/en/expertgruppen/>.
- Federal Government of Germany. 2001. 'D. Aktionsprogramm 2015: Armut bekämpfen. Gemeinsam handled. Der Beitrag der Bundesregierung zur weltweiten Halbierung extremer Armut', online first: 1-46. [https://www.eineweltnetzwerkbayern.de/fileadmin/assets/Dokumente/bmz\\_aktionsprogramm2015.pdf](https://www.eineweltnetzwerkbayern.de/fileadmin/assets/Dokumente/bmz_aktionsprogramm2015.pdf)
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). N.d.a. 'Zuständigkeit und Aufgabenbereich [Responsibilities and Field of Action]'. [https://www.katrima.de/DE/Wer\\_macht\\_was/Akteure/Staatlich/BMZ.html](https://www.katrima.de/DE/Wer_macht_was/Akteure/Staatlich/BMZ.html)
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). N.d.b. 'LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME SOUTH CAUCASUS'. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. [https://www.giz.de/projektdaten/projects.action?request\\_locale=en\\_GB&pn=201221449](https://www.giz.de/projektdaten/projects.action?request_locale=en_GB&pn=201221449)
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). N.d.c 'SUPPORT OF NON GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES IN BELARUS (IBB) II'. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. [https://www.giz.de/projektdaten/projects.action?request\\_locale=en\\_GB&pn=201621762](https://www.giz.de/projektdaten/projects.action?request_locale=en_GB&pn=201621762)
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). N.d.d. 'Improving living conditions'. KfW (Development Bank), online first: 1. <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/About-us/Ukraine/Sector-Information-USIF/>
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2016. 'Social Infrastructure and Energy Efficiency – Moldova'. *KfW (Development Bank)*, online first: 1-2. <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Entwicklungsfinanzierung/L%C3%A4nder-und-Programme/Europa/Projekt-Moldau-2014-MSIF-engl..pdf>.
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2021. 'BMZ 2030 reform strategy'.
- Freyburg, Tina, Madalina Dobrescu and Anastasiia Vlasenko. (2024). "Conceptual framework EU democracy funding: Unpacking EU democracy assistance. What model of democracy does EU funding suit?" REDEMOS Working Paper D3.1. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13310202>.
- GIZ. N.d. German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 'Support to Ukraine's public finance reforms'. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/80627.html>
- GIZ. 2017a. 'Advice on legal and judicial reform in the South Caucasus: Project evaluation: summary report. 2017-43062'. Research Paper. Project.
- GIZ. 2017b. German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co financed by the EU in Armenia. 2017. 'Public Financial Management in the South Caucasus'. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für*

- Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*, online first: 1-2. <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2017-en-public-finance-georgia.pdf>
- GIZ. 2021. German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Armenia. 2021. 'Good Governance for Local Development, South Caucasus'. *German Association for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH)*, online first: 1-2. [https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/Factsheet\\_Good\\_Governance\\_for\\_Local\\_Development.pdf](https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/Factsheet_Good_Governance_for_Local_Development.pdf)
- GIZ. 2024. German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2024. 'Strengthening the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova, Combating and preventing corruption'. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*, online first: 1-2. <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2024-en-strengthening-the-rule-of-law-and-anti-corruption-mechanisms-in-the-republic-of-moldova.pdf>
- Gotkowska, Justyna. 2011. 'Germany and the Eastern Partnership'. OSW, online first: 1-6. [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/118089/Commentary\\_37.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/118089/Commentary_37.pdf)
- Government of Poland. N.d.a. 'Solidarity Fund PL'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polishaid/solidarity-fund-pl>
- Government of Poland. N.d.b. 'Polish Aid 2012 in Numbers'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polishaid/polish-aid-2012-in-numbers>
- Government of Poland. 2016. 'Cooperation 2016'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/ukraina--dwustronna-pomoc-rozwojowa-2016>
- Government of Poland. 2018a. 'Decentralization in practice – we learn from each other – What's next in our municipalities? Plans for change and exchange of experiences'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/co-dalej-w-naszych-gminach-plany-zmian-i-wymiana-doswiadczen>
- Government of Poland. 2018b. 'Support for the social integration center of Crimean Tatars in Drohobych, run by the Ichsan-Szczyrist organization'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/wsparcie-centrum-integracji-spoecznej-tatarow-krymskich-w-drohobyczu-prowadzonego-przez-organizacje-ichsan-szczyrist>
- Government of Poland. 2019a. 'Increasing access to quality infrastructure and social services in eastern Ukraine'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/zwiekszenie-dostepu-do-wysokiej-jakosci-infrastruktury-i-uslug-spoecznych-we-wschodniej-ukrainie>
- Government of Poland. 2019b. 'Support for local government reform - implementation of a model of participatory strategic planning in the clusters of central-northern and western Ukraine'. [https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/wsparcie-reformy-samorzadowej\\_wdrozenie-modelu-partycypacyjnego-planowania-strategicznego-w-gromadach-centralno-polnocnej-i-zachodniej-ukrainy2](https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/wsparcie-reformy-samorzadowej_wdrozenie-modelu-partycypacyjnego-planowania-strategicznego-w-gromadach-centralno-polnocnej-i-zachodniej-ukrainy2)
- Government of Poland. 2019c. 'Support for the development of entrepreneurship in Moldova – strengthening the potential of the Poland-Moldova Centre for Development and Entrepreneurship'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/wsparcie-rozwoju-przedsiębiorczosci-w-r-moldawii--wzmocnienie-potencjalu-centrum-rozwoju-i-przedsiębiorczosci-polska-moldawia>
- Government of Poland. 2021a. 'Improving the conditions of probation service facilities in Armenia'. September 23. <https://www.gov.pl/web/armenia-en/improving-the-conditions-of-probation-service-facilities-in-armenia>
- Government of Poland. 2021b. 'Polska Pomoc 2021 w liczbach [Polish Aid in 2021 in numbers]'. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/polska-pomoc-2021-w-liczbach>
- Government of Poland. 2022. 'Tourist and Educational Centre in Achmet'. January 26. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/centrum-turystyczno-edukacyjne-w-achmecie>
- Government of Sweden. 2016. 'Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance'. Government Communication: 2016/17:60. [https://www.government.se/contentassets/43972c7f81c34d51a82e6a7502860895/skr-60-engelsk-version\\_web.pdf](https://www.government.se/contentassets/43972c7f81c34d51a82e6a7502860895/skr-60-engelsk-version_web.pdf).

- Government of the Republic of Estonia. 2017. 'National Security Concept of Estonia'. [https://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article\\_files/national\\_security\\_concept\\_2017\\_0.pdf](https://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/national_security_concept_2017_0.pdf).
- Government of the Republic of Estonia. 2021. 'Conditions and Procedures for Providing Development and Humanitarian Aid'. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/118122021002>.
- Government of the Republic of Lithuania. 2016. 'Resolution No 937: On approval of an Inter-institutional Action Plan on Development Cooperation'. <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/rs/legalact/TAD/289c75c0d25e11e6a476d5908abd2210/>.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova. 2014. 'Moldova, Germany to Boost Cooperation in Security, Human Rights'. <https://gov.md/en/content/moldova-germany-boost-cooperation-security-human-rights>
- Government Offices of Sweden. 2013. 'Aid Policy Framework. The Direction of Swedish Aid'. Government Communication: 2013/14:131. <https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/6eef64a9a36e48ff9a95e4d6ad97ce84/aid-policy-framework/>.
- Government. 2010. 'Conditions and Procedure for the Provision of Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid'. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/503072018008/consolide>.
- Graef, Alexander. 2023. 'The limits of critique: responses to the war against Ukraine from the Russian foreign policy expert community'. *Journal of International Relations and Development* 26: 762-775. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-023-00303-4>.
- Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP). 2021. 'inforMD – Against disinformation in the Republic of Moldova'. Joint Project. <https://iep-berlin.de/en/projects/enlargement-neighbourhood-and-central-asia/informd/>
- Internationales Bildungs- und Begegnungswerk (IBB). N.d. 'Belarus Support Program'. <https://ibb-d.org/en/programma-podderzhki-belarusi>
- Ion, Oana-Andreea, and Cătălin-Gabriel Done. 2021. 'Romania's Capacity to Plan and Implement a Sustainable Development Strategy'. In *Europeanization of Environmental Policies and their Limitations*, edited by Todor, Arpad, and Helepciuc Florența Elena. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68586-7\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68586-7_9).
- IPN Press Agency. 2014. 'Moldova learns from Poland how to absorb European funds'. December 19. [https://www.ipn.md/en/moldova-learns-from-poland-how-to-absorb-european-funds-7967\\_1017355.html](https://www.ipn.md/en/moldova-learns-from-poland-how-to-absorb-european-funds-7967_1017355.html)
- IPN Press Agency. 2015. 'Results of Bavarian conference on Transnistrian conflict settlement'. October 31. [https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/results-of-bavarian-conference-on-transnistrian-conflict-settlement-7965\\_1023426.html](https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/results-of-bavarian-conference-on-transnistrian-conflict-settlement-7965_1023426.html)
- Jones, Alexei, Pauline Veron, Joanna Czaplicka, and James Mackie. 2019. 'Study on EU member states operational development structures: Volume 2 - Country fiches'. European Centre for Development Policy Management. [https://www.dev-practitioners.eu/media/event-documents/Lithuania\\_Study\\_on\\_inclusiveness\\_Vol2\\_-\\_Country\\_fiches.pdf](https://www.dev-practitioners.eu/media/event-documents/Lithuania_Study_on_inclusiveness_Vol2_-_Country_fiches.pdf).
- Kool, Annika (on behalf of TRIALOG). 2007. 'Development Cooperation in Estonia, Country Study'. JOINT Research Paper. JOINT Project. [https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/TRIALOG\\_Estonia\\_countrystudy.pdf](https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/TRIALOG_Estonia_countrystudy.pdf)
- Kriegsfolgen Ueberwinden. N.d. 'TOP THEMA: Civil conflict resolution in Ukraine and other Eastern European conflict areas'. <https://kriegsfolgen-ueberwinden.de/en/>
- Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS). 2023. 'Latvia's development cooperation policy'. REPORT. <https://lapas.lv/en/resources/petijumi-viedokli-zinojumi/petijumi/nvo-zinojums-as-politika/assets/Zinojums-EN.pdf>.
- Lightfoot, Simon. 2010. 'The Europeanisation of International Development Policies: The Case of Central and Eastern European States'. *Europe-Asia Studies* 62(2): 329-350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130903506854>

