The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union: Challenges Related to the War in Ukraine (2014–2026)

Collective Monograph

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The collective monograph examines contemporary transformations of the European security, political, and economic landscape amid profound geopolitical changes resulting from Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of the European Union, its security and defence policy, economic security and sanctions policy, as well as evolving EU relations with Ukraine and other international actors.

Particular attention is paid to the emergence of a new European security architecture, the strengthening of the European Union’s strategic autonomy, the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy, responses to contemporary hybrid threats, and the enhancement of economic resilience. Individual chapters explore the historical, political, economic, and institutional dimensions of these processes, offering an integrated understanding of Europe’s ongoing transformation and its implications for Ukraine.

The monograph is intended for scholars, university lecturers, students, and experts in international relations, European integration, security studies, and public policy, as well as for all those interested in contemporary transformations of the European Union and the development of Ukraine–EU relations.

The authors of the sections are responsible for the reliability of the results.

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INTRODUCTION

The European Union is one of the most far-reaching and enduring political projects in contemporary Europe. Its formation was a response to the devastating experience of two world wars and the need to establish a new model of interaction among European states. From its inception, European integration was driven not only by the pursuit of economic cooperation but also by the ambition to secure lasting peace, political stability, interdependence among states, and conditions under which large-scale armed conflict between European countries would become increasingly inconceivable. Over subsequent decades, the integration process gradually expanded to encompass political, social, humanitarian, legal, and security dimensions. The European Union developed a complex institutional system, common policies, and decision-making mechanisms, thereby emerging as an important actor in international relations and a significant framework for regional governance.

Following the end of the Cold War, the European security system underwent profound transformations. The structure of international relations changed, new independent states emerged, and regional conflicts, terrorism, irregular migration, energy dependence, economic instability, and the proliferation of hybrid threats became increasingly salient. Against this background, the European Union progressively expanded its toolkit for responding to crises and emerging security challenges. A major milestone in this process was the establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, followed by the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy, which created the institutional and legal foundations for a more active EU role in the promotion of international peace and security.

At the same time, the contemporary stage of the European Union's development is characterized by an increasingly complex security environment. The proliferation of regional conflicts, intensifying geopolitical competition, the transformation of the international order, and growing tensions between different models of political development have raised fundamental questions concerning the EU's capacity to effectively safeguard its interests, values, and security environment. In this context, the Russian-Ukrainian war has assumed particular significance. Since 2014, and on a dramatically greater scale following the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the war has become one of the central drivers of transformation within the European security system.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has demonstrated that the security of the European space cannot be considered separately from the security of Ukraine. The war has constituted a major test of the institutional capacity of the European Union, its Member States, and the broader system of European international cooperation. The EU's response has encompassed a broad range of instruments, extending from diplomatic and political support for Ukraine to unprecedented sanctions, financial, humanitarian, and military assistance, support for Ukrainian citizens who have been forcibly displaced to EU Member States, and measures aimed at strengthening the Union's own economic and energy resilience.

At the same time, the war has contributed to the transformation of the European Union itself. Questions concerning defence capabilities, strategic autonomy, energy independence, critical infrastructure protection, economic security, and countering hybrid threats have acquired renewed importance on the EU's political agenda. Changes are also taking place at the social and value-based levels. The large-scale displacement of Ukrainians to EU countries, the intensification of public debate on war, security, solidarity, and responsibility, as well as the psychological consequences of prolonged warfare, are affecting European societies and bringing the issue of societal resilience to the forefront.

Against this background, there is a particular need for a comprehensive study of the European Union not merely as an integration framework but also as one of the key institutions and actors within the contemporary system of European and international security. Such an approach requires simultaneous consideration of the historical foundations of European integration, the EU's contemporary institutional architecture, its interaction with other international organizations, the mechanisms underpinning the Common Security and Defence Policy, and the practical instruments employed by the Union to respond to conflicts and crises. Equally important is an examination of the impact of contemporary security challenges on the internal stability and development of the European Union itself.

The aim of this collective monograph is to provide a comprehensive examination of the role and place of the European Union within the contemporary system of peace, security, and international cooperation; to analyse its institutional and political mechanisms for responding to contemporary challenges; and to identify the principal directions of the EU's transformation under the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Achieving this aim entails examining the evolution of European integration as a peace project; analysing the value-based, political, and strategic foundations of EU action; characterizing its institutional architecture; determining the EU's role within the system of collective

security; examining the emergence and implementation mechanisms of the Common Security and Defence Policy; analysing the European Union's approaches to conflict resolution, the use of sanctions, humanitarian assistance, and civil protection; and identifying the political, economic, energy, social, and humanitarian consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war for the European Union.

The scholarly contribution of the monograph lies in its comprehensive approach to the study of the European Union as a project of peace, security, and cooperation undergoing substantial transformation in response to changes in the international environment. A distinctive feature of the study is the combination of an analysis of the historical and political foundations of European integration with an examination of contemporary security-policy mechanisms and an assessment of the EU's practical responses to international crises. Particular attention is devoted to the Russian-Ukrainian war as a factor driving the transformation of European security, thereby making it possible to trace the interrelationship between external security challenges and internal transformations within the European Union.

The structure of the monograph reflects the logic of the research, progressing from the conceptual and historical foundations of the European integration project to an analysis of contemporary security challenges and the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Chapter 1 examines the European Union as a project of peace, security, and cooperation, focusing on its value-based and strategic foundations, institutional architecture, and role in shaping the regional and global order. Chapter 2 addresses the EU as one of the principal security institutions of the twenty-first century, its interaction with the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and NATO, as well as the development and functioning of the Common Security and Defence Policy. Chapter 3 explores contemporary challenges and the EU's mechanisms for responding to them, including conflict resolution, sanctions policy, humanitarian assistance, and civil protection.

Chapter 4 focuses on the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014–2026 and its implications for European and global stability. It examines the background and course of the war, the positions of EU Member States, humanitarian and military assistance to Ukraine, and the European Union's sanctions policy towards the Russian Federation. Chapter 5 addresses the impact of the war on the European Union itself, including its economic, energy, and societal security, migration processes, transformations in values, and broader societal consequences.

Thus, this collective monograph seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary European Union amid profound

transformations in the European and international security environment. By combining historical, institutional, political, security, economic, humanitarian, and sociocultural perspectives, the study approaches the EU not only as the outcome of a long-term process of European integration but also as a system adapting to emerging challenges and developing its own mechanisms for responding to them. In this context, the Russian-Ukrainian war is of particular significance, having become a major factor in the reassessment of European approaches to peace, security, solidarity, and international cooperation.

CHAPTER 1

THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A PROJECT OF PEACE, SECURITY AND COOPERATION

1.1. The Specific Features of Europe's Political, Economic and Security Design after the Second World War (*Viacheslav Tsivatyi*)

The evolution of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) between 2014 and 2026 demonstrates a profound paradigm shift in the European Union's approach to regional security. The geopolitical shocks triggered by Russian aggression against Ukraine fundamentally challenged the foundational premises of the EU's security architecture. This decade-long crisis forced the Union to transition from a soft-power normative actor to a more assertive, capable, and geostrategically conscious security provider[1].

The growing interdependence of states in the era of globalization contributes to the strengthening of integration processes. The deepening of integration is also caused by the different potentials and opportunities of different continents, the aggravation of competition between states, the confrontation between poverty and wealth, and the diversity of development models, political platforms, ideologies and confessions. Conflicts between nationalist aspirations and democracies in general are intensifying[2].

The system of international relations is structured on different levels of national, regional and global integration. The new era of growing interdependence directed the system of collective (global) security to the intensification of integration processes. In such conditions, as a result of globalization, the traditional picture of the world with its clear division into sovereign national states is changing[3].

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[1] *Ціватий В.Г.* Стратегічне планування та інституціональний розвиток моделей дипломатії XXI століття // Україна дипломатична. Науковий щорічник. Київ: ГДІП, 2024. Вип. 25 (XXV). С. 851-862.

[2] *Грушецький А., Паніотто В.* Війна і трансформація українського суспільства (2022 – березень 2025). Монографія. Київ: Дух і Літера, 2025. 336 с.

[3] *Andersen Lise H.* Knowledge Management in Multilateral Diplomacy. The Case of the UN First Committee Cyber Negotiations Studies in Diplomacy and International Relations. Palgrave Macmillan, 2026. 232 p.

Although the lines of state borders mostly remain unchanged, the percentage of interstate conflicts is increasing precisely because of the territorial issue. As the borders of quasi-states change, the essence of state sovereignty, which has always been used to protect the integrity of state entities, the inviolability of borders, and non-interference in the internal affairs of the state, will gradually change. States see a way out of the current situation in participation in various integration projects, through which and with the help of which they try to form a system of their own protection against external influence[4].

The integration levers of the modern system of international relations have not yet been fully explored and represent a wide field for finding answers to the questions posed. Specialists of various scientific fields, such as international relations, political history, history of diplomacy, sociology, political science, philosophy, etc., are interested in integration processes[5].

Representatives of various scientific schools and directions tried to develop a system of concepts, categories, principles and norms designed to generalize, systematize and analyse a large body of empirical material of this field[6].

Political science and history make a significant contribution to the study of integration models within the system of international relations. These disciplines examine the foreign policies of nation-states, diplomacy, and international relations in their historical development. Economic diplomacy and the sociology of international relations, which has emerged as an independent field of research, also contribute to this study. A further contribution comes from legal studies, particularly international law, which examines the norms and principles governing the activities of states within the international system[7].

Theoretical and practical problems of international relations are investigated by geopolitics, which has also emerged as an independent field

[4] EU Integration Perspectives of the Candidate Countries. Collection of scientific works. Edited by Prof. Solomon Menabdishvili Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. Batumi, 2026. 394 p.

[5] *Ціватий В.Г.* Стратегічне планування в дипломатії та регіональні особливості системного аналізу міжнародних відносин в умовах мондіалізованого світоустрою XXI століття: інституціональний і трансформаційний дискурси // Гуманітарний корпус. Випуск 52. Київ: ТОВ «НВП Інтерсервіс», 2024. С. 38–43.

[6] ЄС у новій архітектурі європейської безпеки: виклики війни та стратегічна трансформація. Збірник матеріалів Міжнародної наукової конференції (Миколаїв, 02 липня 2026 року) / За ред. *Л.А. Вовчук*. Миколаїв, 2026. 99 с.

[7] *Tsivatyi V.* The concept of «Modern diplomacy» and strategy of communicative influence of states in the conditions of new geopolitical changes of the 21st century: institutional and regional aspects // Ştiinţa politică şi administrativă: provocări globale, soluţii locale. Chisinau, 2026. P. 281-290.

of research. So, the foreign policy function of the state in the context of creation and participation in integration models has absorbed the issues of the formation and development of the state, the development of the system of its protection and implementation mechanisms, the most important laws and principles of the functioning of the modern world community. Studies of models of diplomacy and foreign policy activity in the context of integration processes were formed and are considered at the intersection of various scientific disciplines[8].

In this scientific exploration, the strategic stability (or resilience) of Ukraine is analysed as a complex ability of the state, individuals and society to effectively resist external and internal threats, adapt to rapid changes in the security environment, and quickly recover. Emphasis is placed on the fact that integration diplomacy (multilateral and bilateral) is a new direction in the institutional connections of political and diplomatic systems of interstate relations in the conditions of the polycentric world of the 21 century[9].

Integrative diplomacy / Integration diplomacy is a modern diplomatic concept and practice that focuses on addressing complex global issues through the integration of various actors, networks, and policy sectors, moving beyond traditional state-to-state negotiations to foster collective, sustainable solutions.

Integration diplomacy is a specialised form of modern diplomacy where states strategically manage their participation in regional and global integration blocs to maximize national interests, secure economic growth, and enhance geopolitical influence[10].

Diplomacy is frequently regarded as experiencing an existential crisis, both in terms of processes for managing an increasingly complex policy environment and as a set of structures through which these processes operate. At the same time, diplomacy continues to perform an indispensable role in world politics. The uncertainties generated by this situation reflect a growing awareness that, whilst contemporary policy agendas continue to require a central, if changing, role for the state, many of the norms, rules and roles associated with diplomacy are no longer fit for purpose. Consequently, fundamental questions regarding the purposes of

[8] Стратегічні комунікації в умовах гібридної війни: погляд від волонтера до науковця: монографія / [В. Азарова та ін.; за заг. ред. Л. Компанцевої]. Київ: НА СБУ, 2021. 500 с.
[9] *Ціватий В.Г.* Культурні, кроскультурні та креативні індустрії як інноваційна складова сучасного публічного простору, колективної ідентичності й міжнародної комунікації: політико-дипломатичний і соціологічний аспекти // Креативні підходи у сучасних наукових дослідженнях: моногр. Харків: СГ НТМ «Новий курс», 2026. С. 34-46.
[10] *Гуменюк Б.І., Мартинов А.Ю.* Футурологія міжнародних відносин. Київ: «Українські пропілеї, 2025. 376 с.

diplomacy, which is – or should be – involved in it, and what forms and practices it should assume to deal with new policy challenges, need to be addressed[11]. In pursuing this theme, the article examines a set of interrelated issues underpinning the challenges confronting the practice of diplomacy within a framework that helps us to explore them in a coherent fashion. This framework we have termed "integrative diplomacy".

In employing this term we are not suggesting that the key to understanding diplomacy is defined by regional integration projects such as the European Union (EU). To be sure, these are a central feature of the current diplomatic environment and present policy practitioners with a series of challenges and opportunities – as in the context of the European External Action Service. But the integration of national communities provides only part of the picture. More fundamentally, the rapidly changing landscape of world politics is marked by conflicting tensions which are global and national as well as regional in their scope. The resulting complex texture embraces disintegrative or fragmenting qualities alongside integrative pressures[12].

Integrative diplomacy embraces a "post-globalist" image that argues for the continued significance of state-related diplomatic systems and processes whilst recognising the dramatic changes in their environment.

Integration diplomacy shifts the focus from traditional bilateral state-to-state relations to multilateral institutional frameworks, namely: *institutional engagement* (negotiating terms of entry, voting rights, and legal compliance within blocs like the EU, ASEAN, or USMCA); *sovereignty pooling* (managing the delicate balance between surrendering certain national powers to supranational bodies and retaining core state autonomy); *economic alignment* (harmonising trade tariffs, customs regulations, market standards, and monetary policies across borders); *regulating interdependence* (creating binding legal mechanisms to resolve conflicts and manage shared economic vulnerabilities)[13].

The contemporary landscape of integration diplomacy is marked by deep fragmentation, geopolitical rivalries, and a shift toward regionalization: *crisis of globalism* (traditional global institutions like the WTO face stagnation, causing states to pivot toward regional alternatives); *politicisation of trade* (economic blocs are increasingly used as geopolitical

[11] *Bilichak O., Huz A.* Hybrid war as a tool of foreign policy of the Russian Federation: The Ukrainian dimension (1991–2023) // East European Historical Bulletin. 2024. № 30. P. 162–178.
[12] *Berridge G.R.* Diplomacy, Third Edition: Theory and Practice. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke and New York, 2022. 6th Edition. 240 p.
[13] *Walsh N. Caroline.* Leadership and Morality in Ethical Ambiguity Navigating Accountability, Self-Development, and Communication Among CIA Officers. 2026. 252 p.

tools, where market access is tied to security alliances); *bloc competition* (the global arena is defined by competing integration projects, notably the Western-led systems versus China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and BRICS expansion); *asymmetric diplomacy* (smaller nations heavily rely on integration diplomacy to gain collective bargaining power against global superpowers).

The future trajectory of integration diplomacy will be shaped by technology, security realignment, and the emergence of more flexible diplomatic formats: *minilateralism* (traditional, slow-moving large blocs are being supplemented by smaller, agile networks focused on specific sectors (e.g., AUKUS, Chip 4 Alliance)); *digital integration* (diplomatic agendas will increasingly centre on cross-border data flows, artificial intelligence regulation, and cybersecurity standards); *resilient supply chains* (future negotiations will prioritise "friend-shoring", integrating economic systems only with ideologically aligned and trusted partners); *climate and green blocs* (the introduction of mechanisms like carbon border adjustments will force integration diplomacy to merge closely with environmental policy).

The relevance of this study is driven by the radical transformation of the European security architecture triggered by the war in Ukraine. The timeline from 2014 to 2026 captures a critical historical shift: the EU's transition from a predominantly civilian, "soft power" actor to a proactive security provider. The protracted conflict has exposed the limitations of previous European crisis-management models and forced a fundamental reassessment of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) frameworks. Analysing this 13-year dynamic is essential to understanding how the EU adapts to high-intensity conventional warfare on its borders.

The research evaluates the real-world operationalisation of newly developed defence instruments, including the Strategic Compass, the European Peace Facility (EPF), and initiatives like EUMAM Ukraine, ASAP, and EDIRPA. Furthermore, the deep integration of Ukraine into the EU's defence-industrial ecosystem up to 2030 presents a unique case study of externalised security partnership, making the systemic analysis of these processes highly urgent for both academic literature and strategic policy-making.

The geopolitical landscape of Europe is undergoing a fundamental transformation, driven by the profound crisis of the traditional security architecture in the wake of contemporary conflicts and the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. In this new reality, integration has transcended its original role as a mechanism for economic cooperation, emerging as a

critical paradigm for ensuring regional survival, resilience, and collective defence[14].

This chapter examines the evolution of European integration processes as a strategic response to unprecedented systemic vulnerabilities and imperial revisionism. By analysing the interplay between state sovereignty, accelerated supranational alignment, and the reshaping of Euro-Atlantic security frameworks, this section establishes the theoretical and empirical foundation necessary to understand how a future post-war European order can be constructed on the principles of indivisible security and strategic autonomy[15].

