

# PROBLEMS OF UKRAINE'S FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN EXPERT ASSESSMENTS

Razumkov Centre's studies in the foreign policy sector always include expert polls as a key element, since they make it possible to find out overall expert opinions and forecasts on key foreign policy issues and to monitor their dynamic.

This is especially topical at the present stage of the government change in the country, when discussions are underway in the state political elite, in expert circles, in society on the problems of the foreign political activity effectiveness, guarantee of Ukraine's national security, new accents in the foreign policy course of the new authorities. In this context, the results of the latest expert poll conducted by Razumkov Centre are of interest.<sup>1</sup>

During the poll, experts assessed the effectiveness of the national foreign policy, the situation in the key foreign policy domains, spoke of threats to the national security and the ways of its strengthening.

The poll results prompt the following conclusions.

**Experts assess the effectiveness of Ukraine's new leadership at attainment of the key foreign policy goals much lower than under Viktor Yushchenko's presidency – except deepening cooperation with Russia,** seen as the main success. Almost all expert assessments are lower than those given by citizens (except above-mentioned cooperation with Russia).

**The gravest threats to Ukraine's national security, as experts see them, stem from possible destabilisation of Ukrainian society by internal factors** (social and economic), the least probable are threats associated with interstate armed conflicts or terrorism. Meanwhile, most experts stick to the opinion that now Ukraine has no reliable external guarantees of its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

**Experts mainly negatively assess the effects of the agreement with Russia on the 25-year extension of the term of Russia's Black Sea Fleet stationing in the Crimea for Ukraine's security.** This is contrary to the position of the majority of citizens sticking to the opposite opinion.

**Experts stick to the opinion that Ukraine's national interests and protection from threats would be best secured by accession to the EU and NATO.** While in their attitude to accession to the EU expert opinions are close to those of the majority of citizens, in the treatment of NATO, they fundamentally differ.

**According to the majority of experts, Ukraine's accession to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) or maintenance of a non-aligned status will exert mainly a negative influence** on the situation in the country and prospects of its development.

## ASSESSMENTS OF UKRAINE'S FOREIGN POLICY EFFECTIVENESS

Experts see as the greatest success the new government's efforts at deepening cooperation with Russia (3.89 points on a five-point scale). In early February 2010, i.e., at the end of Yushchenko's presidency, the effectiveness of action in that domain was assessed by experts at only 1.92 points.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted however that the effectiveness of Ukraine's leadership in the other sectors is assessed much lower – all other average marks range between 2.14 and 2.97 points.

The worst assessments were given with respect to Ukraine's integration in the world information and cultural space, a positive international image of the country, its influence and authority in the world community, protection of Ukrainian citizens abroad, the country's security, sovereignty, territorial integrity, favourable conditions for development of the state, society and economy, high competitiveness of the country. In those segments, along with maintenance of peace and stability in the region, development of relations with the EU and the USA, expert assessments of the foreign policy effectiveness are lower

<sup>1</sup> The expert poll was conducted by the Razumkov Centre Sociological Service on 19-28 May, 2010. 92 experts were polled – Ukrainian MPs, representatives of central and regional executive bodies, governmental and non-governmental think tanks in Kyiv and Ukraine's regions. Some assessments are compared with results of the expert poll held on October 26 – November 10, 2006 (95 experts); those results were published in the *National Security & Defence* journal (2006, No.9). Some indices are also compared with results of the Ukrainian public opinion poll held on 15-20 May, 2010, with a sample representative of the adult population of Ukraine above 18 years by the key socio-demographic indices (2014 respondents polled). For the national poll results summed up in tables and diagrams, see the material "Ukraine's foreign and security policy: public opinion" published in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> For more detail see: Foreign policy sector in expert assessments. – *National Security & Defence*, 2010, No.2, p.30-38.

than in early February, 2010. In the other domains the assessments were roughly the same as in early February.

Expert assessments in next to all domains (except the development of cooperation with Russia) are substantially lower than those of the general public (the latter noticeably improved after the presidential elections).

