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Challenges and best practices for Ukraine's regional policy on its path to EU accession

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Presentation based on to the results of the project

‘Preparation of Ukraine for its accession to the EU in the area of Cohesion Policy’

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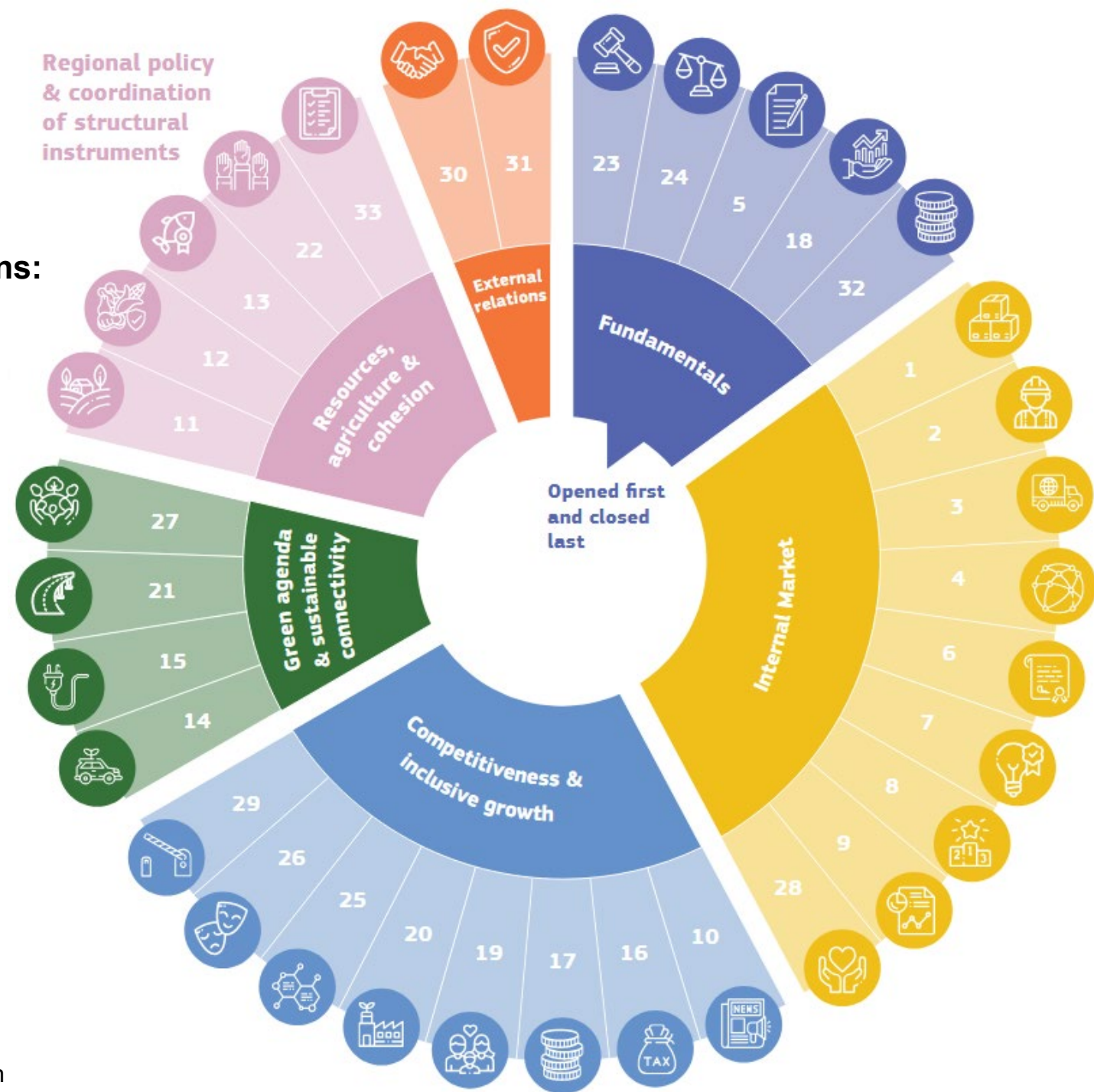
Ukraine's path to EU accession

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- **28 February 2022:** Ukraine applied for EU membership
 - **23 June 2022:** Candidate status granted
 - **14 December 2023:** Decision to open negotiations
 - **25 June 2024:** 1st intergovernmental conference
⇒ formal opening of the accession negotiations
 - **20 May 2025:** European Commissioner for Enlargement: *“Ukraine [...] is ready for Cluster 1 – Fundamentals to be open.”*

Accession negotiations:

6 thematic clusters

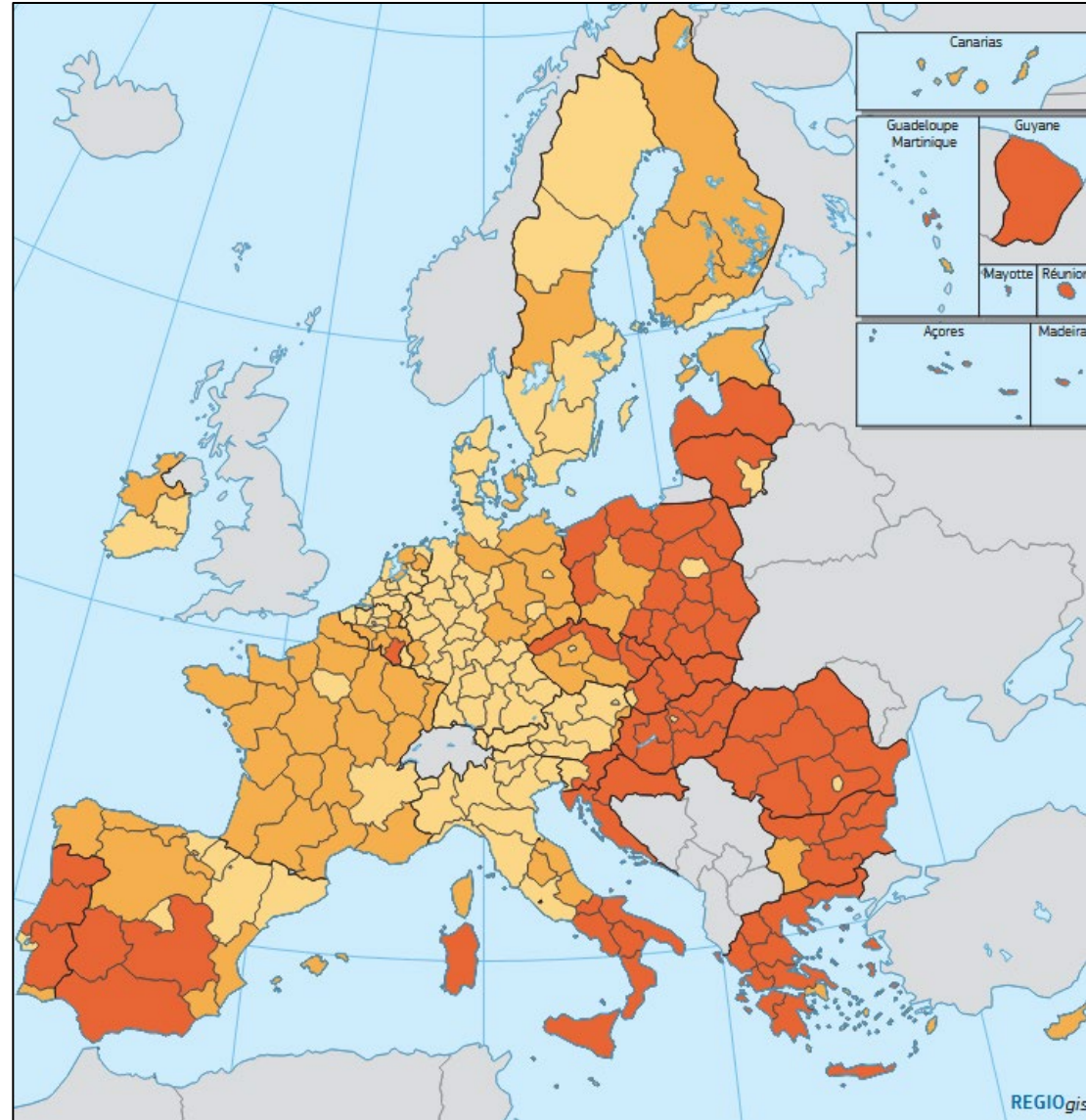
↳ 33 (+2) chapters



Regional policy and structural instruments

EU's main investment policy
for regional development,
focusing on the least
developed parts of Europe

→ **Convergence**



Ukraine Report 2024 – Chapter 22

Institutional framework:

Need to ensure that funding is allocated according to a transparent prioritisation methodology with substantial involvement of sub-national authorities

- **Ukraine:** Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine - *Minister only recently appointed*
- **Example of North Macedonia:** National IPA Coordinator + involvement of the Community of Units of Local Government of North Macedonia in each IPA project

Ukraine Report 2024 – Chapter 22

Administrative capacity:

Need for strengthened and systematic participation of regional and local stakeholders