- Maksymenko, Iryna, and Ganna Grabina. 2024. 'The impact of Russia's propaganda on security perceptions in Romania and Bulgaria'. *European Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-024-00478-5>.
- MDCP, Republic of Poland. 2012. 'Wieloletni Program Współpracy Rozwojowej [MDCP] Lata 2012 – 2015, [Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme for the Years 2012 – 2015]'.
- MDCP, Republic of Poland. 2018. 'Wieloletni Program Współpracy Rozwojowej [MDCP] Lata 2016 – 2020, [Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme for the Years 2016 – 2020]'.
- MDCP, Republic of Poland. 2021. 'Wieloletni Program Współpracy Rozwojowej [MDCP] Lata 2021 – 2030, [Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme for the Years 2021 – 2030]'.
- Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia. 2012. 'The National Defence Concept'. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/167323/Latvia%20State%20Defense%20Concept%202012.%20pdf.pdf>.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2021. 'Strategic Directions for Development Cooperation 2022–2025'. December 27, Order No. V-554. <https://ltaid.urm.lt/en/doclib/wzul6ssdrk9j49dd6gpbx1rggnft8nu8>.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2022. 'Adopting the Description of Activities of the Fund for the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid'. June 9, Order No V-197. <https://ltaid.urm.lt/en/doclib/6qt3y3chyr5z62n1w1cek2prxw34cx6y>.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. 2012. 'Implementation of Policy Coherence for Development – Focus: The Global Challenge of Economic Exclusion'. Government Communication: 2011/12:167. <https://www.government.se/contentassets/e79cd237500f4ebc8b54f1f406ab6b48/implementation-of-policy-coherence-for-development--focus-the-global-challenge-of-economic-exclusion/>.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. 2018. 'Policy for global development in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda'. Government Communication 2017/18:146. [https://www.government.se/contentassets/338057ee724641cda2e54840688d3e21/pgu\\_skrivelse\\_engelsk\\_a\\_slutgiltig\\_181011\\_nyttomslag-002.pdf](https://www.government.se/contentassets/338057ee724641cda2e54840688d3e21/pgu_skrivelse_engelsk_a_slutgiltig_181011_nyttomslag-002.pdf).
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. 2021. 'Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe for 2021–2027'. <https://www.swedenabroad.se/globalassets/ambassader/moldavien-chisinau/documents/strategy-swedish-reform-cooperation-with-eastern-europe-2021-27.pdf>.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. 2023. 'Development Assistance for a New Era Freedom Empowerment and Sustainable Growth'. <https://www.government.se/reports/2024/02/development-assistance-for-a-new-era--freedom-empowerment-and-sustainable-growth/>.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. 2024. 'Strategy for democracy support through Swedish party-affiliated organisations 2024–2027'. <https://www.government.se/international-development-cooperation-strategies/2024/03/strategy-for-democracy-support-through-swedish-party-affiliated-organisations-20242027/>.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. 2024a. 'Minister for Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs 20 March 2024. Statement of Government Policy Following Sweden's Accession to NATO'. <https://www.government.se/contentassets/ae441755aa5141e7af64f44c22db1be7/statement-of-government-policy-following-swedens-accession-to-nato.pdf>.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 2024b. 'Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation Activities in the Areas of Human Rights and Freedoms, Democracy and the Rule of Law 2024–2028'. [https://www.government.se/globalassets/government/dokument/utrikesdepartementet/strategy-for-global-development/240320-global-mr--och-demostrategi\\_eng\\_slutlig.pdf](https://www.government.se/globalassets/government/dokument/utrikesdepartementet/strategy-for-global-development/240320-global-mr--och-demostrategi_eng_slutlig.pdf).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia. 2011. 'Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2011–2015'. [https://idsi.md/files/file/estonia/Arengukava2011-2015\\_ENG.pdf](https://idsi.md/files/file/estonia/Arengukava2011-2015_ENG.pdf)