### ASSESSMENT OF THREATS TO UKRAINE'S NATIONAL SECURITY

**Assessing threats for Ukraine, experts usually mention the high poverty rate, the conflicting potential of stratification by property status in society, usurpation of power by certain political forces, deterioration of Ukraine's international image, ruination of the system of social values, violation of territorial integrity of the state under the influence of internal factors, critical dependence of strategic enterprises and sectors of economy on foreign capital, Ukraine's transformation into a buffer zone, impairment of the law-enforcement bodies effectiveness to the level that does not guarantee reliable protection from existing and potential threats, loss or restriction of the state sovereignty, economic decay** (each of those threats was mentioned by over 60% of experts).

Mentioned less frequently were such threats as barring (complication) of Ukraine's access to foreign markets for its products, Ukraine's involvement in confrontation among international actors, growth of internal contradictions into open conflicts with the use of force, barring (complication) of Ukraine's access to resources (first of all, energy), annexation of part of its territory by another state, spread of international terrorism to the territory of Ukraine, Ukraine's involvement in armed conflicts on the territory of neighbouring countries, spread of international conflicts to the territory of Ukraine (those threats were noted by 32% to 54% of experts).

**So, experts see as more likely the threats associated with internal (social and economic) factors, less probable – associated with possible emergence of interstate armed conflicts or a terrorist threat.**

Meanwhile, only 16.3% of experts believe that Ukraine now has reliable external guarantees of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the opposite opinion is shared by 78.3%. Roughly the same (respectively, 11% and 79.8%) assessments were in early February, 2010. People also mainly negatively assess the state of the national security, although their assessments are somewhat less critical (respectively, 36.4% and 45.4%).

Experts negatively assess the effects of the agreement with Russia on the 25-year extension of the term of Russia's Black Sea Fleet stationing in the Crimea for Ukraine's security – 72.8% of them do not believe that the agreement will strengthen the country's security. This is contrary to the position of the majority of the polled citizens, 55.8% of whom sticks to the opposite opinion.

### WAYS TO GUARANTEE UKRAINE'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND PROSPECTS OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY

**Most experts tend to believe that Ukraine's national interests and its protection against threats would be best secured by its accession to NATO.** A relative majority (40.2%) of the polled experts is

sure that NATO should be the lead actor in charge of regional security in Europe. The European Union was mentioned by 23.9% of experts, OSCE – 15.2%, other organisation – by much fewer experts.

Experts assessed the effects of implementation of three scenarios of Ukraine's foreign political strategy with respect to interstate defence alliances: accession to NATO, CSTO, and non-alignment. Proceeding from such aspects as security guarantees, development of the defence industry, promotion of democracy, international authority of the country, effects for the economic situation, relations with the EU, Ukraine's accession to NATO is assessed mainly positively. According to experts, accession to the Alliance will have a largely negative effect only in two domains: relations with Russia, and stability in society.

By contrast, accession to CSTO would exert unconditionally positive influence only on relations with Russia, and controversial – on the defence industry (39.1% of experts suggest a positive influence, 30.4% – negative) and the economic situation (respectively, 20.7% and 27.2%). According to the majority of experts, all other domains would suffer negative effects from accession to that organisation.

Preservation of the non-aligned status will, according to experts, exert mainly negative influence in most of the mentioned domains, except the international authority, effects for the economic situation and relations with the EU, with respect to which the expert community has no dominant opinion.

Assessing the quality of information given by the Ukrainian media about each of the ways to guarantee the national security, experts most often note domination of biased, mainly negative information about accession to NATO, absence of information about accession to CSTO and the status of permanent neutrality, and partial, mainly positive information about non-alignment.

The absolute majority (88%) of experts believe that Ukraine's security would win from accession to the EU. 50.6% of the polled citizens agrees with that. Respectively, the overwhelming majority (79.3%) of experts suggests that Ukraine should join the EU (52.8% of citizens shares that opinion).

As the most important lines of Ukraine's cooperation with the EU, experts refer to the achievement of free trade with the EU and preparation of the roadmap for introduction of visa-free travel between Ukraine and the EU.

In the attitude to NATO, opinions of experts and Ukrainian citizens fundamentally differ. 79.3% of experts stands for concentration on effective implementation of Annual National Programmes, deeper cooperation with NATO, conduct of an adequate PR campaign, not forcing accession to NATO, and only 8.7% – for refusal from accession to NATO. Among the polled citizens those figures make, respectively, 18.9% and 44.5%. That is, while people mainly stand against accession to NATO, experts advocate deeper cooperation with a view of future accession.