Issues of integration diplomacy (integrative diplomacy), crisis diplomacy and security diplomacy have been the subject of attention of a number of researchers. B. Humeniuk, G. Perepelitsa, V. Kopiyka, V. Tsivatyi, P. Hai-Nyzhnyk, M. Doroshko, I. Matiash, R. Marutyan, L. Vovchuk, O. Kovtun, I. Todorov, S. Tolstov, L. Chekalenko, H. Shelest, N. Perepelitsa, M. Pashkov, Sven Biscop, Daniel Fiott, Nicole Koenig, Brian Hocking, Jan Melissen, Shaun Riordan, Paul Sharp, Gabriela Belova, Gergana Georgieva, Malkhaz Matsaberidze, Levan Jakeli, Solomon Menabdishvili, Tamaz Putkaradze, Omar Phartenadze and others made attempts to reveal the essence of these specific branches of diplomacy and their role in the modern conditions of development of the European Union and Ukraine[16]. Modern diplomacy and integration processes, taking into account their longer existence in scientific discourse and the foreign policy practice of states, have been the subject of attention of a fairly large number of scholars[17].

Among the works on integration and crisis diplomacy published in recent years, particularly in the context of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation, those by P. Hai-Nyzhnyk, O. Mashevskyi, V. Manzhola, V. Konstantinov, M. Kapitonenko, H. Sytnyk, M. Doroshko, S. Troyan, A. Kyridon, S. Vidnyanskyi, A. Martynov, V. Tsivatyi, R. Marutyan, V. Teosa, L. Jakeli and others should be noted[18].

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[14] *Віднянський С., Мартинов А.* Російсько-українська війна та міжнародне співтовариство: монографія. К.: Інститут історії України НАН України, 2023. 264 с.

[15] *Потехін О., Клименко Ю.* Геополітика проти безпеки: союзницьке стримування агресії в Європі XX – початку XXI ст. Київ: ДУХ І ЛІТЕРА, 2023. 552 с.

[16] Futures for Diplomacy. Integrative Diplomacy in the 21st Century / [Brian Hocking, Jan Melissen, Shaun Riordan, Paul Sharp] // Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations Report. October 2012. № 1. 78 p.

[17] *Тодоров І.Я.* Трансформація дипломатії України в умовах широкомасштабної російської агресії // Геополітика України: історія і сучасність: збірник наукових праць. Вип. 2 (35). / ред. кол.: *О.М. Руденко* (гол. ред.) та ін. Ужгород: ДВНЗ «УжНУ», 2025. С. 77-88.

[18] *Дорошко М.С.* Тернистий шлях України від колонії «європейського» типу до суб'єкта міжнародних відносин. Київ: Ніка-Центр, 2025. 200 с.

There is also a fairly broad body of academic literature on the management and military dimension of integration and integration processes in the globalized world, which, however, is not the subject of our work[19].

The scholarly discourse surrounding the evolution of the CSDP in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war can be structurally divided into two main clusters. Ukrainian researchers have focused heavily on the practical dimensions of EU-Ukraine security cooperation, the efficiency of sanctions regimes, and the EU's response to hybrid threats[20]. Scholars such as B. Humeniuk, I. Todorov, H. Shelest, S. Tolstov and M. Pashkov have extensively analysed the initial phase of the conflict (2014–2022)[21], pointing out the EU's early hesitation and its reliance on diplomatic tools like the Normandy Format. Following the 2022 escalation (2022–2026), Ukrainian academic discourse shifted toward the material and military-technical aspects of European aid (P. Hai-Nyzhnyk, M. Doroshko, S. Troyan, A. Kyridon, S. Vidnyanskyi, A. Martynov, V. Tsivatyi, L. Jakeli, V. Teosa). Analytical works by experts from the Razumkov Centre and the New Europe Center have investigated the strategic implications of the European Peace Facility (EPF) and the legal frameworks of the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM)[22].

Ukrainian literature traditionally emphasises the existential necessity of integrating Ukraine into the EU defence-industrial base as a prerequisite for continental stability[23].

Western academia focuses primarily on institutional dynamics, EU-NATO relations, and the concept of "strategic autonomy". Leading European experts like Sven Biscop, Daniel Fiott, and Nicole Koenig have scrutinised how the war accelerated the institutional deepening of the CSDP[24].

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[19] Гібридна війна Росії проти України після Революції гідності (українсько-польське дослідження) / за ред. М. Дорошка, В. Балюка. Київ: Ніка-Центр, 2018. 280 с.

[20] *Гуменюк Б.І.* Українська дипломатія під час Національно-визвольної війни України: есе історика-міжнародника й дипломата // Міжнародні зв'язки України: наукові пошуки і знахідки. 2022. Вип. 31. С. 62-70.

[21] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Російсько-українська війна – війна за життя (2014–2022 рр.): періодизація // Актуальне українознавство. 2022. № 1 (82). С. 51-76.

[22] *Тодоров І.Я.* Геополітичні візії Юрія Липи в контексті сучасної російсько-української війни // Юрій Липа як державотворець і геополітик: збірник наукових праць за матеріалами всеукраїнської мультидисциплінарної науково-практичної конференції з міжнародною участю 26 червня 2026 року / наукова редакторка проф. Тетяна Єщенко. Львів: ДНТ «Львівський національний медичний університет імені Данила Галицького», 2026. С. 75-81.

[23] *Толстов С.В.* Криза системи європейської безпеки: причини та наслідки // Проблеми всесвітньої історії. 2025. № 4 (32). С. 21-46.

[24] *Koenig N.* Suggested citation: NIcole Koenig, "Europe: Detachment Issues", in: Tobias Bunde/Sophie Eisentraut (eds.), Munich Security Report 2026: Under Destruction, Munich: Munich Security Conference, February 2026. P. 59-67.

Biscop's works evaluate the EU's "Strategic Compass" as a response to the geopolitical awakening of the Union. Scholars from institutions like the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) have debated the balance between the EU's autonomous defence ambitions and its reliance on NATO's nuclear deterrence shield. Western historiography has also seen a critical debate regarding the internal cohesion of the EU, analysing how individual Member States (e.g., Germany's Zeitenwende vs. Hungary's veto policies) impact the collective decision-making process within the CSDP framework up to 2026[25].

The scientific novelty of the study lies in a comprehensive, long-term conceptualisation of the CSDP's evolution during a period of active geopolitical crisis (2014–2026). Specifically, the research offers the following novel contributions:

Holistic 13-year periodization. Unlike existing literature that treats 2014 and 2022 as isolated crises, this study provides a continuous, systemic analysis of how the CSDP evolved incrementally from a reactive posture (2014) to structural defence integration (2026).

Empirical evaluation of 2024–2026 defence initiatives. The paper introduces new empirical data and analyses regarding the latest stages of European defence integration, assessing the concrete mid-term results of the Strategic Compass and joint armament procurement mechanisms (ASAP, EDIRPA).

Conceptualisation of "*externalized integration*". The study theorises a new model of security cooperation, analysing how a non-member state (Ukraine) became deeply integrated into the EU's defence-industrial base and military training structures prior to formal political accession).

Redefinition of strategic autonomy. The research redefines the concept of EU "strategic autonomy" in the context of the war, demonstrating how European autonomy has evolved not as a substitute for NATO, but as a functionally specialised, complementary material pillar within the Euro-Atlantic security framework)[26].

The primary aim of this study is to comprehensively analyse the structural, institutional, and operational transformation of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) between 2014 and 2026 under the

[25] Challenges of the Common Security and Defence Policy. ESDC 2nd summer university book. Edited by Anna Molnár, Daniel Fiott, Foteini Asderaki and Sylvain Paile-Calvo. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, European Security and Defence College, 2022. 314 p.

[26] Воєнно-політичні інтереси України в ієрархії суспільних пріоритетів (кінець XX – початок XXI століття): монографія / відп. ред. *Ігор Соляр*, упоряд.: *Олег Муравський, Михайло Романюк*; НАН України, Інститут українознавства ім. І. Крип'якевича. Львів, 2021. 324 с.

impact of the war in Ukraine, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the EU's response to contemporary conventional and hybrid security challenges[27].

To achieve the stated aim, the following objectives have been formulated: 1) to trace the historical evolution of the CSDP from the 2014 annexation of Crimea to the 2022 full-scale invasion, highlighting key shifts in the EU's security paradigm; 2) to evaluate the operational efficiency of the EU's financial and military-technical response instruments, specifically the European Peace Facility (EPF) and EUMAM Ukraine; 3) to analyse the implementation and mid-term outcomes of the Strategic Compass up to 2026 in reinforcing European defence industrial capabilities; 4) to identify the internal political, legal, and institutional barriers within the EU that hinder rapid decision-making in the field of joint defence and crisis management; 5) to define the prospects and optimal models for the strategic integration of Ukraine's defence sector into the CSDP framework in the post-2026 period[28].

The methodological foundation of this study relies on a combination of general scientific and specialised political-historical methods: *historical-systemic method:* (used to track the gradual evolution of the CSDP over the 13-year period, viewing the EU defence policy as a dynamic system responding to external shocks); *content and document analysis* (applied to systematically examine official EU documents, including Council resolutions, the Strategic Compass text, European Parliament reports, and defence budget allocations between 2014 and 2026); *comparative method* (employed to compare the EU's reactions to the 2014 crisis versus the 2022 escalation, as well as to assess the differing strategic approaches of key EU Member States toward defence integration); *institutional functional analysis* (used to evaluate the efficiency of specific EU bodies, funds, and military missions (EPF, EUMAM, EDA) in executing security tasks); *scenario planning / forecasting* (applied in the final sections of the paper to outline potential trajectories for EU-Ukraine defence cooperation and the future architecture of European security)[29].

Integration as a paradigm of the post-war political and security system in Europe is a foundational concept that explains how the continent moved from centuries of conflict to unprecedented stability[30].

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[27] *Kapitonenko M.* International Relations Theory. London and New York: Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business., 2022. 205 p.

[28] Case Studies in Political Leadership. Elgar Leadership Cases series. Edited by *George R. Goethals* and *Scott T. Allison*. Copyright Edward Elgar Publishing 2025. 294 p.

[29] *Кридон А., Троян С.* Українська пастка для російського Левіафана. Монографія. Київ: Ніка-Центр, 2023. 400 с.

[30] *Tsivatyi V., Martsyniuk M.* Foreign Affairs and Historical Challenges of the Mondialized World of Europe in the Context of the Spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Migration and Diasporal Aspects // Foreign Affairs. 2021. № 3–4. P 4–8.

The post-WWII European integration paradigm was built on a simple premise – make war not only unthinkable but materially impossible: *economic interdependence* (merging core war-making industries (coal and steel) created shared economic survival); *supranational governance* (nations voluntarily yielded parts of their sovereignty to joint institutions (like the EU)); *democratic peace* (security was tied to shared democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law); *dual-track security* (integration provided internal peace (EU), while external defence was anchored by NATO)[31].

This paradigm remains highly critical due to shifting global geopolitics and active conflicts: *deterrence of aggression* (the war in Ukraine has revived the core purpose of integration – to unite against external authoritarian threats); *enlargement as stability* (integrating new members (e.g., the Western Balkans, Ukraine, and Moldova) is seen as the primary tool to prevent "grey zones" of insecurity); *economic security* (modern integration protects Europe from economic blackmail, such as weaponized energy supplies or supply chain disruptions); *collective resilience* (cyber threats, climate change, and disinformation cannot be fought by single nation-states alone)[32].

Despite its success, the European integration model currently faces deep systemic crises: *the security gap* (for decades, Europe integrated economically but neglected hard military capabilities, relying heavily on the United States); *rise of nationalism* (populist movements and Euroscepticism challenge the idea of pooling sovereignty, favouring border controls over unity); *democratic backsliding* (internal friction exists when Member States (e.g., Hungary) violate democratic norms, stalling collective decision-making); *the veto bottleneck* (the requirement for unanimity in EU foreign and security policy often paralyses quick responses to crises); *enlargement fatigue* (balancing the geopolitical need for expansion with the internal economic and institutional strain of adding new members).

In the context of the transformation of the modern system of international relations and the search for a new architecture of European security, the key issues are the international political entity of the European Union and the strategic resilience of Ukraine amid geopolitical and geostrategic changes and new paradigms[33].

Geopolitics and geostrategy in the 21st century are gaining special relevance. After all, the search for answers to urgent questions in the field

[31] *Ritzer G., Dean P.* Globalization: Conceptualization, Origins, and History. 2nd Edition. Oxford, 2019. 606 p.
[32] *Teosa V., Matsaberidze M., Tsivatyi V.* Eastern Europe. Regional Studies: monograph. Chişinău: USM, 2017. 355 p.
[33] *Терещук В.* Місце стратегічних комунікацій у публічній дипломатії України // Історико-політичні проблеми сучасного світу. 2025. Т. 52. С. 80-89.

of international relations, an effective response to today's challenges and threats for the European Union and Ukraine can be successful precisely because of the tools of modern diplomacy and innovative approaches in industry diplomacy[34].

The international political subjectivity of the European Union (EU) refers to the Union's ability to act as an independent, integral and legally recognized participant in international relations (actor of international relations). It has a unique hybrid nature, as it combines the features of an international organization and a confederal state.

Strategic stability (or resilience) of Ukraine is the complex ability of the state and society to effectively resist external and internal threats, adapt to rapid changes in the security environment, and quickly recover. It covers political and diplomatic, military, economic, social, energy and cyber security spheres. Among the factors of stability and key elements of the resilience of Ukrainian society in the European and world spaces, the following should be attributed first and foremost: consolidation of society in conditions of war, international support, energy stability, financing and the banking sphere, military adaptation and reforms in the field of security and national defence, cyber security and innovation, technological priorities, effective strategic planning. Ukrainian stability is not an accident, but the result of purposeful reforms and extraordinary efforts of the Ukrainian people, supported by international partners.

The problems of ensuring and effective functioning of the regional security system and the system of national security of the state are currently very relevant for most states of the world in the conditions of the polycentric world system of the 21st century. In the conditions of growing international political instability in the world, increased conflict potential in the global geopolitical space and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, new challenges and threats to international security are emerging in the energy, information, and especially military spheres[35].

Strategic resilience (stability) of Ukraine and crisis diplomacy of the 21st century are complementary elements of national security that allow the state not only to resist hybrid and military threats, but also to actively shape the international agenda. Strategic resilience of Ukraine is the ability of the state, society and life support systems to quickly adapt to shocks, maintain functionality during crises and recover after them. The system of stress

[34] *Лисецький Ю.М. Старовойтенко О.О. Семенюк Ю.В. Павленко Д.Г.* Гібридні війни. Компоненти та особливості // Вчені записки ТНУ імені В. І. Вернадського. Серія: Державне управління. Публічне управління у сфері державної безпеки та охорони громадського порядку. 2021. Том 32 (71). № 5. С. 63–71.

[35] *Carbó-Catalan E., Roig-Sanz D.* Culture as Soft Power: Bridging Cultural Relations, Intellectual History and Cultural Diplomacy. 2022. 350 p.

resistance is functionally based on the main clusters: institutional stability; socio-political solidarity; psychological and cognitive flexibility[36].

Institutional stability is the transformation of management models and social services to the requirements of wartime. Socio-political solidarity is the basis of national stability, which is based on the unity of citizens, the activities of state institutions, people's self-organization and public diplomacy. Psychological and cognitive flexibility is the ability of the population to resist information operations, fakes and disinformation, which is critical in the 21st century[37].

Military doctrine is the basis for preparation and adoption of military-political, military-diplomatic, geostrategic, military-strategic, military-economic and military-technical decisions and the development of relevant concepts and programs. Actually, the military doctrine is the ideological core of all military-political and military-diplomatic activity of the state (military policy) as one of the directions of the general policy of the state, political parties, public organizations and institutions. It concerns the interests of society and all state structures. Political goals are the embodiment of new political interests. In this context, the interest represents a certain synthesis of objective needs for the use of military force to ensure the functioning of the government in a certain territory or in certain spheres of life. In the field of military policy, such an interest is defined as a military-political interest. Such interests, as a rule, have nationwide significance and are among priority national interests[38].

Military and political goals are a set of views and intentions that express the needs and interests of participants in military and political activities. Most often, two types of goals are distinguished: long-term, ideal (goals), which are sometimes called strategic, and short-term, specific (objectives), which are called operational. Each state has its own military-political and military-diplomatic goals and determines them in different conditions of the military-political situation. In order to analyse and standardise an effective military security strategy, it is necessary to evaluate as fully and objectively as possible the entire set of external and internal factors that influence its creation and implementation[39].

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[36] *Федорова Г.* Особливості ведення дипломатичних переговорів // Науково-теоретичний альманах Грані. 2024. Том 27. № 3. С. 111–118.

[37] *Ціватий В.Г.* Переговори і моделі переговорного процесу в мондіалізованому світі XXI століття: міжкультурно-комунікаційний і політико-дипломатичний аспекти // Нотатки сучасної науки, 2023. № 4. С. 7-9.

[38] Modern Diplomacy in Practice. Robert Hutchings, Jeremi Suri. Paris, 2020. 260p.

[39] *Марутян Р.Р.* Воєнна фантастика як гуманітарна технологія гібридної війни. Інформаційно-комунікаційна безпека: сучасні тренди: монографія / *О.О. Бровко, О.В. Курбан, А.Л. Лісневська, Р.Р. Марутян.* Київ: Київський університет імені Б. Грінченка, 2022. С. 270–283.

Modern war is a complex socio-political phenomenon that is institutionalised as a component part of the general political and political-diplomatic process, which consists of a set of interconnected periods characterised by new geostrategies and a certain geopolitical scale (global, regional, local) and the use of a wide range of means to achieve certain political goals (hybrid war).