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia. 2016. 'Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2016–2020'. [https://un.mfa.ee/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2019/01/2016\\_2020\\_arengukava\\_eng.pdf](https://un.mfa.ee/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2019/01/2016_2020_arengukava_eng.pdf).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia. 2020. 'Country Strategy for the Development Cooperation of Estonia and Ukraine 2020–2023'. [https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-08/ua\\_arengukoostoo\\_maastrateegia\\_2020-2023\\_en.pdf](https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-08/ua_arengukoostoo_maastrateegia_2020-2023_en.pdf).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia. 2021a. 'Country Strategy for Estonian–Georgian Development Cooperation 2021–2024'. <https://www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-11/Country%20Strategy%20for%20Development%20Cooperation%20EE-GE%202021-2024.pdf>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia. 2021b. 'Country Strategy for the Development Cooperation of Estonia and Moldova 2021–2024'. [https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-08/ee-md\\_country\\_strategy.pdf](https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-08/ee-md_country_strategy.pdf).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. 2011. 'Latvian Development Cooperation Policy Strategy 2011–2015'. <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/media/2312/download>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. 2024. 'Latvian Development Cooperation Policy Strategy 2011–2015.' Unofficial translation. <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/media/2312/download>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2009. 'Lithuanian Development Cooperation Policy 2009'. Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Department. <https://ltaid.urm.lt/en/doclib/ucb6d0jfg1dt6f5h5k4t33a1mdg3y5v3>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2010. 'Lithuanian Development Cooperation 2010'. Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Department. <https://ltaid.urm.lt/en/doclib/fmxutc77pc88uxn6stu1kuudf9trkdfw>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2019. 'Report on the Implementation of the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme'. <https://ltaid.urm.lt/en/lithuanian-development-cooperation/lithuanian-development-cooperation-policy/activity-reports/126>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2020. 'Report on the Implementation of the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme'. <https://ltaid.urm.lt/en/lithuanian-development-cooperation/lithuanian-development-cooperation-policy/activity-reports/126>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2021. 'Report on the Implementation of the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme'. <https://ltaid.urm.lt/en/lithuanian-development-cooperation/lithuanian-development-cooperation-policy/activity-reports/126>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland [MFA]. 2019a. 'Polish Development Cooperation in the Eastern Partnership States'. <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/0951a882-85b7-47ce-9e24-ce33025742ee>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland [MFA]. 2019b. 'Polska Współpraca Rozwojowa Raport Roczny 2017'. Issuu. [https://issuu.com/msz.gov.pl/docs/polska\\_wsp\\_praca\\_rozwojowa\\_raport](https://issuu.com/msz.gov.pl/docs/polska_wsp_praca_rozwojowa_raport)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland [MFA]. 2021. '10 Years of Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration'. <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/18efdd07-4672-428c-9e58-58eb24e989ad>
- Moga, Teodor Lucian, Nadiia Bureiko, and Dorina Baltag. 2022. 'The relevance and impact of the ENP in Moldova: why local perceptions matter?'. *International Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-022-00405-9>.
- Moldovan Social Investment Fund (Fondul de Investiții Sociale din Moldova (FISM)). N.d. 'Objectives: The Moldova Social Investment Fund'. <https://fism.gov.md/en/content/objectives>
- Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. 2020. 'Europe's burden: Promoting good governance across borders'. Cambridge University Press.
- Ociepka, Beata. 2016. "International broadcasting by a middle-size country: The case of Belsat TV from Poland to Belarus." *Global Media and Communication* 12, no. 2 (2016): 111-126.