Meanwhile, the success of the Annual National Programme implementation, at the time of its adoption designed to promote Ukraine's course of Euro-Atlantic integration, is assessed by experts very critically (from 1.34 points in the field of fighting crime to 2.33 points in the Armed Forces reform). ■

**To what extent did Ukraine's foreign policy under new authorities ensure...?**  
% of the polled experts

	Average mark*	Assessment					Hard to say
		"1"	"2"	"3"	"4"	"5"	
Development of relations with the Russian Federation	<b>3.89</b>	30.4	38.0	10.9	9.8	3.3	7.6
Development of mutually advantageous partner relations with neighbour countries	<b>2.97</b>	3.3	29.3	29.3	23.9	7.6	6.5
Peace and stability in the region	<b>2.87</b>	2.2	26.1	34.8	23.9	9.8	3.3
Simplification of visa procedures for Ukrainian citizens, optimization of border controls	<b>2.87</b>	0.0	20.7	44.6	19.6	6.5	8.7
Development of relations with the EU	<b>2.85</b>	3.3	18.5	40.2	28.3	5.4	4.4
Development of relations with the USA	<b>2.73</b>	2.2	9.8	46.7	22.8	7.6	10.8
Favourable external conditions for the development of society, the state, national economy, enhancement of the country's competitiveness	<b>2.28</b>	1.1	12.0	19.6	39.1	20.7	7.6
Security, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the country	<b>2.25</b>	1.1	12.0	26.1	28.3	29.3	3.3
A positive international image of the country, influence and respect in the world community	<b>2.20</b>	0.0	10.9	19.6	37.0	22.8	9.8
Reliable protection of Ukrainian citizens abroad	<b>2.19</b>	0.0	4.3	28.3	39.1	19.6	8.7
Integration in the global information and cultural space	<b>2.14</b>	0.0	7.6	26.1	33.7	28.3	4.4

\* On a five-point scale from 1 to 5, where "1" is the lowest mark, "5" – the highest.

May 2010

**Does Ukraine face the following threats?**  
% of the polled experts

	YES		NO		HARD TO SAY/ NO ANSWER	
	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010
High poverty rate, the degree of stratification of Ukraine's population in terms of property status fraught with conflicts	83.2	<b>85.9</b>	5.3	<b>2.2</b>	11.6	<b>12.0</b>
Usurpation of power by certain political forces	81.1	<b>79.3</b>	14.7	<b>14.1</b>	4.2	<b>6.5</b>
Deterioration of the international image of Ukraine	89.5	<b>75.0</b>	6.3	<b>15.2</b>	4.2	<b>9.8</b>
Ruin of the system of social values	70.5	<b>70.7</b>	13.7	<b>17.4</b>	15.8	<b>11.9</b>
Critical dependence of strategic enterprises and branches of the economy on foreign capital	61.1	<b>66.3</b>	23.2	<b>17.4</b>	15.8	<b>16.3</b>
Violation of the territorial integrity of the state under the influence of internal factors	64.2	<b>66.3</b>	24.2	<b>21.7</b>	11.6	<b>12.0</b>
Turning Ukraine into a buffer zone	69.5	<b>65.2</b>	12.6	<b>14.1</b>	17.9	<b>20.6</b>
Reduction of the effectiveness of the law-enforcement bodies to the level not guaranteeing reliable protection against the existing and potential threats	66.3	<b>65.2</b>	18.9	<b>18.5</b>	14.8	<b>16.3</b>
Loss or impairment of the state sovereignty	56.8	<b>64.1</b>	32.6	<b>23.9</b>	10.6	<b>12.0</b>
Economic collapse	66.3	<b>62.0</b>	25.3	<b>17.4</b>	8.4	<b>20.7</b>
Loss (or substantial complication) of Ukraine's access to foreign markets for its produce	82.1	<b>54.3</b>	10.5	<b>19.6</b>	7.4	<b>26.0</b>
Involvement of Ukraine into a confrontation with international actors	53.7	<b>54.3</b>	26.3	<b>34.8</b>	20.0	<b>10.9</b>
Transformation of internal contradictions into open conflicts that involve the use of force	51.1	<b>51.1</b>	45.3	<b>27.2</b>	14.8	<b>21.8</b>
Loss (or substantial complication) of Ukraine's access to resources (first of all, energy)	48.9	<b>48.9</b>	10.5	<b>32.6</b>	7.4	<b>18.5</b>
Spread of international terrorism to the territory of Ukraine	28.4	<b>41.3</b>	51.6	<b>28.3</b>	20.0	<b>30.5</b>
Annexation of part of its territory by another state	47.4	<b>41.3</b>	42.1	<b>38.0</b>	10.6	<b>20.7</b>
Involvement of Ukraine into armed conflicts on the territory of the neighbouring countries	24.2	<b>33.7</b>	62.1	<b>41.3</b>	13.7	<b>25.0</b>
Spread of international conflicts to the territory of Ukraine	30.5	<b>31.5</b>	57.9	<b>46.7</b>	20.0	<b>21.8</b>