However, not all political goals can always be achieved with the help of "soft" non-military means. There may come a time when, in order to achieve them, international actors may continue their policy by other means – through aggressive policy. This serves as the reason for the transition from peaceful cooperation to a qualitatively new state – war and confrontation, when politics and diplomacy begin to be carried out by other, harsh non-military and military means of war[40].

New conditions of crisis situations and international political conflicts require corresponding new approaches and tools. They are based on methods involving the study and practical implementation of mathematical, cybernetic, simulation models, etc. The international political conflicts of the 21st century constitute an institutional cluster; they are social conflicts in the globalized society and public space[41].

It is rightly noted by Prof. H.P. Sytnyk that "…Threats to state security are caused by various factors, for the systemic activation of which there are various methods that involve the use of information technologies and mass communications and have as their final consequence the generation of critical (emergency) situations, the feature of which is a rapid increase in tension between the subjects of social interactions, which leads to the transformation of potential dangers to state security into real ones…"[42].

Disaster diplomacy (crisis diplomacy) and its role in the diplomatic systems of states of the 21st century are an innovative research issue for historical, political and legal research. The above-mentioned problems require an updated toolkit for the application of system analysis and the appropriate terminology, which is necessary for the performance of scientific tasks. Crisis diplomacy (disaster diplomacy) is a specific branch of

[40] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Матриця CRINK: авторитарний альянс держав-парій (геополітичні інтереси і геостратегічні цілі Китаю, Росії, Ірану та Північної Кореї в епоху глобального протистояння). Монографія. Київ, 2026. 296 с.

[41] *Семененко О., Водчиц О., Толок П., Митченко С., Гетьман А., Тарасов О.* Основні теоретичні і практичні аспекти ведення проксі-війн та гібридних воєн у сучасній світовій геополітичній та безпековій обстановці: історія, теорія, практика, форми та способи, досвід для України // Social Development & Security. 2023. № 13 (3). С. 1–23.

[42] *Ситник Г.П.* Інформаційна компонента критичних (надзвичайних) ситуацій у контексті забезпечення державної безпеки // Науковий вісник: Державне управління: науковий журнал. 2020. № 2 (4). С. 327-339.

diplomacy and one of the new directions in the theory of diplomacy and the theory of international relations[43].

Crisis diplomacy (disaster diplomacy) is a factor in the institutionalisation of political conflictology and one of the unifying institutional vectors in world politics and processes of transformation of the modern system of international relations. The concept of "crisis diplomacy" is a means of neutralisation and settling international conflicts, wars and political crises of the 21st century[44].

In the context of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the defence of its sovereignty, Ukraine defines its national interests and priorities, looks for ways to protect them, determines its place and role in the region, the European Union and the polycentric world as a whole. In 2026, Ukraine's geostrategic goals are focused on achieving a military advantage to end the war on favourable terms, integration into Western security structures, and economic recovery in the face of global transformations.

The geostrategy of the state is a complex long-term policy that determines the methods of achieving geopolitical goals, ensuring national security, strengthening economic and military power while taking geographical location into account. It combines the interests of the state with spatial, historical and resource factors, acting as a tool for implementing the national strategy in the international arena. Solving these problems is impossible without constant identification and analysis of factors that affect the national security of the state and its struggle against external aggression. The main components of Ukraine's national security include military security, negotiation practices and crisis diplomacy.

The transformation of the modern system of international relations destroys the former international political world order and increases geopolitical instability[45].

In these conditions, the interaction between the international political subjectivity of the European Union and the strategic resilience (stability) of Ukraine acquires decisive geopolitical significance for the

[43] *Tsivatyi V.* The Transformation of the World Order in the 21st Century and its Impact on the Life of Ukrainian Society: International Political, Geopolitical and Diplomatic Aspects // Трансформація світового порядку в XXI столітті та її вплив на життя українського суспільства: зб. наук. праць. Харків: Право, 2025. С. 33-39.

[44] *Ціватий В.Г.* Дипломат і кризова дипломатія в умовах трансформації сучасної системи міжнародних відносин: теоретико-методологічний і практико-орієнтований дискурси // Україна і світ: теоретичні та практичні аспекти діяльності у сфері міжнародних відносин. Київ: Вид. центр КНУКіМ, 2024. С. 99–106.

[45] *Ціватий В.Г.* Дипломатичний протокол, церемоніал та етикет міжнародної ввічливості: модель, інструментарій і національні особливості сучасної дипломатії (теоретико-методологічний аспект) // Гуманітарний корпус. Збірник наукових статей. Вінниця–Київ, 2022. С. 43–47.

security of European states as a whole. Further strengthening of the role of the EU in a multipolar (polycentric) world directly depends on the EU's ability to ensure the victory and restoration of Ukraine. This will be the main test of Brussels' ability to act as a global leader (global actor) capable of protecting its own strategic interests[46].

After the Revolution of Dignity, international communication activities were implemented in Ukraine on the conceptual basis of strategic communications. Not least, the need for this was caused by Russian military aggression, which required the adaptation of the state's information policy to these realities[47].

This study aims to examine the place of strategic communications in Ukraine's public diplomacy, analyses regulatory documents in this area, and traces how the relevant activities were implemented through the creation of specialised institutions[48].

It was proved that over the past decade, public diplomacy has been confidently integrated into Ukrainian foreign policy practice[49].

The concept of strategic state communications, introduced somewhat later, integrated public diplomacy as a separate element. This happened both at the normative and institutional levels[50].

The interpretation of strategic communications is fully correlated with Western (in particular, American) visions and approaches, and the invariance of the interpretation in various doctrinal documents indicates the constancy of the understanding of this concept, in particular, in the foreign policy and military spheres[51].

Public diplomacy at the institutional level was implemented in the activities of the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine in 2015 in the form of the creation of a special department. In 2021, the Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for 2021–2025 was adopted, the

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[46] *Belova G., Ivanova A.* EU Institutions: Revisiting Gender Balance and Women's Empowerment // Laws. 2023. № 12. P. 3.

[47] *Цевельов О.Є.* Російсько-українська війна: причини, хід ведення та наслідки (огляд подій та хід ведення бойових дій 2022 -2023 років): монографія / *Цевельов О.Є., Вітер Д.В.* Київ: Талком, 2024. 372 с.

[48] *Matiash I.* Borshch as a Tool of Culinary Diplomacy // Ocznik Centrum Studiów nad Ukrainą (CSU). Щорічник Центру досліджень України. 2026. № 3. P. 97-109.

[49] *Ціватий В.Г.* Системний аналіз і моделювання в дипломатичних, управлінських і соціально-економічних процесах: міждисциплінарний, інституціональний і теоретико-методологічний дискурси // Системний аналіз в управлінні: міжгалузеві дослідження: збірник наукових праць. Національний педагогічний університет імені М.П. Драгоманова. Київ: Ореол-Сервіс, 2022. Випуск IV (4). С. 27–30.

[50] *Перепелиця Н.О.* Переговори в умовах конфліктів: стратегії деескалації та досягнення компромісу // Політикус. 2024. № 2. С. 188–193.

[51] *Малик І.Р.* Перемога в гібридній війні: складний конструкт – складні рішення // Регіональні студії. 2023. № 35. С. 89–94.

provisions of which are relevant to current challenges and correspond to the logic of strategic communications[52].

The outlines of Ukraine's strategic communications system were defined by the Information Security Doctrine of Ukraine in 2017. This system includes, in particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine (now its functions are transferred to the State Committee of Ukraine for Television and Radio Broadcasting)[53].

In 2026, the updated Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine was adopted for the next period – 2025–2030[54].

In the conditions of the transformation of the modern system of international relations, the concepts of "state protocol", "diplomatic protocol", and "etiquette of international courtesy" are important components of the construction of interstate relations and the political leadership of global actors-states[55]. Effective negotiations are a political tool in world diplomacy for the settlement of wars and international conflicts[56].

Integration diplomacy (integrative diplomacy) and the integration level of interstate relations are one of the promising ways to build a new European security system and re-evaluate global leadership in the world[57].

Conclusion. The chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of integration processes as a fundamental paradigm for shaping a new architecture of the post-war European political and security system. The study allows for the formulation of the following key conclusions:

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[52] *Ціватий В.Г.* Публічна дипломатія в Україні та світі: соціально-гуманітарний, міжнародно-політичний і практичний виміри зовнішньої політики у сфері культури (1991-2025 рр.). Соціально-гуманітарні відносини в сучасній Україні: виклики та перспективи: колективна монографія Харків: СГ НТМ «Новий курс», 2025. Розділ 3 (3.2). С. 73-88.

[53] *Лепський М., Щербань О., Бублєєв В.* Класифікація переговорів в умовах війни // Науково-теоретичний альманах «Грані». 2022. Том 25. № 4. С. 43–49.

[54] Стратегія публічної дипломатії Міністерства закордонних справ України. 2026-2030. Стратегію ухвалено Наказом МЗС від 23.07.2026. Київ: МЗС України, 2026. 40 с.

[55] *Ціватий В.Г.* Дипломатичний протокол і етикет міжнародної ввічливості в умовах мондіалізованого світоустрою XXI століття: теоретико-методологічний і практичний дискурси наукової та освітньої дипломатії. Сучасне суспільство: колективна монографія. Розділ 3.12. Харків: СГ НТМ «Новий курс», 2022. С. 338–348.

[56] *Ціватий В.Г.* Політика безпеки, гібридні війни і міжнародно-політичні переговори в теорії та практиці дипломатії: історико-інституціональний і політико-правовий дискурси // Міжнародна безпека. Російсько-українська війна: право, безпека, світ. Збірник наукових праць. 2022. Вип. V. С. 274–278.

[57] *Tsivatyi V.* Integration Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy as an Institutional Toolkit for the Implementation of Interstate Cross-border Cooperation and Cross-border Security: the European Experience of Ukraine (2014-2020) // Ştiinţa politică şi administrativă: provocări globale, soluţii locale. Chişinău, 2021. P. 181-189.

In the field of transformation of the integration paradigm, we must state that Russian aggression against Ukraine has decisively shattered the previous European security system, which was built on liberal illusions and economic interdependence with authoritarian regimes. Today, integration has outgrown the boundaries of a purely economic or normative project. It has emerged as a crucial geopolitical tool for deterrence, survival, and ensuring the strategic autonomy of the European continent.

In the field the security dimension of enlargement, we must state that the European Union enlargement process – specifically granting Ukraine candidate status and launching official accession negotiations – has shifted from the category of "neighbourhood policy" to a security imperative with no alternative. Ukraine's integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures stands as the only effective guarantee to prevent future large-scale conflicts in the region.

Despite its consolidation, the EU's internal system faces a series of critical contradictions that require immediate resolution: *institutional reform and decision-making crisis* (the current principle of unanimity (veto power) in foreign and security policy frequently paralyses EU action).

The transition to qualified majority voting is blocked by certain Member States driven by national egoism); *the* "*enlargement vs. deepening*" *dilemma* (the necessity of admitting new members (Ukraine, Western Balkan countries, Moldova) requires a radical overhaul of the EU's budget, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and regional policies – a financial and political restructuring for which current European leaders are not fully prepared); *populism and internal disintegration* (the rising influence of right-wing radical and Euroskeptic forces within the EU undermines solidarity regarding support for Ukraine and weakens joint security initiatives); *strategic dependence* (Europe still experiences a severe deficit in its own defence capabilities, remaining critically dependent on the US security umbrella (via NATO), which creates substantial risks in the event of fluctuations in American political discourse).

For Ukraine, integration into the post-war security system involves addressing several key challenges:

Aligning national legislation with the acquis communautaire during reconstruction. Legislative alignment and economic reconstruction must proceed simultaneously, placing considerable pressure on state institutions and the financial system.

Completing systemic reforms. Priorities include strengthening the rule of law and anti-corruption institutions, reforming the judiciary, and advancing de-oligarchisation. Progress in these areas remains subject to close scrutiny by EU Member States.

Addressing economic protectionism in neighbouring countries. The integration of the Ukrainian agricultural sector and logistics infrastructure into the EU market has already encountered resistance from some Member States, including Poland and Hungary. This requires a firm but diplomatic defence of national economic interests.

Securing guarantees prior to full membership. The central challenge is to develop interim security arrangements through bilateral agreements and participation in EU defence projects. These arrangements are intended to help protect the country against renewed aggression before the security commitments under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty or those associated with EU membership become applicable.

In conclusion, Europe's post-war integration paradigm is undergoing dynamic formation. Its ultimate success depends on the EU's capacity for internal modernisation and Ukraine's ability to transform its security and human capital into an inseparable element of European sovereignty.

A specific feature of the modern international system (1991–2026), whether it is interpreted as the progressive "diffusion" of unipolarity and/or as the initial phase of a transition to a multipolar (polycentric) model, is the changing interests and motivations of states amid growing political complications in relations between the major powers, as well as a significant increase in the number of states that are increasingly engaged in dialogue on key global issues and seek potential collaborative solutions.

The emergence of new great powers among former colonies and former Third World countries challenges the traditional geopolitical division of the world into the "System Centre" and the periphery, as countries such as China, India and Brazil have become major regional centres.

Redistribution loss of economic potential and power and power factor promotes the role of medium-sized countries that join the ad hoc regional combinations of interests and forms of interaction and, depending on their individual intentions and capabilities are more involved in regional coalitions.

In summary, the trajectory of the CSDP from 2014 to 2026 highlights a historic turning point. While the war in Ukraine served as a powerful catalyst for unprecedented defence integration and defence-industrial mobilisation, it also exposed systemic operational vulnerabilities. To secure its geopolitical future and ensure lasting stability on the continent, the European Union must now institutionalise these ad hoc wartime mechanisms into a permanent, highly integrated, and self-sustaining European Defence Union.

Strategies of communicative influence in interstate and interinstitutional relations are of particular relevance today.

1.2. The European Union in the Discourse of Values, Interests, and Strategic Narratives
(*Alina Iovcheva*)

European integration became the priority project for the political unification of Europe in the 20th century. The original rationale behind this project was quite complex: following the catastrophe of two world wars, European political elites sought to establish a system of state interaction in which the recurrence of a large-scale conflict on the continent would be, on the one hand, politically undesirable, and on the other, structurally impossible. Against this background, the origins of the European integration project should be sought first and foremost in a rethinking of the very principle of organising the European political space, in the desire to build relations based on substantive, democratic, and economically beneficial cooperation among the countries of the European region. In other words, the aim was a gradual transition from a system based on competition among sovereign states to one in which interdependence, shared institutions, and coordinated rules would serve as tools for overcoming historical conflicts.

Postwar Europe created exceptional conditions for such a rethinking. In addition to the devastating consequences of World War I and World War II, the continent had been politically discredited by the experience of aggressive nationalism, totalitarianism, and interstate struggles for dominance. The Franco-German rivalry, which for decades remained one of the central sources of instability in Europe, was also telling. That is why, after 1945, the question of European unity was also linked to the search for an institutional mechanism capable of transforming the nature of relations between former adversaries. It is important to note that this idea developed in parallel with the broader formation of the postwar international order, in which international law, human rights, and multilateral institutions took on increasing significance. A key development in this context was the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, which established a system of international legal protection for fundamental rights in Europe[58]. At the same time, the European integration project went beyond traditional interstate cooperation, gradually establishing mechanisms for joint decision-making and supranational regulation.

A pivotal moment in this process was Robert Schuman's Declaration of May 9, 1950. It marked a shift in the very logic of European politics. Schuman reasoned that reconciliation between France and West Germany required not yet another system of diplomatic guarantees but the creation of a form of

[58] Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Rome, 1950. 62 p. URL: https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention_ENG

interdependence under which war between them would gradually lose its practical meaning. The proposal to place the production of strategic raw materials under joint control effectively became a unique political experiment: material interests were used as a tool to achieve and secure peace. It was precisely in this combination of interest and principle that one of the most enduring characteristics of European integration was laid[59].

The creation of the European Coal and Steel Community under the 1951 Treaty of Paris marked the first practical implementation of this logic. Six European states (France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) agreed to place strategically important industries under joint supranational management[60]. The fundamental novelty lay in the fact that, in addition to agreeing to coordinate their policies, the states also created an institutional mechanism that limited the traditional autonomy of national governments in a specific area. This marked the emergence of a new type of political order in which conflicts of interest were not eliminated, but their resolution was transferred to an institutional framework where interdependence and shared rules were intended to reduce the risk of unilateral behaviour.

However, it would be incorrect to view early integration in the postwar period exclusively as a peace-making or moral project. From the very beginning, it combined normative motives with clear geopolitical and economic interests. Western European states were navigating the emergence of a bipolar international order, the growing Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, and the need for economic reconstruction. Cooperation made it possible to simultaneously reduce the risks of a new Franco-German conflict, stimulate economic recovery, and strengthen Western Europe's political position. That is precisely why, from the very beginning, the unique nature of the European project lay in the fact that integration institutions were created specifically to make them mutually compatible: a shared interest was meant to sustain peace, and peace, in turn, was meant to create the conditions for deeper cooperation.

This logic was extended to a broader economic sphere with the signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957. The establishment of the European Economic Community marked a transition from sectoral integration to the creation of a common market and the gradual removal of economic barriers between Member States[61]. However, even the preamble to the Treaty

[59] *Schuman R.* Schuman Declaration. 9 May 1950 // European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/schuman-declaration/
[60] Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. Paris, 1951. URL: https://lnk.ua/XSB1EB9yu
[61] Treaty establishing the European Economic Community. Rome, 1957. URL: https://lnk.ua/aY7GDPOkk

Establishing the European Economic Community demonstrated that economic integration was not viewed as a purely technocratic project. Among the stated goals were economic and social progress, the improvement of living and working conditions, the harmonious development of economies, and the reduction of disparities between regions. Ultimately, the idea gradually took shape that integration was intended to create both an efficient economic area and a certain social order. It was this trend that later formed the basis for the broader normative framework of the European Union as an institutional union.