- OECD. 2015. 'OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Germany 2015. Chapter 2: Germany's vision and policies for development co-operation'. OECD Publishing. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-germany-2015/germany-s-vision-and-policies-for-development-co-operation\\_9789264246133-7-en#page1](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-germany-2015/germany-s-vision-and-policies-for-development-co-operation_9789264246133-7-en#page1)
- OECD. 2019. 'Development Cooperation Profiles: Sweden. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development'. <https://doi.org/10.1787/2dcf1367-en>.
- OECD. 2021. 'OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Germany 2021'. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/bb32a97d-en>
- OECD. 2023. 'OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Germany 2023'. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. 2023a. 'Sweden's Mid-Term Review. Stockholm'. Development Cooperation Directorate. [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/AR\(2024\)3/18/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/AR(2024)3/18/en/pdf).
- OECD. 2023b. 'OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Poland 2023'. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/deae8fba-en/1/3/1/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/deae8fba-en&csp=2bfa4f0d8ca8df897b61f9eba3e0b9ad&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book>.
- OECD. 2024a. 'Development Co-operation Profiles: Estonia'. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/6a0551b5-en/images/pdf/dcd-2019-2170-en.pdf>.
- OECD. 2024b. 'Development Co-operation Profiles: Latvia'. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/231c67ca-en/images/pdf/dcd-2019-2185-en.pdf>.
- OECD. 2024c. 'Development Co-operation Profiles: Lithuania'. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/3eb7f948-en/images/pdf/dcd-2019-2186-en.pdf>.
- OECD. 2024d. 'Development Co-operation Profiles: Romania'. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/dd728946-en/images/pdf/dcd-2019-2194-en.pdf>.
- OECD. 2024e. 'Development Co-operation Profiles: Sweden'. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/8a6be3b3-en/images/pdf/dcd-2019-2199-en.pdf>.
- OSCE/ODIHR. 2020. 'Romania Presidential Election: 10 and 24 November 2019.' ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/a/449200\\_0.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/a/449200_0.pdf).
- OSCE/ODIHR. 2021. 'Romania Parliamentary Elections, 6 December 2020.' ODIHR Special Election Assessment Mission Final Report. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/3/484562.pdf>.
- Parliament of Estonia. 2006. 'Foreign Relations Act'. Riigi Teataja. Consolidated text as of February 1, 2017. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/501022017002/consolide>.
- Parliament of the Republic of Latvia (Saeima). 2002. 'State Administration Structure Law'. Latvijas Vēstnesis 94, June 21. <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/63545-state-administration-structure-law>.
- Parliament of the Republic of Latvia (Saeima). 2008. 'Law on International Assistance'. Latvijas Vēstnesis 74, May 14. <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/175254-law-on-international-assistance>.
- Parliament of the Republic of Latvia (Saeima). 2015. 'The National Security Concept'. [https://www.mod.gov.lv/sites/mod/files/document/NDK\\_ENG\\_final.pdf](https://www.mod.gov.lv/sites/mod/files/document/NDK_ENG_final.pdf).
- Parliament of the Republic of Latvia (Saeima). 2020. 'Amendments to the Law on International Assistance'. Latvijas Vēstnesis 21. January 30. <https://www.vestnesis.lv/op/2020/21.4>.
- Parliament of the Republic of Latvia (Saeima). 2021. 'Amendments to the Law on International Assistance'. Latvijas Vēstnesis 234A, December 4. <https://www.vestnesis.lv/op/2021/234A.10>.
- Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania. 2013. 'Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Lithuania'. 16 May, No XII-311. As last amended on 15 December 2020 – No XIV-75. <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActPrint/lt?documentId=a3c842912cfa11edbf47f0036855e731&category=TAD>.