**Which of the following models of the Ukraine's security best meets the following objectives,**  
% of the polled experts

	REQUIREMENTS OF DEFENCE FROM THREATS		REQUIREMENTS OF NATIONAL INTERESTS	
	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010
Accession to NATO	63.2	<b>48.9</b>	61.1	<b>46.7</b>
Preservation of the non-aligned status	12.6	<b>8.7</b>	13.7	<b>13.0</b>
Acquisition of the permanent neutral status	4.2	<b>7.6</b>	8.4	<b>9.8</b>
Accession to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO, or the Tashkent Treaty)	0.0	<b>7.6</b>	0.0	<b>3.3</b>
Other	5.3	<b>7.6</b>	3.2	<b>5.4</b>
Hard to say / No answer	14.7	<b>19.5</b>	13.7	<b>21.7</b>

**Which organisation should lead the process of guaranteeing regional security in Europe?**  
% of those polled experts



May 2010



**What consequences will the preservation of the non-aligned status bring for Ukraine in the following domains?**  
% of those polled experts

Domains	Consequences	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE		NO CONSEQUENCES		HARD TO SAY / NO ANSWER	
		October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010
Relations with Russia		51.6	53.3	17.9	17.4	21.1	16.3	9.5	13.1
Social stability		29.5	41.3	20.0	14.1	29.5	27.2	21.0	17.4
Security		14.7	25.0	60.0	54.3	12.6	6.5	12.7	14.2
International image		20.0	22.8	44.2	32.6	25.3	33.7	10.5	10.9
Economic situation		17.9	21.7	40.0	30.4	28.4	26.1	13.7	21.8
Development of democracy		17.9	20.7	34.7	42.4	38.9	22.8	8.4	14.2
Relations with the EU		17.9	17.4	46.3	27.2	23.2	43.5	12.6	12.0
Defence industry		22.1	17.4	51.6	54.3	16.8	14.1	9.5	14.2

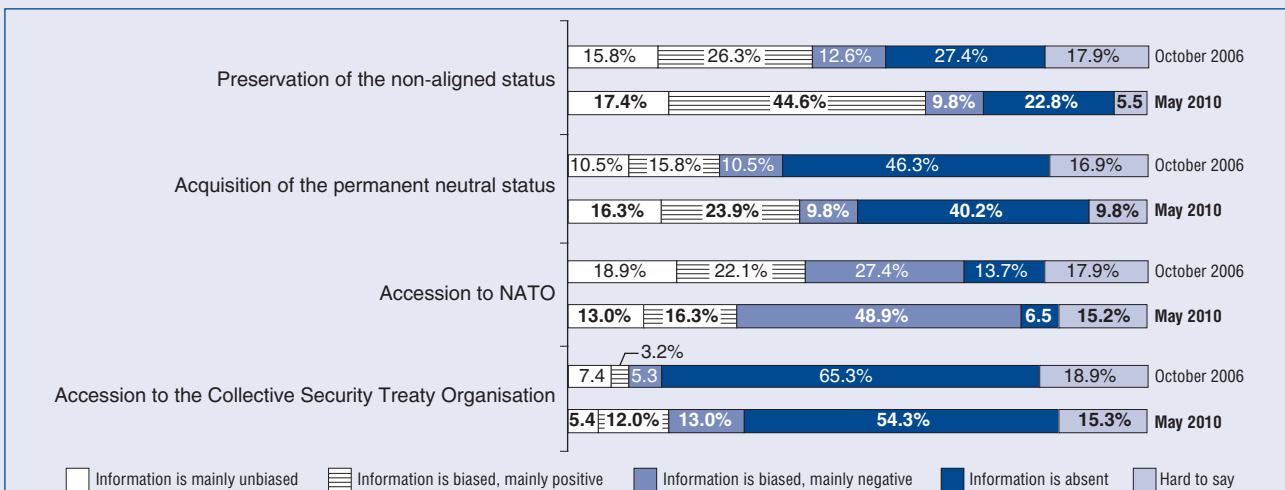
**What consequences will the accession to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (the Tashkent Treaty) bring for Ukraine in the following domains?**  
% of those polled experts