Nevertheless, the early Communities were not established on the basis of a single set of shared values, and their legitimacy was largely grounded in the concrete and pragmatic outcomes of integration (economic development, stability, minimisation of conflict, the gradual formation of interdependence, etc.).

The normative content of integration took shape gradually, through institutional practice and the interaction between European law and national constitutional traditions. Therefore, it should be noted that the history of European values has been inextricably linked to the history of the gradual institutionalisation of European integration.

A qualitative change took place amid the transformation of the international environment in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The catalyst was the end of the Cold War and the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. The European Community faced the prospect of enlargement and the need to define the political conditions for membership in the European order. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty became a major milestone in this transformation, ushering in a new phase in the political dimension of European integration[62].

It is of fundamental importance that, during this period, the value foundation of integration began to serve a new function. It became a means of describing the political nature of the Union and, at the same time, a criterion for its internal and external political differentiation. European integration increasingly required not only that states meet certain economic criteria but also that they belong to a common political order. This became particularly relevant in the context of EU enlargement following the end of the Cold War, when the integration process became one of the mechanisms supporting the political and institutional transformation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Consequently, in 1993, the European Council

[62] Treaty on European Union. Maastricht, 7 February 1992 // Official Journal of the European Communities. 1992. C 191. P. 1–112. URL: https://lnk.ua/LluuT2IQl

in Copenhagen defined the political, economic, and legal criteria that candidate countries for EU membership were required to meet[63].

The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam continued this process of formalisation and enshrined the principles that had previously been taking shape with increasing clarity in the Union's political and legal order[64]. The progression of deeper integration created a new problem: the more power the common institutions acquired, the more important the question of the political and normative basis for their legitimacy became. Thus, values gradually shifted from the periphery of the integration discourse to its centre. They could no longer be viewed merely as the moral backdrop to economic cooperation, as they increasingly defined the boundaries of acceptable political behaviour within the Union.

The culmination of this process at the level of primary law was the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on December 1, 2009. Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union enshrined the Union's core values, including respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, while also defining the broader social context through pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and equality between women and men[65]. The importance of this provision lies precisely in the change in the status of values: they were ultimately presented as one of the constitutive foundations of the Union, which determined a certain normative order that extended to the community shared by all Member States.

It would be erroneous to perceive the contemporary value core of the EU exclusively as the result of the internal evolution of the European Community, since integration has never been a purely value-based project. The concept of "European values" is the result of the convergence of different normative sources rather than the product of a single ideological centre. This, in turn, explains their political viability, yet at the same time creates space for ongoing disputes over their content, the limits of their application, and their relationship with national political traditions.

It is also worth noting that the value core of the European Union, formed in the course of the historical development of European integration, does not exist beyond specific political, economic, and security circumstances. As established above, European integration from the very beginning combined normative aspirations with the practical interests of

[63] Accession criteria (Copenhagen criteria) // EUR-Lex. URL: https://lnk.ua/V9nZVeEd6
[64] Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts. Amsterdam, 2 October 1997 // Official Journal of the European Communities. 1997. P. 340. URL: https://lnk.ua/NyZ3V1r7R
[65] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2012. C 326. P. 13–46. URL: https://lnk.ua/7DWfP2oTM

the participating states, while the institutional development of the Communities largely proceeded through the gradual reconciliation of these two dimensions. In the contemporary EU, this interaction has become even more complex, as the Union simultaneously acts as the bearer of a certain normative order, an economic space, a political union, and an international actor compelled to respond to competition, conflicts, and structural changes in the international environment. For this very reason, the relationship between values and interests should be considered as a dynamic process of shaping "normative" and "pragmatic" policy.

In classical approaches to international relations, the concept of interest has traditionally been associated primarily with ensuring security, power, resources, and the ability to make autonomous decisions. The realist tradition, beginning with *Hans Morgenthau*, regarded the national interest as a central category of foreign policy, emphasising that states are compelled to act under conditions of international anarchy and competition for power.[66] The development of liberal and constructivist approaches demonstrated the limitations of such an interpretation, drawing attention to the role of institutions, norms, identities, and socially constructed notions of appropriate behaviour. For the European Union, this debate is of particular significance, since its external action fundamentally does not fit the model of the classical state, while the very concepts of "interest" and "power" acquire a more complex meaning.

The specificity of the EU lies primarily in the fact that its interests cannot be fully separated from the normative foundations on which the Union itself is built. This is directly reflected in EU primary law. Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union stipulates that, in its relations with the wider world, the Union shall *"uphold and promote its values and interests"*. The objectives of external action include peace, security, sustainable development, solidarity, the protection of human rights, the development of international law, and respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations[67]. This formulation defines the balance of the community's normative framework, in which the founding treaties do not establish a hierarchy whereby interests automatically take precedence over values or, conversely, values have unconditional priority over any material considerations. They are based on the need to ensure both simultaneously.

In other words, the EU's interests are not merely a set of material advantages or goals that the Union seeks to achieve regardless of the nature of the political environment. Security, economic stability, technological

[66] *Morgenthau H.J.* Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948. URL: https://lnk.ua/zumUUarTZ

[67] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union. Official Journal of the European Union. 2012. C 326. P. 13–46. URL: https://lnk.ua/7DWfP2oTM

capability, control over critical dependencies, protection of the internal market, and international political agency take on particular significance for the EU precisely because they ensure its ability to maintain its internal political and socioeconomic order. In this sense, the normative and material dimensions do not merely coexist; rather, they partially construct and balance one another.

It was precisely this feature that allowed *Ian Manners* to propose the concept of ***"Normative Power Europe"***, which shifted attention from the traditional question of the EU's resources to the question of its ability to influence the international environment through the dissemination of norms and principles. Manners emphasised that the specificity of European power lies not only in the use of material instruments, but also in shaping perceptions of what should be regarded as legitimate and appropriate behaviour of international actors[68]. Nevertheless, the concept of normative power does not imply the absence of interests. On the contrary, the very ability of the EU to transform its own normative principles into foreign policy practices presupposes the availability of corresponding economic, diplomatic, and institutional resources. For this reason, it would be methodologically erroneous to oppose "Normative Europe" to a Europe guided by interests.

An alternative approach is one in which normativity is regarded as one of the mechanisms for shaping and realising interest. The economic dimension of EU activity is fundamental in this respect. Thus, its single market creates for the Union an internal space of economic interaction, as well as a significant resource of external influence. *Chad Damro*, developing the concept of ***"Market Power Europe"***, draws attention to the EU's ability to use the scale of its market and its regulatory capacities to externalise its own rules and standards[69]. In this case, economic power and normative influence are not alternatives, since it is precisely the material scale and potential of the European market that creates the opportunity to extend normative rules beyond the Union's borders. This interconnection becomes particularly evident when economic interdependence shifts from being a source of mutual benefit to a source of political vulnerability. The logic of European integration has long been based on the assumption that deepening interdependence would promote stability and predictability and foster cooperation among Member States. The global crises of recent years have demonstrated that interdependence can be asymmetrical and,

[68] *Manners I.* Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms? // JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 2002. Vol. 40. № 2. P. 235–258. URL: https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353

[69] *Damro C.* Market Power Europe // Journal of European Public Policy. 2012. Vol. 19. № 5. P. 682–699. URL: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13501763.2011.646779

consequently, create opportunities for political pressure. The COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions in global supply chains, energy dependence, competition in critical technologies, and the consequences of a full-scale war in the European region have transformed the very understanding of economic security. What was previously viewed primarily as a matter of market efficiency and optimisation has increasingly come to be seen as a matter of resilience, security, and political autonomy.

In this context, the concept of strategic autonomy has taken on particular significance. Its essence lies in the European Union's ability to independently set priorities, make decisions, and possess sufficient capacity to implement them, without becoming critically dependent on external actors. Contemporary academic literature emphasises the multidimensional nature of this concept: strategic autonomy encompasses security and defence, economic resilience, technology, energy, financial infrastructure, and the ability to defend its own normative priorities[70]. The point is not to eliminate interdependence, but to reduce those dependencies that could limit the Union's political choices.

It is also worth noting that the EU institutions themselves increasingly formulate strategic autonomy precisely through simultaneous reference to values and interests. In 2016, the EU Global Strategy ***"Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe"*** combined the concepts of principles, interests, and priorities within a single vision of the Union's external action[71]. The strategy states that the EU must be capable of protecting its citizens, acting in conditions of crises, and upholding a rules-based international order, which, in turn, highlighted the need for capabilities sufficient to practically ensure the strategic foundations of the Union.

The most characteristic manifestation of this logic is the EU's policy in the field of security and defence. Adopted in March 2022, the ***"Strategic Compass"*** directly linked the strengthening of the EU's defence capabilities with the need to protect its values and interests. The document is based on strengthening the capacity of the European Community to act, invest, ensure resilience, and develop partnerships, while defining strategic autonomy as a means of enhancing the EU's ability to act independently and together with partners[72]. This logic does not imply

[70] *Steinbach A.* The EU's Turn to 'Strategic Autonomy': Leeway for Policy Action and Points of Conflict // European Journal of International Law. 2023. Vol. 34. № 4. P. 973–1006. URL: https://www.ejil.org/pdfs/34/4/3374.pdf

[71] Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. European External Action Service. Brussels, 2016. URL: https://lnk.ua/ZsJD1V6WI

[72] A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade. Council of the European Union. Brussels, 21 March 2022. URL: https://lnk.ua/Osh1NwZg6

a rejection of the transatlantic partnership within the framework of security systems. Strategic autonomy in this context means, first and foremost, the ability to be a more capable actor within the partnership framework, rather than becoming an isolated geopolitical entity.

The economic dimension of this transformation is revealed through the issue of competitiveness, which determines the position of European companies in global markets. It is increasingly linked to the Union's ability to maintain its own political autonomy. After all, if critical technologies, energy resources, financial instruments, or key supply chains are subject to excessive external control, economic dependence can turn into a political constraint. That is why, based on this logic, the EU has begun to view economic resilience as a component of a broader security concept.

A prime example is European policy in the field of semiconductors. The European Chips Act, which took effect in September 2023, was aimed not only at developing technological capabilities but also at strengthening the resilience of supply chains and reducing external dependencies[73]. This example illustrates how economic policy actually intersects with strategic security policy, since the ability to produce and control critical technologies becomes a prerequisite for political autonomy.

An important factor in the Union's effective and harmonious development is the formula of balance: regulations without capability risk becoming mere declarations, while capability without regulatory constraints could undermine the Union's very political identity. Nevertheless, this interdependence does not eliminate the tension between the realisation of the Community's values and its interests. On the contrary, in practical politics, this tension becomes particularly evident. For example, the European Union is compelled to defend human rights, democracy, and the rule of law while simultaneously maintaining relations with states that do not meet its normative standards but are of strategic importance. This situation is evident in the development of partnerships in the areas of energy, migration, security, trade, and counterterrorism. In such cases, the political choice comes down to determining the acceptable level of compromise between normative principles and specific political necessities.

This problem is particularly characteristic of foreign policy, where the EU does not have a fully autonomous decision-making system, and its position is shaped through the interaction of the Union's institutions and the Member States. Unlike domestic law, where normative principles can be enforced through supranational judicial and legal mechanisms, their implementation in foreign policy depends largely on political consensus

[73] European Chips Act / European Commission. Digital Strategy. URL: https://lnk.ua/n9Q73IfdF

among Member States. This creates a structural tension between the universality of the proclaimed principles and the political selectivity of their application. Consequently, on the one hand, the problem lies in the relationship between "values" and "interests," and on the other, in who exactly defines the EU's interests, which Member States are capable of influencing their formation, and how far they are willing to go in defending common normative positions. This is precisely where the problem of double standards arises, which is one of the most complex challenges to the normative legitimacy of the European Community. If the Union proclaims the universality of human rights, international law, and democratic principles but applies political instruments to different partners with varying intensity, questions arise regarding the consistency of its normative policy. It is more constructive to view such selectivity as a structural consequence of the functioning of international politics, in which normative goals constantly interact with security, economic, and geopolitical constraints. Indeed, studies of EU foreign policy have repeatedly documented situations in which human rights issues took a back seat to short-term considerations of stability, migration control, energy, or economic relations[74]. Nevertheless, such selectivity usually has certain political consequences for the EU. For an actor whose international role is largely based on normative legitimacy, a discrepancy between professed principles and practical decisions can result in significant reputational and strategic losses. Based on this, the consistency of normative policy can be viewed as an essential component of the EU's international status.

Completely abandoning selectivity is practically impossible, since no international actor has unlimited resources, and political decisions always involve setting priorities. This raises the question of whether the Union can justify differences in its policies with clear and consistent criteria. It is precisely the transparency of criteria, the proportionality of measures, and the coherence between domestic and foreign policy that can determine whether a differentiated approach will be perceived as a legitimate political necessity driven by critical needs or as a double standard.

The relevance of this issue stems from the fact that EU values increasingly function both as an internal normative framework and as a resource for foreign policy, while upholding democracy, human rights, international law, and the multilateral order. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between normative and strategic interests, since, for example, the protection of international law can simultaneously be both a value-based position and a pragmatic strategy for

[74] European Union. Events of 2023. World Report 2024 // Human Rights Watch. 2024. URL: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/european-union

maintaining the order upon which the security and prosperity of the EU itself depend.

This interdependence becomes particularly evident in the context of growing geopolitical competition and global security threats. Alongside issues of economic dependence, the European Union is increasingly compelled to take into account the possibility of using economic dependencies as an instrument of political pressure. The most illustrative case in this context was the transformation of the EU's internal and external policies in connection with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Thus, for example, in March 2022, EU leaders in Versailles directly linked strengthening European security, reducing energy dependencies, and reinforcing the economic base of the Union with the need to protect European citizens, values, and democracy[75]. Thus, the concept of interest was broadened: security and competitiveness began to be viewed as prerequisites for safeguarding the normative order, rather than as an alternative to it.

It would be a mistake to think that this has resolved the tension between normative and pragmatic imperatives. On the contrary, this dual relationship is becoming more structural, since the more actively the EU uses economic, regulatory, and security instruments to protect its own interests, the more the question arises regarding the limits of such use. Regulatory power can turn into a form of economic pressure; sanctions can simultaneously uphold international law and impose economic costs on European societies; policies aimed at reducing dependencies can enhance resilience, but at the same time conflict with the principles of an open economy. Therefore, strategic autonomy does not in itself resolve the dilemma between values and interests. Rather, it elevates it to a new level.

Thus, the relationship between values and interests in the European Union should be viewed as an important interdependence that is, at the same time, not without conflict. Values set the normative boundaries of what the European Community can consider a legitimate interest, while interests and available resources determine the actual capacity to protect and promote these values. For example, economic competitiveness provides the material foundation for political capacity; security capabilities create the conditions for safeguarding the political order; and strategic autonomy is intended to reduce dependencies that could limit Europe's freedom of choice. The fundamental dilemma lies precisely not in whether the European Union must choose between values and interests. Its distinctive nature as a political project lies precisely in the fact that it is compelled to

[75] The Versailles declaration, 10 and 11 March 2022 // European Council. Brussels, 2022. URL: https://lnk.ua/CKzZK8tVG

constantly reconcile them, even when such reconciliation gives rise to internal contradictions. Therefore, the question is rather about finding a balance between principles and capacity, one in which interests do not undermine the Union's value foundation, and values, in turn, do not prevent it from responding to the real challenges of international politics.

It is at this level that the following problem arises: if values define the normative boundaries of European interests, and interests define the Union's practical priorities, how does the European Union itself explain and legitimise this potentially contradictory framework? How do European institutions shape the image of the Union as a political actor, what meanings do they ascribe to its external activities, and how do they explain changes in its priorities to citizens and international partners? The answer to these questions shifts the analysis from the realm of the relationship between normative and material factors to the realm of their political interpretation in the domestic and international spheres. Strategic narratives take on particular significance in this context, as they help the European Union define its own role, goals, and place in the international order.

While the balance of values and interests determines the substance of the European Union's political priorities, strategic narratives determine the way in which these priorities are understood, explained, and presented as a coherent and well-defined political position of the community. In this sense, a strategic narrative serves as a means of structuring political reality, allowing for the integration of perceptions of the past, assessments of the current international environment, and visions of a desired future into a single coherent framework. It is through such constructs that a political actor defines who they are, which threats they consider significant, which goals they deem legitimate, and by what means they intend to achieve them.

Conceptually, the notion of strategic narrative was systematised in the works of leading researchers in the field of international relations and strategic communications, *Alister Miskimmon*, *Ben O'Loughlin*, and *Laura Roselle*, who proposed considering strategic narratives as a means by which political actors shape a shared understanding of the international environment and their own role within it[76]. This approach is based on an understanding of international politics as a space where, alongside material resources and institutional capacities, the struggle for the interpretation of meanings plays a decisive role. States and international actors seek to shape a unified vision among domestic and foreign audiences regarding the cause-and-effect relationships of international processes and the necessary responses. Under these conditions, the strategic narrative serves as a

[76] *Miskimmon A., O'Loughlin B., Roselle L.* Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order. New York: Routledge, 2013. 226 p.

conceptual link between objective political reality and its discursive construction.

For the European Union, this is of particular importance due to the specific nature of its political structure, since the EU is not a nation-state and cannot rely on a single traditional mechanism for forming political identity. Its political agency is shaped through a complex interplay of Member States, supranational institutions, shared legal norms, and societal perceptions of what the concept of "Europe" actually means. Thus, the strategic narrative serves not only a foreign policy function but also a domestic policy function for the Union, as it helps to weave diverse national perspectives into a shared history and explains why Member States must act in unison even when their immediate national interests do not fully align.