- **Ukraine:** High staff turnover - *military mobilisation*
- **Example of North Macedonia:** Project implementation is challenging (strong coordination among stakeholders + technical and strategic expertise)
→ low IPA absorption caused by weak staffing, frequent changes and political influences

Ukraine Report 2024 – Chapter 22

Programming:

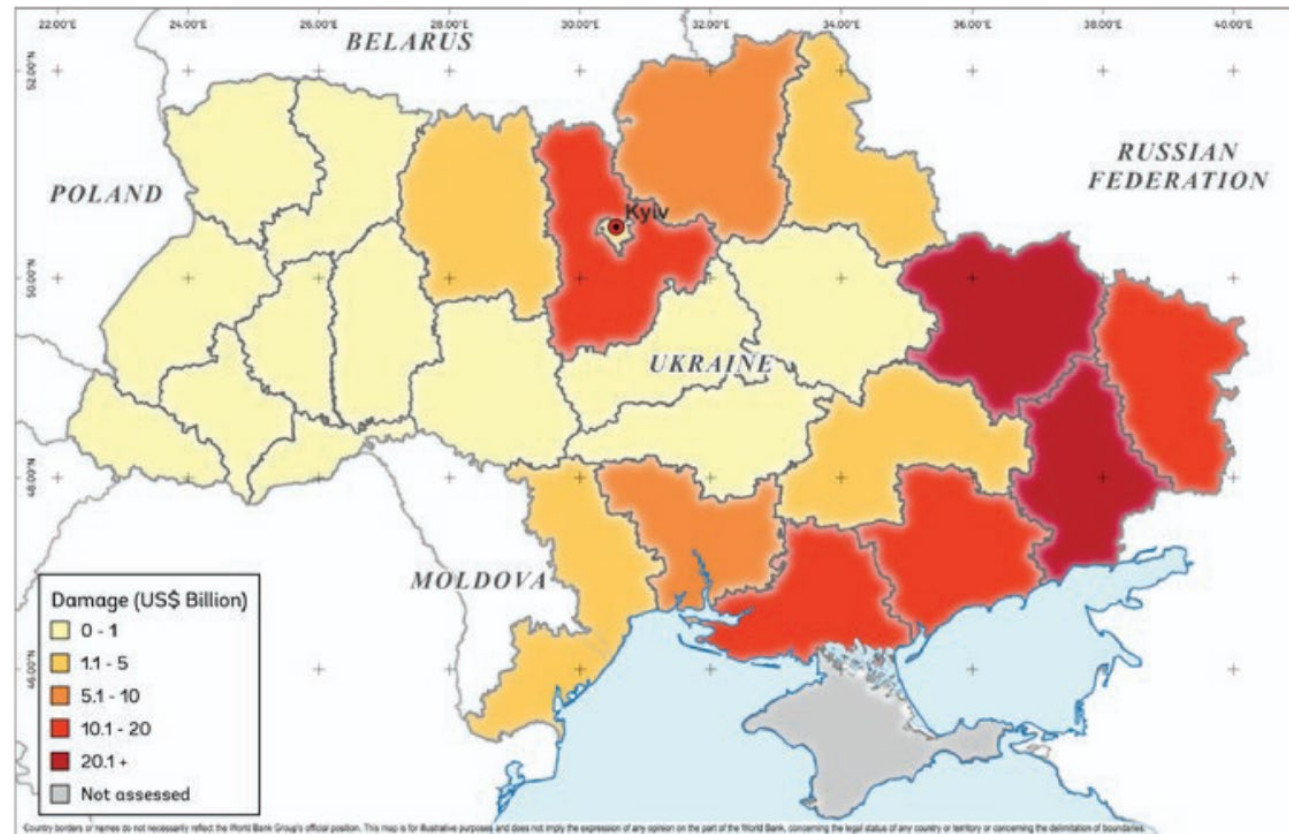
Need to follow the principles of Cohesion Policy, in particular subsidiarity, efficiency, accountability and decision-making role of sub-national authorities

- **Ukraine:** State Regional Development Strategy for 2021-2027 – *further territorial disparities*
- **Example of France:** Each region establishes its own partnership (with up to 300 partners, incl. main cities)
→ thematic focus groups for programme elaboration

Conclusions

The war reshapes and aggravates territorial disparities,
while martial law impedes decentralisation advancements...

**Damage by region as
of December 31, 2024**



Source: World Bank, Government
of Ukraine, EU, UN (RDNA4)

Conclusions

...but the war also showed the resilience of Ukrainian subnational authorities and communities.

Not least, the EU provides significant support to regional development endeavours in Ukraine.



Thank you for your attention!

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