Domains	Consequences	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE		NO CONSEQUENCES		HARD TO SAY / NO ANSWER	
		October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010
Relations with Russia		72.6	66.3	6.3	9.8	9.5	6.5	11.6	17.4
Defence industry		25.3	39.1	38.9	30.4	18.9	12.0	16.8	18.5
Security		8.4	26.1	57.9	60.9	14.7	3.3	18.9	9.8
Economic situation		15.8	20.7	40.0	27.2	28.4	21.7	15.8	30.4
Relations with the EU		2.1	15.2	80.0	66.3	8.4	7.6	9.5	10.9
International image		4.2	14.1	69.5	63.0	13.7	6.5	12.7	16.3
Development of democracy		4.2	10.9	68.4	68.5	17.9	12.0	9.5	8.7
Social stability		6.3	15.2	53.7	66.3	20.0	5.4	20.0	13.1

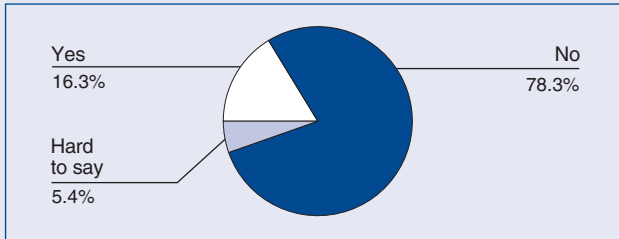
**What consequences will the accession to NATO bring for Ukraine in the following domains?**  
% of those polled

Domains	Consequences	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE		NO CONSEQUENCES		HARD TO SAY / NO ANSWER	
		October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010	October 2006	May 2010
International image		81.1	75.0	1.1	4.3	8.4	8.7	9.5	11.9
Relations with the EU		86.3	75.0	5.3	5.4	1.1	7.6	7.4	11.9
Security		77.9	72.8	9.5	10.9	3.2	5.4	9.5	10.8
Development of democracy		77.9	72.8	1.1	10.9	14.7	8.7	6.3	7.6
Defence industry		55.8	54.3	20.0	21.7	6.3	5.4	17.9	18.4
Economic situation		56.8	45.7	8.4	10.9	16.8	18.5	17.9	25.1
Social stability		29.5	16.3	28.4	53.3	17.9	6.5	24.3	24.0
Relations with Russia		5.3	13.0	76.8	72.8	9.5	3.3	8.5	10.8

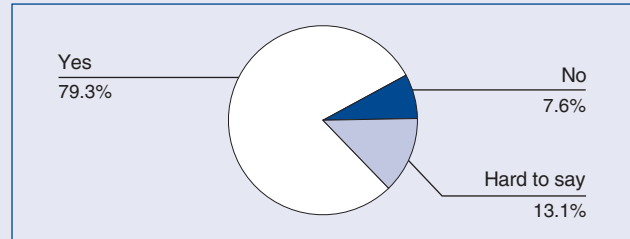
**How do the Ukrainian mass media inform citizens about each of the following ways to guarantee the national security?**  
% of those polled experts