One of the most enduring European narratives in this context became the ***"Europe of Peace"*** narrative, which, by describing the historical significance of integration, gives it a teleological meaning. According to this narrative, Europe emerges as a political space that was able to transform the experience of war and conflict into an institutional mechanism of cooperation. After the Second World War, it was precisely this interpretation that became one of the central elements of the legitimation of the integration project, allowing European unification to be presented as a historical means of overcoming the logic of interstate hostility. This narrative had both internal and external dimensions. Within the Communities, it shaped the image of integration as a guarantee of stability and reconciliation (primarily in the context of Franco-German cooperation). Externally, it allowed European unification to be positioned as an alternative to the traditional politics of power rivalry. In this sense, peace became the foundation of integration and, at the same time, one of the main criteria of its political legitimacy. A symbolic recognition of such a perception was the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union in 2012 for its contribution to reconciliation, the protection of democracy, and human rights[77].

Alongside this, the narrative of ***"Normative Europe"*** emerged in parallel, which was closely linked to the conceptualisation of the EU as a particular type of international actor. Its intellectual foundation was the concept of ***Normative Power Europe***, proposed by *Ian Manners*[78]. Within this approach, the specificity of the European Union was determined not so much by its ability to impose its will through military

[77] The Nobel Peace Prize 2012: Press release // NobelPrize.org. 2012. URL: https://lnk.ua/CYAKgeB8L

[78] *Manners I.* Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms? // JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 2002. Vol. 40. № 2. P. 235–258. URL: https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353

force as by its capacity to influence the behaviour of other actors through the dissemination of norms, rules, and notions of a legitimate political order. In practical terms, this manifested itself through the enlargement policy, the conditions for concluding agreements with third countries, support for democratic reforms, the protection of human rights, and the promotion of a multilateral international order. The narrative of Normative Europe was particularly influential in the period following the end of the Cold War, when the European Union was undergoing large-scale enlargement and shaping an image of a centre of a stable, democratic, and rule-based order. In this case, the strategic narrative directly intersected with the policy of conditionality, when the prospect of membership or the deepening of relations with the EU created incentives for political and institutional reforms in partner states. The Copenhagen Criteria of 1993 effectively transformed the normative image of the EU into a practical mechanism of external influence with specific mechanisms of influence.

This narrative gradually encountered limitations. *First*, the dissemination of norms presupposes the availability of corresponding resources and political attractiveness. *Second*, normative influence depends on the willingness of external actors to accept the proposed rules. *Third*, EU enlargement and the intensification of global competition demonstrated that the international environment does not always respond to normative attractiveness in the way anticipated by the post-Cold War liberal model. Thus, the growing role of power politics, authoritarian states, geoeconomic competition, and strategic dependencies gradually created a demand for a different language of European foreign policy.

In this context, the narrative of "Geopolitical Europe" began to gain prominence, referring to a gradual change in the way the international environment and the EU's place within it were described. According to the new logic, Europe could no longer regard the international order solely as a space of rules, institutions, and economic interdependence. It was increasingly perceived as a space of competition, power asymmetries, strategic dependencies, and the struggle for political influence. A turning point in the political rhetoric was Ursula von der Leyen's programmatic speech in the European Parliament in 2019, in which she stated her intention for the Commission led by her to become a "geopolitical Commission"[79]. The term itself had important symbolic significance. The European Commission had traditionally been associated primarily with regulatory and economic functions, whereas the concept of geopolitics referred to a space of power,

[79] *Von der Leyen U.* A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe. Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019–2024. Brussels, 2019. URL: https://lnk.ua/9Xd1i9ctI

competition, and strategic choice. Therefore, the emergence of the "geopolitical Commission" meant not simply a change in communication vocabulary, but an attempt to rethink the boundaries of what the European Union was capable of and should do as an international actor.

It is precisely here that a fundamental analytical problem arises, in which "Geopolitical Europe" does not displace "Normative Europe", but rather overlaps with it. After all, the geopolitical discourse does not abolish democracy, the rule of law, international law, or human rights as elements of European self-identification. The perception of the conditions for preserving the normative foundation of the Union is shifting. For example, whereas it was previously assumed that the dissemination of rules and economic interdependence would contribute to stability, under conditions of growing competition, the ability to protect these rules and institutions from external pressure is becoming increasingly important. In this context, the geopolitical narrative can be interpreted as a narrative of responsibility, according to which the EU emerges as an actor that must act in a world where other states actively use economic, technological, diplomatic, and military instruments to achieve their own objectives. This is precisely why the concepts of *"power", "resilience", "protection", "competitiveness", "strategic dependencies"*, and *"capacity to act"* are increasingly appearing in contemporary European discourse, which indicates a gradual expansion of the vocabulary of European political agency.

Another key narrative of the European Community is the ***"strategically autonomous Europe"*** narrative, which is linked to the aspiration to present the EU as an actor that has sufficient freedom of political choice and material capacity to implement its own decisions. After 2020, the concept of strategic autonomy became considerably broader, as it began to encompass not only defence, but also energy, technology, critical infrastructure, economic security, finance, and supply chains. It is important that strategic autonomy in this discourse is not synonymous with isolation. A strategically autonomous Europe emerges as an international actor that seeks to have sufficient capabilities of its own so that partnership remains a political choice rather than a forced dependency.

A key factor in understanding these narratives is their focus on the target audience. For the European Union, there are at least two main levels of its target audience: internal and external. The internal audience includes citizens of Member States, national political elites, the European Parliament, civil society organisations, the business community, and other groups on whom the political legitimacy of the integration process depends. For this audience, the narrative should explain why countries need to act together, why common policies require certain costs and restrictions, and

how European integration relates to the everyday interests of citizens in Member States.

The external audience is more diverse. It includes partner states, international organisations, global political and economic actors, as well as the EU's competitors. In foreign policy interactions, the strategic narrative serves to demonstrate the Union's political intentions and shape perceptions of its capabilities and limitations, thereby defining its role on the international stage. It should be noted that there may be a certain discrepancy between how the European Union describes itself and how it is perceived by external actors.

This allows the strategic narrative to be considered as a process consisting of at least three interconnected elements: *formation, transmission, and perception*. Political institutions may formulate a certain vision of the EU's role, but it does not automatically become dominant merely through its proclamation. It must be supported by specific policies, institutional decisions, and political behaviour. For this very reason, the question of who forms the EU's strategic narratives does not have an unambiguous answer. Formally, the Union's institutions play an important role, although their functions in this process differ. The European Council defines general political guidelines and strategic priorities, since it is precisely the heads of state and government of the Member States who coordinate the most fundamental political positions. The European Commission transforms these priorities into policies, programmes, and public communications, and also has significant resources for shaping the economic, technological, and regulatory dimensions of the European self-description. The European Parliament, in turn, is an important arena of political competition over what the role of the Union should be and which values should determine its activities.

It would be a mistake to view European strategic narratives as the result of centralised construction by Brussels. The European Union is a politically fragmented actor, and its strategic discourse takes shape through a process of constant coordination between various institutional and national positions. Member States may support a common narrative but interpret its practical implications differently. France, for example, traditionally places particular emphasis on strategic autonomy and Europe's ability to act independently; Central and Eastern European states often place greater emphasis on the transatlantic partnership and the Russian threat; southern states may place greater emphasis on migration, instability in the Mediterranean, and the southern neighbourhood. As a result, the European strategic narrative takes on the characteristics of a political compromise between different visions of Europe's future.

At the current stage of the European Community's development, there is a clearly discernible deepening trend toward the transformation of strategic narratives, particularly regarding how the European Union understands its own role in the international order. From a narrative in which Europe's main resource was its ability to transform conflict into cooperation, the EU is gradually shifting to a narrative in which the ability to defend itself, strategic resilience, and the capacity to act in a competitive environment have become necessary conditions for preserving the European normative system. But previous narratives do not disappear but continue to influence the Union's political self-identification. It is precisely this coexistence of normative continuity and strategic adaptation that creates the main analytical challenge for understanding contemporary Europe: the challenge of how values, interests, normative self-identification, and geopolitical aspirations coexist within a single political project.

Addressing this issue requires a shift from analysing individual narratives to synthesising how they have transformed under the influence of crises and changes in the international environment, which have gradually called into question the assumption that the post-World War II model of European integration, based on economic stability, can function independently of a power-based international system. The financial and migration crises, Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, the intensification of strategic competition between the U.S. and China, the Russian-Ukrainian war, which entered a phase of escalation in February 2022, and energy dependence, have exposed the limitations of the European organisational model. It is precisely during times of crisis that citizens and political elites have come to understand Europe itself and the priorities of what exactly needs to be protected. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic showed that even in an area traditionally falling primarily within the competence of Member States, a crisis can spur a significant expansion of joint mechanisms. The European Union responded to the economic consequences of the pandemic by creating a financial instrument of unprecedented scale, notably Next Generation EU, which provided for the joint mobilisation of funds at the European level. At the same time, Russia's war against Ukraine has posed a fundamentally different question for the Union: Can a political union, created largely to overcome the logic of war, operate effectively in the midst of a war that is directly altering Europe's security environment?

It should be noted that Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine has, in this context, become a qualitatively different type of crisis. Not only has it increased the number of threats facing the European Union, but it has also called into question the fundamental assumptions on which European strategic discourse has long been based. After the end of the Cold

War, much of European political thinking was based on the assumption that the continent's stability could be maintained through increased integration, economic interdependence, diplomacy, and multilateral institutions. Russian aggression has demonstrated that these mechanisms alone do not guarantee security if one international actor deliberately disregards the rules upon which the relevant world order is based. In this context, the Russian-Ukrainian war has served as a test of the resilience of the EU's political model.

The change in strategic thinking was institutionally formalised as early as March 2022, when the Council of the EU adopted the Strategic Compass, which had been prepared before the beginning of the full-scale war. This document identified four key areas of EU action in the field of security and defence: *act, secure, invest, partner*, that is, to act, ensure security, invest, and develop partnerships. The document directly linked the strengthening of strategic autonomy with the need to protect the values and interests of the Union[80]. Thus, strategic autonomy ceased to be merely a conceptual discussion about the desired level of European autonomy and increasingly transformed into a more practical dimension of capabilities.

In this context, the war against Ukraine has also significantly changed the very understanding of solidarity. In the previous European logic, solidarity was predominantly associated with the redistribution of resources, social cohesion, and support for Member States within the common market. After 2022, it increasingly acquired a security and geopolitical dimension. Support for Ukraine included financial, humanitarian, political, and military assistance, sanctions, the reception of millions of Ukrainians under temporary protection, as well as the creation of long-term financial instruments. It is known that the cumulative support for Ukraine from the EU and its Member States reached almost EUR 124 billion, while the Ukraine Facility provided for up to EUR 50 billion in grants and concessional loans for 2024–2027[81]. The scale of these measures itself indicates that the war has led to an expansion of the practical content of European solidarity far beyond the traditional framework of socio-economic mutual assistance.

Equally important was the shift in attitudes toward European Union enlargement. Whereas enlargement had previously been viewed largely as a tool for spreading stability, democracy, and the rule of law, after 2022 its security and geopolitical dimensions became much more pronounced. Granting Ukraine candidate status in June 2022 and the start of accession

[80] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security. Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2022. 47 p. Doc. 7371/22. URL: https://lnk.ua/WSXUPGE53
[81] EU solidarity with Ukraine // European Commission. URL: https://lnk.ua/Zl6fCHI8s

negotiations demonstrated that European integration can also be viewed as a strategic tool for creating a more secure political space. In the EU's Strategic Agenda for 2024–2029, enlargement is explicitly addressed alongside strengthening defence capabilities, supporting Ukraine, and enhancing the Union's resilience[82].

This shift is particularly important for understanding the transformation of European political identity. For a long time, the European Union defined itself largely by its distinction from traditional state power politics. Its distinctive feature lay in its attempt to transform political competition into legal and institutional cooperation, and the logic of power, in turn, into the logic of interdependence. The current geopolitical shift creates a paradoxical situation in which, to preserve the post-national and normative order, the Union is forced to develop instruments traditionally associated precisely with geopolitical policy: defence capabilities, economic sanctions, control over strategic dependencies, protection of critical infrastructure, technological security, and the ability to resist external coercion. This is precisely where the central contradiction of contemporary European agency arises. The European Union strives to remain a normative actor that defines itself through international law, democracy, human rights, and multilateralism, but at the same time increasingly acts as a geopolitical actor that must take into account the balance of power, strategic dependencies, and material capabilities.

Therefore, the current geopolitical shift is best understood as a transformation of the conditions and strategies for implementing the European normative order, since democracy requires stable institutions but also protection from external interference; economic openness requires secure supply chains; digital rights depend on technological capacity; and the multilateral order requires actors capable of defending it. In this sense, power is gradually ceasing to be the antithesis of normativity and is becoming one of its prerequisites.

The geopolitical shift in European discourse also has a downside. The more the EU emphasises security, competitiveness, and strategic autonomy, the more difficult it becomes to maintain the image of it as an actor that operates exclusively on the basis of universal norms. Geopolitical policy involves setting priorities, choosing partners, assessing risks, and sometimes making compromises between different principles. This creates a risk of selectivity, where the same norm may be given different political weight depending on the strategic significance of a particular partner or conflict. Consequently, geopolitical transformation creates an impetus to

[82] Strategic agenda 2024–2029 // European Council. 2024. 27 June. URL: https://lnk.ua/iJRXKDBCN

exacerbate the problem of double standards, as it requires the EU to constantly balance the universality of its stated principles with the specific conditions of their practical implementation.

On the other hand, it is precisely Russia's war against Ukraine that has demonstrated that normative positions and geopolitical interests can not only conflict but also coincide. Support for Ukraine can simultaneously be framed as the defence of international law and the right to self-determination, as an expression of European solidarity, and as the protection of the European Union's own security. In this case, normative and strategic arguments reinforce one another. It is precisely this convergence that largely explains the political resilience of European support for Ukraine.

The war has also revealed the limits of Europe's capabilities. The EU has demonstrated significant capacity for economic, financial, and political mobilisation, but at the same time continues to rely heavily on NATO and the transatlantic partnership in the sphere of collective defence. This means that the European Union's strategic autonomy cannot be viewed as complete self-sufficiency. Its realistic meaning lies rather in the Union's ability to possess a sufficient set of its own resources and policy instruments to make and implement decisions, without losing the ability to act through partnerships. That is precisely why the geopolitical transformation of the EU does not mean its transformation into a traditional "state within a state," but rather the formation of a more complex type of international actor that combines supranational institutions, state resources, normative influence, and strategic instruments.

In a broad conceptual sense, these processes reflect a transformation in the development of European political identity. The European Union remains committed to the traditional paradigm of a "Europe of peace," yet it increasingly interprets peace as a state that requires effective deterrence mechanisms and defence capabilities. The fundamental construct of "normative Europe" is not being devalued, but is being supplemented by an awareness of the need to underpin norms with institutional and material-resource capabilities. Ultimately, while remaining committed to an open economic model, the EU is simultaneously implementing measures to minimise critical strategic dependencies.

In this sense, the modern European Union is in a state of transition from a predominantly normative model of international agency to a hybrid model in which normativity and geopolitical capacity are meant to complement one another. This transition is not yet complete and has no clear endpoint. It is accompanied by internal contradictions among Member States, differing visions of strategic autonomy, varying perceptions of threats, and debates over the limits of European responsibility. However,

the direction of this transformation seems quite clear: the EU is defining itself less and less solely by the rules it creates, and increasingly by its ability to defend those rules and its own political space in a competitive international environment.

Thus, the synergy of values, interests, and strategic narratives allows us to view European political identity as a process-oriented and adaptive category. In this system, values serve a teleological function by setting the direction of the European project's development; interests form the immediate basis for practical decisions; and strategic narratives ensure their cognitive coherence and socio-political legitimacy. Crisis-induced destabilisation disrupts the established balance among these components, prompting the European Union to reassess its own role and geopolitical capabilities. In this context, Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has become a key factor in transforming these dynamics, as it has highlighted the need to protect both the EU's immediate security and economic interests and the normative and value-based foundation upon which the entire European order rests.

1.3. The Institutional Architecture of the EU: Dynamics, Effectiveness, and Imbalances of Power (*Alina Iovcheva*)

When analysing the institutional architecture of the European Union, it should be noted that, unlike a traditional state, it does not have a single centre of political power that combines legislative, executive, and judicial functions. Its institutional system has evolved as a result of the gradual layering of different levels of integration, political compromises among Member States, and the expansion of areas of shared competence. For this reason, the EU's institutional system should be viewed as a system of distribution and mutual checks and balances on power, within which political decision-making is carried out by supranational institutions, the governments of Member States, and representative bodies. It is important to note that the absence of a traditional institutional hierarchy within the Union is offset by a complex system of interdependencies among all political decision-makers.

EU primary law formally identifies seven institutions of the Union: *the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank, and the European Court of Auditors*. Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union establishes a principle fundamental to the entire system: each institution shall act within the limits of the powers conferred on it by the Treaties, in accordance with the

procedures, conditions, and objectives set out therein, while at the same time the institutions shall practise mutual sincere cooperation[83]. Such wording already demonstrates from the outset the fundamental difference between the EU and the classical state model, in which a clear separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers can be observed. Instead, a system of functionally differentiated institutions is formed, the powers of which overlap, interact, and in certain cases constrain one another, while implementing a system of checks and balances.

A central place in the EU institutional system is occupied by the *European Council*. Its role requires a clear distinction from the legislative functions of other institutions. It consists of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission, and aims to define the general political directions and priorities of the Union. Formally, the European Council does not adopt legislative acts; however, its significance for the political process extends far beyond a consultative or coordinating function[84].

The specific nature of its authority lies, first and foremost, in its ability to define the political framework within which other institutions subsequently operate, as well as the strategic parameters of their activities. Based on this, the European Council can be viewed as an institution of political leadership in which the intergovernmental dimension of European integration finds its most concentrated expression. The fact that heads of state and government are at the centre of the institutional system does not signify a return of the EU to the classical intergovernmental model. The European Council operates within the framework of the Union's institutional order, and its political decisions must be translated into specific policies and legal acts through other institutional channels. It is at this level that the distinction between the political setting of priorities and the formal formulation of policy becomes evident. Thus, the European Council sets the political agenda, while the Council of the EU, the European Commission, and the European Parliament ensure its subsequent institutional implementation.