- Romanian Agency for International Development Cooperation (ROAID). 2019. 'The Multiannual Strategic Program on the International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance for the period 2020-2023'. <https://roaid.ro/en/the-multiannual-strategic-program-on-the-international-development-cooperation-and-humanitarian-assistance-for-the-period-2020-2023/>.
- Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2016. 'LAW no. 213 of November 9th, 2016, On international cooperation for development and humanitarian aid'. [https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul\\_2024/pdf\\_2024/law\\_213\\_2016\\_en.pdf](https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul_2024/pdf_2024/law_213_2016_en.pdf).
- Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2023. 'The 2024-2027 Multiannual Strategic Programme of International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian assistance'. [https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul\\_2024/pdf\\_2024/ro\\_2024-2027\\_multiannual\\_strategic\\_programme\\_of\\_international\\_development.pdf](https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul_2024/pdf_2024/ro_2024-2027_multiannual_strategic_programme_of_international_development.pdf).
- Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2024. 'Development Cooperation Policy'. <https://www.mae.ro/en/node/2063#null>.
- Sarjveladze, Mikheil. 2021. 'More responsibility or lack of interest? German Perspective on the South Caucasus after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War'. GIP Policy Paper (25). Georgian Institute of Politics. Research Paper. Project.
- Schaffer, Johan Karlsson. 2021. 'How Democracy Promotion Became a Key Aim of Sweden's Development Aid Policy'. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108772129.008>.
- Science in Poland. 2021. '260 osób z ok. 30 krajów dostało stypendium im. Banacha na studia w Polsce [260 people from around 30 countries received the Banach scholarship in Poland]'. September 6. <https://naukawpolsce.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C89163%2C260-osob-z-ok-30-krajow-dostalo-stypendium-im-banacha-na-studia-w-polsce>
- Solidarity Fund PL. 2015. 'Young leaders from Kazbegi for their community'. August 5. <https://solidarityfund.pl/2015/08/05/mlodzi-liderzy-z-kaukazu-dzialaja-dla-swojej-spolecznosci/>
- Solidarity Fund PL. 2021. 'Inspiring women: She turned her passion into a thriving company'. May 7. <https://solidarityfund.pl/2021/05/07/inspirujace-kobiety-swoja-pasje-zamienila-w-preznie-przedsiębiorstwo/>
- Solik, Martin, and Jan Graf. 2023. 'Russia as a hybrid threat to Moldova in the context of the Russian–Ukrainian war'. *International Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-023-00536-7>.
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). 2024. 'About Sida: Sida is guided by strategies'. <https://www.sida.se/en/about-sida/how-we-are-governed>.
- The Federal Constitutional Court [BVerfG]. 2023. 'Die staatliche Förderung politischer Stiftungen bedarf eines gesonderten Parlamentsgesetzes, [The state funding of political foundations requires a separate parliamentary act]'. 22 February. <https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2023/bvg23-022.html>
- Tsygankov, Andrei, Pavel Tsygankov, and Haley Gonzales. 2023. 'Putin's "Global Hybrid War": The Anti-Russian Bias of the Atlantic Council'. *Russiatgate Revisited*, online first: 133-159. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-30940-3\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-30940-3_7).
- Ukrainian Social Investment Fund (USIF). N.d. 'About Us'. <https://usif.ua/en/about>
- Vlasenko, Anastasiia, and Tina Freyburg. (2024). "International and EU funding in the eastern neighbourhood (2005-2022)". REDEMOS Dataset 3.2 [Data set]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13123531>
- Volintiru, Clara, and Edit Zgut-Przybylska. 2024. 'The Eroding Force of Informal Rules: Romania Between Democracy and Europeanization'. In "Post-Communist Progress and Stagnation at 35" edited by Lavinia Stan, Diane Vancea. Springer. Palgrave Macmillan. 57-81.
- Wolters Kluwer, eds. 2024. Ustawa o współpracy rozwojowej [Law on Development Cooperation]. Dz.U.2021.0.1425. Wolters Kluwer.

Zube, Julius and Olivia Glenn Wells. 2017. 'International Development Cooperation: Trends, Actors, and Alternatives'. JOINT Research Paper. Joint Project.  
[https://www.vbplatforma.org/uploaded\\_files/articles/International%20Development%20Cooperation%20Trends,%20Actors,%20and%20Alternatives.pdf](https://www.vbplatforma.org/uploaded_files/articles/International%20Development%20Cooperation%20Trends,%20Actors,%20and%20Alternatives.pdf)



**REDEMOS: REconfiguring EU DEMOcracy Support.**  
**Towards a sustained demos in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood**  
 REDEMOS- 101061738  
 HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01-04

**Dr Mădălina Dobrescu, NTNU**  
**info@redemos.eu**

 redemos.eu

 @REDEMOS\_eu

 REDEMOS Horizon Europe Project