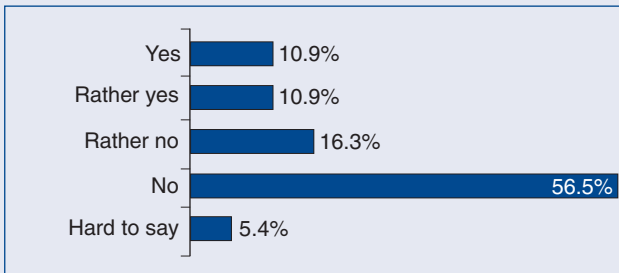
**Do you believe that Ukraine now has reliable external guarantees of its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity?**  
% of the polled experts



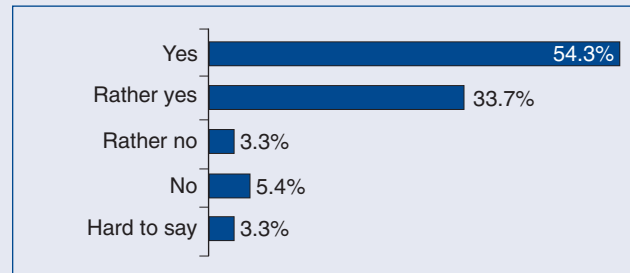
**Should Ukraine join the EU?**  
% of the polled experts



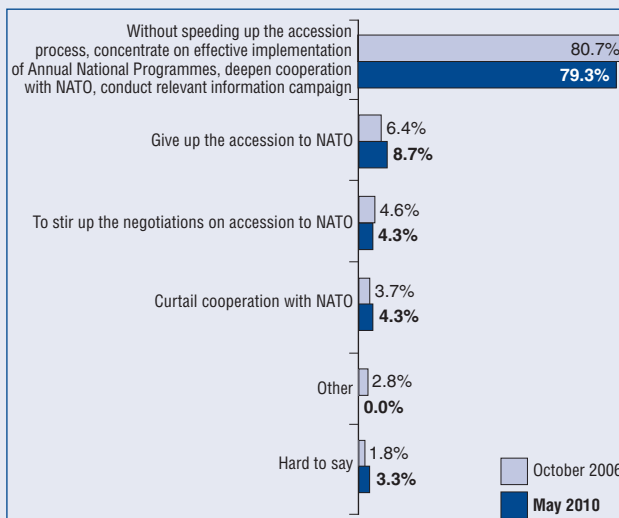
**Does the agreement on prolongation of the Russia's Black Sea Fleet stationing in Crimea for 25 years enhances the security of Ukraine?**  
% of the polled experts



**If Ukraine were EU member, would this strengthen Ukraine's security?**  
% of the polled experts



**How should Ukraine act towards NATO?**  
% of the polled experts



**Which areas of EU-Ukraine cooperation are the most important?**  
% of the polled experts

	Very important	Rather important	Rather unimportant	Unimportant	Hard to say
Ensuring a free-trade regime with the EU	77.2	21.7	0.0	0.0	1.1
Measures aimed at introduction of visa-free regime between EU and Ukraine	71.7	28.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Extension of interpersonal contacts with EU countries	55.4	38.0	1.1	1.1	4.4
Conclusion of a treaty with EU countries on employment, social security and pensions	54.3	38.0	3.3	0.0	4.4
Enhancement of security and stability on European continent	50.0	38.0	6.5	3.3	2.2
Enhancement of joint actions against illegal migration, international crime, and terrorism	45.7	47.8	5.4	1.1	0.0

**How successful is the implementation of Ukraine's course towards Euro-Atlantic integration (Annual National Programme) in the following areas:**  
% of the polled experts

	Average mark*	Assessment					Hard to say
		"1"	"2"	"3"	"4"	"5"	
Armed Forces reform	2.33	18.5	32.6	26.1	10.9	0.0	12.0
Public information	2.10	29.3	33.7	23.9	7.6	0.0	5.4
Economic issues	1.93	29.3	37.0	18.5	2.2	0.0	13.1
Internal policy	1.90	35.9	37.0	17.4	4.3	0.0	5.4
Legal issues	1.78	39.1	30.4	19.6	0.0	0.0	10.9
Security sector reform	1.74	40.2	38.0	14.1	1.1	0.0	6.5
Judicial reform	1.50	55.4	27.2	7.6	1.1	0.0	8.7
Fighting corruption	1.34	67.4	21.7	5.4	0.0	0.0	5.5

\* On a five-point scale from 1 to 5, where "1" is the lowest mark, "5" – the highest.