Unlike the European Council, the *Council of the European Union* is a direct participant in the legislative process. It represents the governments of the Member States through the respective ministers and, in most legislative areas, jointly with the European Parliament, adopts the Union's

[83] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2012. C 326. P. 13–46. URL: https://lnk.ua/7DWfP20TM
[84] How the European Council works. European Council // European Union. URL: https://lnk.ua/PTkMGQMc2

legislative acts[85]. The Council is the key mechanism through which national governments participate in policy-making at the EU level while defending the national interests of Member States. In other words, the Council is the institutional mechanism through which Member States are integrated into a system of shared governance.

The *European Commission* occupies a fundamentally different position in relation to the other institutions. Its role is to represent the general priorities and interests of the Union. Of particular importance is its right of legislative initiative, according to which it is the Commission that prepares and submits proposals for new EU legislation. After that, they undergo the legislative procedure with the participation of the Parliament and the Council[86]. In addition, the Commission is also responsible for implementing the Union's foreign and domestic policies, overseeing the application of EU law, and managing a range of programmes and financial instruments. The Commission is not the Union's "government" in the traditional sense, as the EU does not possess a full set of executive powers and depends on cooperation with Member States and other institutions. The combination of the right to initiate legislation, regulatory functions, oversight of legal implementation, and resource management gives it significant potential to influence the shaping of the political agenda.

It is also worth noting one of the fundamental characteristics of the European institutional system, which is that power in the EU is distributed not only according to the principle of "who makes the final decision," but also according to the principle of "who sets the priorities for decisions." An institution that sets the agenda, drafts legislative proposals, or establishes regulatory parameters can wield significant political influence even if it lacks the ability to adopt a final act on its own. An effective institutional analysis of the EU therefore requires distinguishing between formal authority and the actual capacity to influence the outcome of the political process. This distinction subsequently becomes particularly important for analysing informal mechanisms of power and the redistribution of authority during crises.

Another institutional body of the Union is the *European Parliament*, which represents the direct democratic dimension of the EU political system. Its role has fundamentally changed in the course of the evolution of integration: from a predominantly consultative body, it has transformed into a full-fledged co-legislator within the ordinary legislative procedure. Article 294 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

[85] The Council of the European Union. Consilium // European Union. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/
[86] Planning and proposing law // European Commission. URL: https://lnk.ua/USCjOQdLz

provides that, within this procedure, legislative acts are jointly adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on the basis of a proposal from the Commission[87]. Ultimately, the current model of the EU's legislative branch is based on the interdependence of three main institutions. The Commission identifies issues and drafts proposals, the Parliament represents the citizens of the Union, and the Council represents the governments of the Member States. This structure allows for the simultaneous consideration of the supranational, civic, and intergovernmental dimensions of the political process, although it is precisely this that makes the process more complex, bureaucratically overburdened, and, as a result, slower.

A special place in the institutional structure of the EU is occupied by the *Court of Justice of the European Union*. Its role is not limited to classical judicial review of compliance with the law. The Court ensures the uniform interpretation and application of EU law, reviews the legality of acts of the Union's institutions, and contributes to ensuring that Member States and institutions comply with the obligations established by Union law[88]. The judicial branch in the EU primarily plays an integrative role, as the Court, through its interpretation of the treaties, effectively shapes the boundaries of competence between the Union and the Member States. Another important function is its ability to define the legal framework within which other institutions operate. Furthermore, such fundamental characteristics of the EU legal order as the primacy of Union law, its direct effect, and its autonomy are shaped exclusively through case law.

An even more specific case is that of the *European Central Bank*. Unlike most of the Union's political institutions, the ECB has been granted a high degree of institutional, functional, and operational independence. The Treaties confer upon it primary responsibility for defining and implementing monetary policy in the euro area, while the Union's institutions and the governments of the Member States may not give instructions to the ECB's decision-making bodies[89]. This creates a unique form of authority that is not directly based on electoral legitimacy; rather, the independence of the Central Bank is deliberately embedded in the structure of the Economic and Monetary Union as a mechanism to protect monetary policy from short-term political pressure.

Consequently, the institutional architecture of the European Union differs fundamentally from the classical model of the horizontal separation

[87] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. C 202. P. 47–390. URL: https://lnk.ua/oVdASedDt
[88] About the Court of Justice of the European Union // Court of Justice of the European Union. URL: https://lnk.ua/eYTyfdlrP
[89] Independence // European Central Bank. URL: https://lnk.ua/vtiRcNeMl

of powers. The European Parliament and the Council of the EU exercise legislative power in a bicameral system; the European Commission combines a monopoly on legislative initiative with broad executive and supervisory powers; the European Council sets strategic goals; the Court of Justice of the EU ensures compliance with the rule of law and defines the jurisdictional boundaries of all institutions' activities, while the ECB possesses sovereign monetary authority. At the same time, none of these institutions enjoys absolute functional autonomy. Decision-making bodies are in a state of structural interdependence, determined by investiture procedures, regulated legislative and budgetary mechanisms, judicial review, and institutional checks and balances. In this context, it is more appropriate to conceptualise the EU's power structure as decentralised, distributed, and network-interdependent rather than as a centralised or hierarchical system.

This approach aligns with the broader theoretical framework of the EU's multilevel governance[90]. Under this concept, governmental powers are distributed among the European, national, and regional levels, preventing any single institutional centre from monopolising decision-making. EU public policy is shaped through a networked process in which regulatory provisions are combined with practices of negotiated consensus and the formation of inter-institutional coalitions. Despite ensuring systemic flexibility and taking into account interests at various levels, this configuration creates the problem of blurred political accountability, as the high level of involvement of diverse actors makes it difficult to identify the entity that makes the final decision.

In this context, the principle of institutional balance takes on key importance, requiring each institution to exercise its own powers while duly respecting the functional limits of other bodies. The Court of Justice of the European Union directly links this principle to Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union, interpreting it as a cornerstone of the institutional architecture of the European Union[91]. The institutional balance serves as a procedural safeguard against the monopolisation of decision-making by a single centre of power.

In this regard, a fundamental problem of the EU's institutional structure can be defined as the degree to which its formal configuration corresponds to the actual configuration of political influence. While retaining their legally established powers, institutions are capable of

[90] *Hooghe L., Marks G.* Multi-Level Governance and European Integration. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001. URL: https://lnk.ua/6rHoZTrNQ

[91] Judgment of the Court (Grand Chamber) of 14 April 2015. Council of the European Union v European Commission. Case C-409/13 // Official Journal of the European Union. 2015. C 198. P. 5. URL: https://lnk.ua/Mh7zp8sAT

significantly changing their weight through agenda-setting mechanisms, control over information flows, procedural manipulation, inter-institutional coalition-building, or the establishment of the limits of permissible decisions. As a result, the European Union has developed a model of political governance in which power is constantly shifting between different institutional bodies depending on the nature of the policy, the decision-making procedure, and the political context. And although the formal institutional configuration creates the framework for such a distribution, it does not determine it definitively. The actual structure of power relations within the Union is formed at the intersection of formal competences, procedural resources, and the actual political weight of key actors. Therefore, it would be appropriate to turn next to the issue of institutional dynamics, namely, to the question of how exactly this functional configuration is modified under the influence of inter-institutional competition, crisis destabilisation, and the transformation of the European agenda.

While the formal institutional structure defines the limits of the competences of the Union's main bodies, their actual political weight depends on their ability to exercise these competences within a specific political context. It follows that the EU's institutional balance is not a static construct. It shifts depending on which issues come to the fore, how conflicting the positions of Member States are, and whether the situation requires routine legislative coordination or a political decision at the highest level. This characteristic is most evident during periods of crisis, when the usual division of roles among institutions is supplemented by mechanisms of political concentration.

This applies first and foremost to the European Council. Formally, its role is limited to defining the Union's general political directions and priorities; however, in situations of fundamental importance to Member States, it is often the forum for final political agreement. The Eurozone financial crisis, the migration crisis, Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine have successively reinforced this trend. The reason lies not only in the extraordinary nature of the crises themselves. Issues such as the allocation of financial resources, sanctions policy, security, energy, and relations with third countries directly affect national political interests; therefore, a final decision requires a political mandate from the leaders of the Member States. In such a situation, the European Council serves as a kind of political "upper echelon" where the limits of compromise are determined, while its subsequent regulatory and administrative implementation is left to other institutions[92].

[92] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. C 202. P. 13–46. URL: https://lnk.ua/oVdASedDt

It is worth noting that experience during crises demonstrates the interdependence of these levels. A political decision by the European Council is not self-sufficient, as it must be translated into legal acts, budgetary decisions, regulatory mechanisms, and specific programmes. This is where the European Commission's importance grows, as its political role has gradually strengthened over the past decades. Today, the Commission is increasingly active as the guardian of the treaties, the initiator of legislation, and the institution that shapes the Union's political agenda. This is particularly evident in times of crisis, when the Commission's ability to quickly propose a joint response mechanism becomes, in and of itself, a source of political influence. The EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic serves as a prime example. The launch of NextGenerationEU marked the emergence of a large-scale mechanism for jointly financing recovery, which significantly expanded the scope of the Commission's actions and demonstrated the ability of the Union's institutions to use existing legal and financial mechanisms in a way that would have seemed politically unlikely before the crisis[93]. Therefore, the crisis created conditions under which the Commission gained new opportunities to influence the allocation of resources, the coordination of national policies, and the definition of the parameters of economic recovery. This, in turn, underscores the fact that crisis-response policies can alter an institution's actual influence even without a formal transfer of new powers to it.

A different trajectory of institutional evolution can be observed in the case of the European Parliament. Its strengthening was less dependent on crises and much more closely linked to the gradual development of the representative dimension of integration. From a body with a predominantly advisory function, it has evolved into a full-fledged co-legislator, and following the Treaty of Lisbon, the ordinary legislative procedure has become the primary mechanism for adopting Union legislation in most areas[94]. Nevertheless, what is crucial is that Parliament has become a key player in the formation of political coalitions, in negotiations with the Council and the Commission, and in shaping the content of legislative compromises. Thus, its institutional weight increasingly depends on its ability to translate its representative mandate into real influence in the policy-making process.

[93] Council Regulation (EU) 2020/2094 of 14 December 2020 establishing a European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis // Official Journal of the European Union. 2020. L 433I. P. 23–27. URL: https://lnk.ua/Nao84Gswk

[94] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. C 202. P. 47–390. URL: https://lnk.ua/oVdASedDt

The informal institutional mechanisms of the EU present a far more complex dimension of these transformations. A significant portion of inter-institutional interaction takes place even before the formal voting stage, in the context of trilateral negotiations between the Council, the Parliament, and the Commission (*trilogues*), as well as within the framework of COREPER and specialised working groups. It is at this delicate stage that the key substance of future legislative acts is established, and although the final decision is adopted in accordance with a regulated procedure, its direction is shaped in the early stages of coordinating positions and defining the limits of a possible compromise[95]. Thus, a thorough analysis of institutional influence in the EU requires taking into account such informal levers as control over the agenda, access to expert knowledge, the ability to moderate the pace of negotiations, and the potential for coalition-building.

A separate area of research involves assessing the functional effectiveness of the EU's institutional design and identifying the key factors that have a decisive influence on it.

Critics of the EU's institutional system often argue that the decision-making process is lengthy and highly bureaucratic. This is especially true when issues require prompt resolution and intervention by the Union. However, the complexity of the EU's institutional architecture stems from the need to simultaneously reconcile various sources of political legitimacy, the interests of Member States, and supranational mechanisms for developing common policies. Therefore, the effectiveness of European governance should be assessed not only by the speed of decision-making, but also by the institutions' ability to formulate a politically acceptable response in a timely manner, ensure its implementation, and maintain a sufficient level of legitimacy. This approach fundamentally changes the very framing of the issue, since a slow decision is not necessarily ineffective if the lengthy coordination process allows for the formation of a stable consensus, just as a quick decision is not necessarily effective if it generates significant political resistance or proves impossible to implement.

In this context, one of the fundamental contradictions of the European institutional order becomes apparent. The growing need for rapid response proportionally increases the desirability of concentrating decision-making in the hands of a limited circle of actors. Alongside this, such consolidation of influence automatically raises the issue of their democratic accountability. Within the standard legislative process, this dilemma is compensated for by the balanced participation of the

[95] *Reh C., Héritier A., Bressanelli E., Koop C.* The Informal Politics of Legislation: Explaining Secluded Decision Making in the European Union // Comparative Political Studies. 2013. Vol. 46. № 9. P. 1112–1142. URL: https://lnk.ua/MWGobYrN1

Parliament, the Council, and the Commission, where each institution relies on its own sources of legitimacy. Crisis circumstances radically alter this algorithm. The imperative of expediency objectively strengthens the weight of the governments of the Member States and the European Council, while simultaneously narrowing the space for lengthy inter-institutional coordination and parliamentary oversight. A separate challenge for the EU institutional system is the principle of unanimity, which serves as a classic institutional *veto point*.

On the one hand, it allows Member States to protect fundamental national interests, but on the other hand, it significantly increases the political cost and duration of adopting common decisions. In those areas where the Treaties require unanimity, one state is capable of blocking a decision even in the presence of broad support from the other participants. Such a mechanism reflects the intergovernmental nature of the most sensitive areas of policy. In particular, the common foreign and security policy, EU enlargement, certain aspects of taxation, and the formation of the budget's own resources remain areas where national sovereignty retains decisive importance[96]. Instead, in most legislative areas, voting by qualified majority is applied, which makes it possible to prevent the institutional process from becoming entirely dependent on the unanimous consent of all actors[97].

The aforementioned asymmetry becomes particularly pronounced during periods of crisis, when the institutional system is required to produce not merely a legitimate, but also an operationally adopted decision. Although a series of large-scale crises has demonstrated the Union's capacity to develop new mechanisms of collective action even in the absence of adequate classical instruments, experience shows that crisis governance in the EU is almost never a monopoly of a single centre of power. The fundamental political impetus is formed at the level of the European Council and the governments of the Member States, the regulatory and financial instruments are developed and implemented by the Commission, legislative approval requires the involvement of the European Parliament, while key decisions are subject to judicial review.

Thus, it can be concluded that, in order to achieve effective decision-making under crisis conditions, the EU seeks to do so not by simplifying or eliminating institutional complexity, but rather by mobilising it for rapid inter-institutional coordination. An illustration of such an approach was the implementation of a number of initiatives during Russia's full-scale war

[96] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. C 202. P. 13–46. URL: https://lnk.ua/7cBvdXUhO
[97] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. C 202. P. 47–390. URL: https://lnk.ua/oVdASedDt

against Ukraine (in particular, the adoption of the multiannual Ukraine Facility programme), when the expediency of decision-making was achieved not by disrupting institutional balances, but by involving all key actors and institutions in intensive coordination of positions.

Nevertheless, it is precisely crisis governance that most clearly exposes the problem of democratic legitimacy. If effectiveness is measured solely by the ability to respond quickly, then preference will be given to those mechanisms that minimise the number of participants in the decision-making process. Instead, if the main criteria become representation of interests, transparency, and accountability, the process inevitably becomes more complex and slower. In this context, it would be erroneous to perceive the so-called "democratic deficit" of the EU as a lack of powers of the European Parliament. Its institutional nature is broader and is related to the fact that power in the Union is distributed among several levels, which have different mechanisms of democratic legitimation.

The European Council and the Council of the EU are legitimised through national electoral mandates, the Parliament is directly elected by EU citizens, the Commission receives its powers through a complex inter-institutional compromise, while the Court of Justice of the EU exercises independent legal and normative review. As a consequence, there is no single actor in the EU system that could be unambiguously identified as the bearer of executive power and held directly politically accountable for the outcomes of European policy during elections[98]. It is precisely this dispersion of responsibility that constitutes a fundamental challenge to the democratic nature of the European Union.

Institutional asymmetry is also evident in the relations among the Member States themselves, since the formal legal equality of the parties under the founding treaties is not equivalent to the equality of their actual political influence. The latter is determined by a complex of factors, such as demographic and economic scale, military potential, the volume of financial resources, geographic location, institutional reputation, and the ability to build coalitions and enlist the support of other partners. Given this, the actual configuration of influence cannot be derived solely from the arithmetic distribution of votes during decision-making. Great powers gain a systemic advantage through their resource base and their ability to form broader coalition alliances. However, it would be a mistake to view small states as passive objects in this process. Their agency is realised through flexible coalition strategies, thematic specialisation in specific policy areas,

[98] *Follesdal A., Hix S.* Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik // Journal of Common Market Studies. 2006. Vol. 44. № 3. P. 533–562. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2006.00650.x

and the effective use of procedural levers embedded in the EU's institutional architecture. It is essential to define the European political space not as a hierarchy of "large" and "small" actors, but as a dynamic system of asymmetries in which the resources of power depend on the specific political configuration.

A similar logic applies to the relationship between the supranational and intergovernmental levels. The European Union is not a system in which authority is linearly and irrevocably transferred from Member States to supranational institutions. Instead, there is a constant, dynamic flexibility in the location of decision-making depending on the specific policy area. For example, where the ordinary legislative procedure applies, the supranational dimension is particularly strong, whereas where decisions directly concern state sovereignty, the influence of the intergovernmental level increases. In light of this, it is inappropriate to interpret periods of crisis unambiguously as a factor that either strengthens or, conversely, weakens supranational integration. Rather, they alter the balance between the two logics of power, with the institutional outcome depending on the specifics of the crisis challenge and the available legal instruments.

Thus, a key characteristic of the EU's institutional system is the institutionalisation of imbalances within a shared political order. The Union functions as a system in which contradictions between different sources of legitimacy, models of representation, and levels of power are constantly reproduced through mechanisms of negotiation, compromise, and inter-institutional balancing. In light of this, the question of the effectiveness of European governance cannot be reduced solely to the speed of decision-making or the scope of authority of individual institutions. What is far more important is the extent to which the existing architecture is capable of adapting to growing political complexity without losing manageability and legitimacy. In this context, it is worth examining in greater detail the process of European Union enlargement, which presents a foreign policy challenge and a test of the European institutional framework's ability to maintain functional balance amid increasing political, economic, and security heterogeneity.

First and foremost, it is worth noting that the future expansion of the European Union differs fundamentally from previous stages in terms of the scale of potential changes and the political context in which they are taking place. In the early stages of European integration, enlargement was largely viewed as a tool for consolidating the European political space, expanding the common market, and supporting the democratic transformation of new Member States. Today's enlargement agenda has a much more pronounced geopolitical dimension, as membership is increasingly viewed as a tool for

strengthening the security and political stability of the European continent[99]. However, this conceptual shift exacerbates an institutional problem, since each new enlargement, while increasing the Union's political potential, simultaneously makes it more difficult to reach collective decisions.

Particularly important in this context is the concept of *integration capacity*, that is, the EU's capacity to integrate new members without losing effectiveness and the ability to act politically. It is not a matter of the system's abstract readiness, but of a clear relationship between the number of actors, the complexity of procedures, and the capacity to generate decisions that retain political and legal implementation capacity. In view of this, the European Parliament fundamentally links future waves of enlargement inextricably to the need for institutional and financial reforms, emphasising that an increase in the number of Member States must be accompanied by the adaptation of decision-making processes[100]. The key challenge lies in the fact that, although the EU's institutional architecture has repeatedly adapted to enlargement throughout its history, each such transformation has changed not only the technical parameters of its functioning, but has also transformed the actual balance of influence between the Member States and the supranational institutions.

The most obvious manifestation of this problem is the principle of unanimity. In the current institutional system, it is retained in a number of areas that states traditionally regard as particularly sensitive from the perspective of national sovereignty, while the procedure for the accession of a new member itself provides for unanimous decisions by the Member States at key stages[101]. With a small number of participants, such a model functioned as a mechanism for protecting fundamental national interests and ensuring high political legitimacy. However, as the number of states increases, the very structure of collective action changes: the number of potential *veto points* increases, the likelihood of situational blockages rises, and the possibility for an individual state to use its formal veto right as a bargaining resource gains greater weight. A paradox arises, which lies in the fact that enlargement objectively strengthens the EU's strategic weight, but at the same time may reduce its operational capacity to consolidate a common position precisely in those areas where such unity is critically necessary.

It would be erroneous to interpret the reform of unanimity as a simple renunciation of the right of Member States to block decisions. In

[99] European Commission. Enlargement // European Commission. URL: https://lnk.ua/ZtXcDco72

[100] EU should seriously prepare for the next enlargement // European Parliament. 22 February 2024. URL: https://lnk.ua/AFSztUmKN

[101] The Enlargement of the Union. Fact Sheets on the European Union // European Parliament. URL: https://lnk.ua/IOp9suFN6

reality, it involves a much more complex redistribution of risks between the effectiveness of collective governance and the protection of national sovereignty. A transition to qualified majority voting means that a state may be required to agree with a decision that it does not support. On the one hand, this undoubtedly increases the Union's capacity to act, but on the other hand, it raises questions about the limits of political coercion in a system characterised by the voluntary union of states. This brings to the fore the debate over what level of disagreement between states is compatible with the continued existence of a common political system. Yet, the existing founding Treaties already contain instruments that allow the voting regime to be modified selectively without the procedurally complex process of a full revision of primary law.

In particular, Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union provides for the mechanism of "passerelle clauses", which enables the European Council, by a unanimous decision, to authorise a transition from the principle of unanimity to qualified majority voting in certain areas, although the application of this procedure is subject to significant legal and political constraints[102]. Thus, the problem lies not in the absence of legal instruments for institutional flexibility, but in the fact that their activation is conditioned by the need to achieve consensus precisely among those actors whose influence they potentially limit. This gives rise to an institutional dilemma whereby, in order to demonopolise the right to block, it is necessary to obtain the consent of the actors who directly possess this right.

It is precisely in this context that the concept of differentiated integration takes on particular significance. In a situation where the group of Member States is unable or unwilling to move forward simultaneously at the same pace and to the same extent, it becomes institutionally acceptable to vary the levels of their involvement in the integration process. This model is no longer purely theoretical, as the functioning of the Schengen Area and the Eurozone, as well as the use of enhanced cooperation mechanisms, convincingly demonstrate the EU's ability to function as a political space with varying degrees of integration. The key advantage of a differentiated approach lies in preventing the paralysis of the entire system due to the refusal or resistance of individual actors. Conversely, differentiation creates the risk of dividing the EU into several levels of influence. In such a system, countries in the "integration core" not only assume greater obligations but also have the decisive say in determining the strategic course of the entire Union.

[102] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. C 202. P. 13–46. URL: https://lnk.ua/oVdASedDt

In view of this, differentiated integration should not be regarded as a panacea for the challenges of future enlargement. It can guarantee the necessary adaptability only on the condition that variability in participation does not transform into an institutional hierarchy between the "core" and the "periphery". Otherwise, the mechanism created to preserve unity through different speeds of integration may provoke a new problem of political inequality. This problem is particularly acute with regard to countries that are undergoing a lengthy process of adaptation to EU standards. The gradual involvement of candidate states in certain sectoral policies of the Union even before formally acquiring membership serves as an effective instrument of preparation, but at the same time requires a clear demarcation of the limits of their participation in decision-making. In this context, Ukraine's gradual integration (in particular, its access to certain segments of the single market, as well as the deepening of energy and security cooperation) illustrates the general tendency to move away from the rigid binary model of "membership / non-membership" in favour of a more graduated integration architecture[103].

Enlargement through the accession of Ukraine and other candidate states convincingly demonstrates why institutional reform should not be considered exclusively through the prism of the quantitative growth of the Union's membership. Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkan countries operate in substantially different political, economic, and security contexts. Accordingly, their potential integration will have heterogeneous consequences for the budget, agricultural policy, cohesion policy, the single market, institutional representation, and the EU's foreign policy potential. In its current analytical reports, the European Commission directly links the dynamics of candidates' progress with advancements in the areas of democratisation, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms, confirming that enlargement continues to retain its conditional character, based on strict compliance with the established criteria[104]. In light of this, the EU's institutional adaptation cannot come at the cost of weakening its regulatory requirements. On the contrary, the more geopolitically significant enlargement becomes, the more important it is to preserve procedures that prevent the strategic necessity of membership from overshadowing the criteria of political and legal compatibility.

This gives rise to a fundamental dilemma for future institutional adaptation. The Union needs a higher degree of flexibility, but flexibility

[103] European Commission. Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission to Question P-001053/2025 // European Parliament. 20 May 2025. URL: https://lnk.ua/IHUmeWWYt

[104] Commission reports on the progress of aspiring EU members // European Commission. 4 November 2025. URL: https://lnk.ua/KcDglMPyk

alone does not guarantee an increase in its effectiveness. Overreliance on ad hoc coalitions, a system of opt-outs, and terms and conditions of asymmetric participation risk exacerbating the fragmentation of common institutions, just as excessive unification can paralyse the decision-making process.

Given this, the EU's future institutional reform is unlikely to boil down to a single decision – such as a complete abandonment of unanimity or yet another redistribution of voting weights in the European Council. A much more likely scenario is a combined approach that would include expanding the use of qualified majority voting in areas where the risk of a veto is critical to collective decision-making; maximising the use of existing treaty-based flexibility mechanisms; further developing differentiated integration; and gradually adapting the institutional architecture to accommodate the growing number of Member States. It is noteworthy that in 2024, the European Parliament explicitly proposed expanding the use of qualified majority voting, particularly on specific issues of foreign policy, sanctions, and the protection of democracy and the rule of law, and in 2026, it supported the use of qualified majority voting for certain intermediate stages of the negotiation process, while maintaining unanimity for the final decision on the accession of a new member[105]. This indicates a gradual shift from the binary debate of "unanimity or qualified majority" toward the search for a differentiated voting regime depending on the political weight of a specific decision.

Thus, future waves of European Union enlargement present its institutional architecture with a challenge that is not so much quantitative and absorptive in nature as substantive and managerial, namely, maintaining strategic governability under conditions of growing heterogeneity of national interests. An increase in the number of Member States may complicate the maintenance of a balance between the principle of sovereign equality of membership, institutional capacity (the capacity to make decisions), and the need to take national specificities into account. Nevertheless, it is precisely this systemic complexity that acts as a catalyst for the EU's institutional evolution, stimulating the deconstruction of the classical concept of integration as a linear, unified, and identical process of deepening interdependence for all actors. Potentially, the institutional configuration of the Union will tend toward a more differentiated, procedurally adaptive, and asymmetrical model. Its long-term viability directly depends on whether such flexibility will remain compatible with

[105] Report on deepening EU integration in view of future enlargement (A9-0015/2024) // European Parliament. 30 January 2024. URL: https://lnk.ua/SJFUCzMly; EU enlargement: a strategic investment in Europe's security and stability. Press Release // European Parliament. 11 March 2026. URL: https://lnk.ua/f81NN6Wfr

the integrity of the legal order (*acquis communautaire*) and the unity of the EU political space.

It is precisely in this dimension that the limits of the permissible transformation of the European system of multilevel governance are located. EU institutions are capable of modifying procedural regulations, optimising the distribution of competences, expanding the scope of application of qualified majority voting, or authorising multi-speed formats of cooperation, but they are not capable of indefinitely levelling out the structural heterogeneity of the political and economic landscape.

A scenario in which enlargement is reduced to the inertial (mechanical) inclusion of new actors into the existing procedural frameworks will inevitably lead to a cumulative exacerbation of the problem of institutional paralysis. Conversely, adaptation through uncontrolled and hypertrophied differentiation carries the risk of fragmenting the Union into a hierarchical configuration of concentric circles of influence, with varying degrees of agency and access to shaping the strategic agenda. Accordingly, the key systemic challenge for the European Union is to achieve such an institutional balance in which functional flexibility does not undermine unity, while normative unity does not paralyse the capacity for operational action. This dimension encompasses not only the practical challenges of the future accession of candidate states, but also a fundamental conceptual question: to what extent is the EU capable of flexibly transforming its own institutional and legal configuration while preserving the political identity and normative foundation upon which this integration project was historically established.

1.4. EU Policies as Practices for Shaping the Regional and Global Order

(*Alina Iovcheva*)

The shift from analysing the European Union's internal institutional organisation to its external activities requires a change in the analytical perspective itself. The key question is how the EU's internally developed institutional capacity translates into real influence beyond the European political sphere. In this context, it is appropriate to view the European Union as a distinct actor in international relations, capable of projecting norms, institutional frameworks, and models of interaction at the regional and global levels.

At the same time, the category of "international actor," as applied to the EU, requires a rethinking of the classical categories of international relations theory, which were shaped around the Westphalian model of the state. Since it is not a state in terms of its mode of operation, the Union

lacks the traditional monopoly on the legitimate use of force and does not have a single centre for foreign policy decision-making equivalent to a national government. Consequently, the EU's external capacity is constructed at the intersection of supranational competences, intergovernmental mechanisms, the resources of Member States, and its own institutional capacity.

It is worth noting that in the theory of international relations, the concept of international order refers to a relatively institutionalised configuration of rules, norms, resource allocation, and mutual expectations that structure the behaviour of international actors. In contemporary approaches, it emerges as a derivative of the interaction between material capacity, institutional mechanisms, and prevailing notions of legitimacy[106].

For the European Union, this theoretical framework is of fundamental importance, as its international strategy has historically been oriented toward the construction of normative and legal frameworks that increase the predictability of political and economic interaction. Accordingly, the EU simultaneously acts as a structural element of the existing world order and as an important instrument for its reproduction and transformation. This dual role is most clearly manifested at the regional level, where the Union dictates normative frameworks and conditions for access to its own political and economic space.

In the course of this analysis, it will be important to distinguish between the categories of the EU's "*international legal personality*" and "*international actorness*". Thus, international legal personality defines the formally established capacity of the Union to act as an autonomous participant in international legal relations. Its fundamental establishment took place with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, Article 47 of which enshrined the Union's legal personality[107]. Actorness, by contrast, is a broader political concept that concerns the ability to define objectives, mobilise resources, undertake consistent action, and influence the behaviour of other actors. For this reason, a central distinction in the discourse of European Union studies is that between the normative-declarative possibility of acting and the practical ability to translate this possibility into actual political outcomes. In the conceptual model of *Ch. Bretherton* and *J. Vogler*, EU actorness rests on three basic dimensions: presence, opportunity, and capability. In other words, it concerns the synergy of the Union's objective presence in the global

[106] *Smith M.E.* The European Union and International Order: European and Global Dimensions // European Foreign Affairs Review. 2007. Vol. 12. № 4. P. 429–443. URL: https://lnk.ua/9qPcJiu6v

[107] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2012. C 326. P. 1–46. Art. 47. URL: https://lnk.ua/g810aocI1

environment, favourable conjunctural opportunities, and the internal institutional resources for implementing collective action[108].

This theoretical and methodological approach makes it possible to avoid a simplistic comparison of the EU's actual international influence with its formal legal status alone. Another distinctive feature of the EU's role as an actor is that it is uneven, since the EU is not equally influential in all areas of international politics, and its ability to act depends on the specific distribution of competences, the nature of the external environment, and the degree of coordination among Member States. For example, in trade policy, internal market regulation, competition, data protection, environmental regulation, and much of its economic diplomacy, the Union possesses resources that allow it to act in a much more consolidated manner. In contrast, on issues directly related to military power, strategic deterrence, or the use of armed forces, its capabilities depend to a large extent on the Member States and their willingness to act jointly. Thus, the EU's role as an international actor is primarily functional in nature: the Union is most capable where its institutional structure allows it to mobilise collective resources for coordinated external action, whereas in areas that remain dependent on intergovernmental consensus, this capacity varies significantly.

This feature also transforms the very understanding of the nature of European power. For a long time, the debate on the EU as an international actor revolved around the question of whether it could be described in terms of traditional "power". Thus, the concept of *Civilian Power Europe* drew attention to the Union's ability to influence events predominantly through non-military means. In turn, the concept of *Normative Power Europe* proposed viewing the EU as an actor that seeks to promote certain norms and principles beyond its own political space[109]. Nevertheless, both concepts, despite their heuristic value, reveal certain limitations in their interpretation of those areas where European influence is based on market size, regulatory capacity, and the ability to set conditions for access to the European economic area.

The EU's normative authority is manifested, first and foremost, in its ability to define and disseminate notions of legitimate rules of political and economic conduct. It is of particular importance for the Union's external action, since its international identity is largely built on the assumption that the internal principles of the European order can also be relevant beyond its borders. The legal basis for this position is Article 21 of the Treaty on

[108] *Bretherton C., Vogler J.* The European Union as a Global Actor. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2006. URL: https://lnk.ua/lg2BqKwCI

[109] *Manners I.* Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms? // JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 2002. Vol. 40. № 2. P. 235–258.

European Union. It explicitly subjects the EU's external action to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and human dignity, equality, and solidarity, as well as compliance with the provisions of the UN Charter and international law. At the same time, this same article includes among the objectives of foreign policy the protection of the Union's vital interests, security, and independence; the preservation of peace; and the promotion of international trade, sustainable development, and multilateral cooperation[110]. The substantive value of this provision lies in the fact that primary EU law does not draw a clear line between value-based principles and pragmatic material interests, but rather integrates them into a unified system of foreign policy actions. This indicates that the Union's international function has, from the outset, been institutionally designed to ensure a constant link between values, security and economic interests, and the practical instruments for their implementation.

A powerful instrument for implementing the EU's foreign policy strategies is also the Union's economic power. The functioning of the Single Market creates conditions under which legal norms and technical regulations adopted within the Union acquire effect far beyond its geographical jurisdiction. It is precisely this mechanism that underlies the concept of the *"Brussels Effect"*, developed by *Anu Bradford*. Its key thesis is that the EU is capable of exporting its regulatory standards to the global level without direct pressure on other states or the conclusion of special international agreements. The main drivers of this process are the attractiveness and scale of the European market, which compel transnational companies to voluntarily adapt their goods and services to the most stringent EU requirements[111].

Further academic analysis of this concept has shown that market size is merely a necessary but insufficient condition for the externalisation of rules. The effectiveness of the *"Brussels effect"* is determined to a greater extent by the quality of the institutional environment, the high level of technical expertise of European bodies, the legal specificity of regulations, and effective mechanisms for monitoring compliance[112]. At the same time, the mere existence of internal resources does not in itself determine the extent of their external impact. The question of the mechanisms through which the Union's internal policies are externalised beyond its jurisdiction becomes crucial.

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[110] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. C 202. P. 28–30. Art. 21. URL: https://lnk.ua/oVdASedDt

[111] *Bradford A.* The Brussels Effect // Northwestern University Law Review. 2012. Vol. 107. № 1. P. 1–68.

[112] *Hadjiyianni I.* The European Union as a Global Regulatory Power // Oxford Journal of Legal Studies. 2021. Vol. 41. № 1. P. 243–264.

In light of this, there is a need to analyse the mechanisms by which the European Union's internal resources are converted into an instrument of external influence. Since a significant portion of European strategies is formulated within the Union and is subsequently externalised through market demands and regulations, we should next consider the Union's internal policies as a mechanism for international foreign policy regulation.

If the European Union's agency is manifested in its ability to influence the rules and behaviour of other actors in the international system, then the question of exactly which mechanisms are used to exert this influence is of fundamental importance. What sets the EU apart is that its external influence is by no means always the result of direct foreign policy activities. A significant portion of the international implications of European policy stems from decisions that formally fall within the realm of domestic regulation. The rules governing the single market, requirements for digital platforms, personal data protection standards, environmental and climate regulations, and trade regulations create conditions to which actors outside the Union are forced to adapt. Thus, the boundary between the EU's internal and external policies turns out to be much less clear-cut than the formal division of competences would suggest. The internal regulatory framework is gradually becoming one of the channels through which the Union's external environment is shaped.

The structural prerequisite for this influence is the scale and nature of the single market. As noted earlier, its significance lies not only in the aggregate volume of economic transactions but also in the ability of European institutions to establish detailed and legally binding rules governing access to this common economic space. For companies operating simultaneously across multiple jurisdictions, the choice between complying with European requirements and creating separate production, technological, or organisational models for the European market has a direct economic dimension. If the costs of such differentiation are high, the European standard may in fact extend far beyond the territory of its original application. In this case, authority is not exercised through coercion in the traditional sense. It arises from an asymmetry of interdependence, where the EU market is so significant for external players that adapting to its rules becomes more rational than refusing to cooperate.

The external effect of internal regulation should not be confused with the direct extraterritorial effect of EU law, since a completely different logic is at work here: rules formally established only for the European market reshape the behaviour of actors beyond its borders through economic incentives. In this sense, although the Union's regulatory authority is indirect, it is no less significant. Moreover, its key characteristic lies in the fact that external actors adapt on their own, without waiting for direct

instructions or political pressure from Brussels. In particular, *Anu Bradford* distinguishes between direct and indirect mechanisms for the dissemination of European regulatory standards, emphasising that companies can extend European requirements to their global operations even in the absence of a formal legal obligation[113].

According to this concept, the EU's external influence emerges not so much as a consequence of the direct export of political decisions, but rather as a result of changing the economic rules of the game within which other actors are compelled to make their own decisions. One of the most illustrative examples of this mechanism in practice was the European policy on the protection of personal data. *The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*, adopted in 2016, fundamentally extended beyond the purely physical space of the Union. In particular, Article 3 provides for the application of its provisions to any entities outside the EU if their activities are related to offering goods or services to residents of the Union or monitoring their behaviour[114].

The global scale of the GDPR is determined not only by this legal construction. Economic pragmatism also played a decisive role. For transnational companies, the fact that creating separate data-processing models for different markets may be more costly and organisationally more complex than applying a single standard is of fundamental importance. As a result, the European norm has de facto become a global corporate standard even where Brussels' formal jurisdiction is absent.

Digital regulation demonstrates a further evolution of this logic. While the GDPR focused primarily on the protection of the fundamental right to privacy and the regulation of personal data flows, *the Digital Markets Act (DMA)* and *the Digital Services Act (DSA)* are aimed at restructuring the architecture of the digital environment. The DMA introduced a special regime for the largest digital platforms, defining the criteria for "gatekeepers" and establishing specific obligations and prohibitions for them[115].

The DSA, in turn, established a unified system of accountability for online platforms, updating the rules on transparency, combating disinformation and illegal content, as well as the assessment of systemic

[113] *Bradford A.* The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World. New York : Oxford University Press, 2020. 404 p.

[114] Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 // Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. L 119. P. 1–88. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj/eng

[115] Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2022 on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector (Digital Markets Act) // Official Journal of the European Union. 2022. L 265. P. 1–66. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/1925/oj

risks[116]. The key point is that these regulations seek to change the conditions under which digital markets operate and the behaviour of the most powerful intermediaries between users, businesses, and information. Accordingly, the potential external effect of European regulation arises not only from the protection of European consumers, but also from the direct transformation of the business models of global technology corporations worldwide. At the same time, it is precisely the digital sphere that clearly defines the boundaries of the "Brussels Effect" concept. The EU's regulatory advantage does not mean that European rules are automatically established as a universal global standard. The digital sector is characterised by rapid technological change, competition among different regulatory models, and the significant ability of large technology corporations to adapt their business models or, conversely, to mount political and economic resistance.

Therefore, the actual external impact of European regulations depends in each case on the balance between the EU's market weight, companies' adaptation costs, the specific nature of the technologies, and the availability of alternative regulatory models (particularly American or Chinese ones). Consequently, the Union's regulatory power is shaped by specific institutional and economic conditions and requires constant validation through the quality and flexibility of the regulations themselves.

Another illustrative combination of internal regulation and external influence is the climate policy sector. The European Union is consistently transforming decarbonisation from an internal normative priority into a factor that reshapes global value chains. A particularly illustrative instrument of this strategy is *the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)*, the full application regime of which began on 1 January 2026. The CBAM imposes direct financial obligations on importers of carbon-intensive products depending on the volume of embedded CO_2 emissions, covering such basic sectors as cement, iron and steel, aluminium, fertilizers, electricity, and hydrogen[117].

The primary logic of the mechanism is to prevent "carbon leakage", that is, the risk of relocating production to countries with less stringent environmental standards, and to protect the competitiveness of European producers. The actual scope of the CBAM extends far beyond the protection of the internal market. In order to maintain competitive access to European

[116] Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act) // Official Journal of the European Union. 2022. L 277. P. 1–102. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj

[117] Regulation (EU) 2023/956 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 establishing a carbon border adjustment mechanism // Official Journal of the European Union. 2023. L 130. P. 52–104. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/956/oj

consumers, an incentive is created for producers in third countries to modernize technologies, introduce European methodologies for emissions verification, and restructure their own industrial infrastructure. In this way, the EU's climate policy becomes an effective instrument of foreign policy influence, which transforms the industrial standards of third countries without the need to conclude separate bilateral or multilateral agreements with them. At the same time, it is important to avoid excessive idealisation of the purely normative nature of European climate policy.

The CBAM constitutes a synthetic instrument, as it simultaneously serves the objectives of decarbonisation, protects the competitiveness of the European industrial sector, and adjusts the conditions of international trade. Its implementation demonstrates how complex and interdependent the relationship between normative orientations and Brussels' pragmatic economic interests is. Accordingly, internal policy acquires an external dimension precisely through the combination of a value-based mission and material interest. This observation is fundamental to understanding the nature of European regulatory power in general: its effectiveness is determined by the ability to synthesise the normative legitimacy of its own rules with economic incentives strong enough to make these rules indispensable for external actors.

This interdependence is also characteristic of trade policy. Since the Common Commercial Policy falls within the exclusive competence of the EU, the Union acts as the sole negotiating party in relations with third countries[118]. This is of fundamental importance for its international actorness, as the economic potential of individual Member States is consolidated into a powerful collective negotiating capacity. At the same time, modern EU trade agreements have long gone beyond tariff-setting and market access.

They cover competition rules, public procurement, intellectual property protection, labour and environmental standards, as well as digital trade. As a result, trade policy is transformed into a key channel for the institutional entrenchment of European norms in the legal orders of partner countries. The external effect of the EU's regulatory and trade policy should not be interpreted as one-way Europeanisation. External actors and transnational corporations are not passive recipients. They actively manoeuvre, demand preferences, lobby for exemptions, develop alternative standards, or use their own economic weight to exert pressure on Brussels. For this reason, the Union's regulatory power has a distinctly relational character, as its actual scope is determined not only by its ability

[118] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2012. C 326. P. 47–390. URL: https://lnk.ua/7DWfP20TM

to formulate rules, but also by the degree of dependence and willingness of other actors to implement them. This constitutes one of the fundamental limits of the "Brussels Effect". The EU can create powerful incentives for normative adaptation, but it cannot guarantee the same level of such adaptation across all sectors and jurisdictions. Regulatory influence proves most sustainable where high dependence on the European market is reinforced by the quality, specificity, and stability of the standard itself.

Thus, it becomes clear that the European Union's domestic policies function as the infrastructural foundation of its external influence. Their essence lies in the ability to reshape the global environment in which external actors build business models, organise production chains, and shape their own regulatory frameworks. This mechanism differs fundamentally from classical foreign policy power. Brussels does not so much coerce or persuade third countries as it creates market conditions under which adapting to its rules becomes the most rational strategy for external actors. This is the essence of European agency – the transformation of internal regulatory capacity into an external resource of influence.

As already noted, this model has clear limitations. It is most effective in the realm of economic and regulatory practices, but has limited potential when it comes to systemic political transformation, profound institutional changes, or the geopolitical orientation of states. It is precisely at this boundary that a fundamental question arises: How does the Union organise the political space immediately surrounding it when purely regulatory influence is no longer sufficient? At this level, the EU's task lies in shaping the systemic behaviour of states, defining acceptable models for their institutional development, creating levers for incentives and constraints, and, ultimately, configuring the regional order. In this context, it makes sense to view enlargement, the neighbourhood policy, association, sectoral integration, and sanctions and security instruments not as separate strands of Brussels' external activity, but as different mechanisms for shaping regional regimes. All these instruments differ in their level of institutional engagement and depth of influence, but they serve a common function – they create a framework within which neighbouring states adapt their own political and economic practices in line with the European order.

The most illustrative form of such influence undoubtedly remains the enlargement policy. Along with the adaptation of an external actor to certain EU norms, it also entails its full-fledged incorporation into the institutional core of the Union. A central place in this mechanism is occupied by the principle of political conditionality, the logic of which consists in establishing a strict link between the fulfilment by a candidate state of defined criteria and the receipt of successive integration preferences. *The Copenhagen criteria* of 1993 ultimately established the

requirements concerning the stability of democratic institutions, the rule of law, the protection of human and minority rights, the existence of a functioning market economy, and the ability to fulfil the obligations of membership[119]. Through this mechanism, the EU gains the ability to shape a country's internal development without directly violating its formal sovereignty, by leveraging the interdependence between the state's desire to become a member and the strictness of the conditions for membership.

However, *conditionality* should not be regarded as an automatic algorithm of transformation. Its actual effectiveness depends on several key variables, among which the credibility of the membership perspective, the clarity of the requirements put forward, and the balance between the political benefits of integration and the domestic costs of implementing reforms are of particular importance. As noted by leading scholars of European integration, *Frank Schimmelfennig* and *Ulrich Sedelmeier*, European conditionality works most effectively when the ultimate reward is sufficiently substantial, the criteria are clearly defined, and the prospect of accession to the Union within a foreseeable timeframe is perceived as entirely realistic[120]. This leads to a fundamentally important conclusion: the EU's transformative power is not merely a consequence of its normative appeal. It stems from a specific configuration of incentives, in which the European Union is able to transform a state's desire to join the European order into a motive for domestic institutional change.

It is through this mechanism that the process of Europeanisation unfolds a process that should not be reduced to a purely mechanical transposition of the acquis communautaire into national legal systems. Europeanisation entails a much deeper restructuring of policy-making processes, the functioning of state institutions, administrative practices, and models of interaction among political actors. It proves successful not when European norms are formally implemented into national legislation, but when they begin to determine the actual internal logic of how institutions function.

On the other hand, national governments and political elites also frequently use Brussels' requirements as leverage to advance their own reforms, while limiting themselves to merely copying European rules without properly transforming domestic practices. Consequently, the mere existence of the acquis does not in itself guarantee deep institutional convergence. It is precisely this dichotomy between formal compliance and

[119] European Council in Copenhagen, 21–22 June 1993. Conclusions of the Presidency. Copenhagen, 1993. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21225/72921.pdf

[120] *Schimmelfennig F., Sedelmeier U.* Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe // Journal of European Public Policy. 2004. Vol. 11. № 4. P. 661–679. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/1350176042000248089

actual change that explains why the results of Europeanisation have turned out to be so uneven across different countries.

The experience of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements demonstrated the significant potential of this model. The prospect of membership contributed to a large-scale overhaul of legislation, public administration, economic regulation, and political institutions in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This experience revealed a structural limitation of the EU's transformational power: it is strongest prior to accession, when the Union controls access to politically and economically valuable rewards. Once membership is achieved, the balance of incentives changes fundamentally, and Brussels' leverage over the domestic political behavior of new Member States weakens significantly. Thus, accession to the EU is not the end of the transformation, but rather a turning point in the very mechanism of European influence. This circumstance is of fundamental importance for assessing enlargement policy, as it demonstrates that the Union's ability to transform candidate countries during the accession phase is not equivalent to its capacity to ensure long-term political convergence once they are already within the Union.

A fundamentally different configuration of influence emerges where the prospect of membership is absent or remains politically uncertain. It is on this basis that *the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)* was developed, aimed at creating around the EU a space of stability, prosperity, and predictable partnership relations without automatically incorporating the respective states into the Union. Launched in 2004, the ENP was based on the need to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines following the EU's large-scale eastern enlargement and to extend certain elements of the European regulatory and institutional order to neighbouring countries[121].

It was precisely the absence of a clear prospect of accession that fundamentally changed the nature of European conditionality. If, in the context of the enlargement policy, full membership is the key incentive, then within the neighbourhood policy, motivation is provided through gradual access to the EU internal market, the involvement of financial resources, participation in common programmes, sectoral integration, and the gradual approximation of national legislation to European standards. *The Eastern Partnership*) launched in 2009 for six states of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, became the most developed form of implementation of this logic[122].

[121] European Neighbourhood Policy: Strategy Paper. European Commission. Brussels, 12 May 2004. COM(2004) 373 final. URL: https://lnk.ua/J7YMbexpj

[122] Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, Prague, 7 May 2009. Council of the European Union. Brussels, 2009. Doc. 8435/09 (Presse 78). URL: https://lnk.ua/OrScwR7SU

Its logic lay in the ability to differentiate the level of engagement depending on the ambitions, readiness, and political choices of a particular country. This is precisely why the EU's policy toward its eastern neighbours has gradually moved away from a one-size-fits-all approach, as relations with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan (as well as Belarus in the early stages) has followed fundamentally different trajectories. This differentiation should be viewed as fundamental to understanding European regional power, as it demonstrates that Brussels does not simply impose a single template on the entire region, but rather constructs different levels and degrees of institutional proximity.

The institution of association acquired particular significance in this process, as it effectively established an intermediate regime between the absence of institutional involvement and full membership. In the case of Ukraine, the Association Agreement and its key component, *the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)*, created a mechanism for the large-scale adaptation of Ukrainian legislation and economic regulation to the EU regulatory framework without the formal granting of membership status[123].

This model demonstrates the EU's ability to integrate specific segments of a partner country's political and economic sphere without requiring its full institutional integration. Energy, transportation, the digital sector, trade, public procurement, and competition protection become effective channels for incorporating a partner state into European regulatory frameworks. In this way, the association becomes an instrument of partial (sectoral) integration that profoundly alters the structure of interdependence even before potential membership is achieved.

It is precisely at the neighbourhood level that the limitations of the EU's capacity for transformation are most clearly evident. The European Union can create incentives for reform, but it is unable to fully control the internal political choices of a partner state. The effectiveness of European influence is determined by a complex balance of political forces in the partner country, its institutional capacity, the appeal of the European development model, and the presence of alternative centres of economic, political, or security gravity. It is particularly important to note that the EU operates in a highly competitive environment. In Eastern Europe, its policy has long been shaped by a fierce confrontation with Russia, while in other regions, the influence of other global power centres, such as the United States and China, is increasingly felt. Therefore, the transformational model, which relies on the voluntary adoption of European rules, faces

[123] Association Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part // Official Journal of the European Union. 2014. L 161. P. 3–1537. URL: https://lnk.ua/iQcGmTcYo

structural limitations where external incentives from the EU are not dominant or where integration with Europe carries a high domestic political cost. It is precisely this boundary that is gradually shifting European regional policy from logic of transformation to logic of containment. In this context, sanctions represent a fundamentally different instrument of influence.

While the mechanism of conditionality provides for positive rewards for proper compliance with requirements, sanctions policy deliberately raises the political and economic cost of actions that Brussels deems unacceptable. The significance of this instrument has grown dramatically in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine. Since 2014, the EU has consistently expanded restrictive measures against Russia, and following the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022, sanctions have definitively become one of the central levers of European foreign policy. In this context, sanctions serve as a tool for structurally reshaping incentives. Through them, the EU limits the adversary's resource capabilities, raises the cost of aggression, and demonstrates to other international actors the limits of what is permissible. In this way, sanctions policy fulfils not only a deterrent function but also a direct rule-setting function.

The further strengthening of the security dimension of European regional policy is linked to the evolution of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Its significance lies primarily in the fact that the EU acts on the international stage as an institutionally established security actor. Civilian and military missions, crisis management operations, support for the security and defence sectors of partner states, as well as financial and restrictive mechanisms, form a comprehensive set of tools through which the Union directly influences regional stability. At the same time, its security agency is not analogous to a traditional state military force. The EU acts through a combination of the Union's institutional resources and the capabilities of its Member States, and its capabilities depend to a large extent on cooperation with other European security structures.

In this context, cooperation with NATO is of fundamental importance. The EU and the Alliance do not form a hierarchical system of subordination. They perform distinct yet complementary functions: NATO remains the foundation of collective defence for most EU Member States, while the EU possesses a broader range of economic, regulatory, diplomatic, and civilian security tools. The combination of these capabilities forms a distinct European model of regional security governance. Studies of the EU's security role show that its key added value lies precisely in its ability to integrate civilian and military instruments, economic resources, and regulatory

frameworks[124]. Therefore, the Union's security policy should not be viewed as an attempt to mechanically duplicate the Alliance's functions. Its significance lies in the fact that it substantially broadens the range of tools used to maintain, strengthen, and defend the European order.

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine served as a catalyst for the integration of the EU's various instruments of regional influence into a cohesive, interconnected system. Ukraine simultaneously serves as a candidate country, a party to the Association Agreement and sectoral approximation, a recipient of large-scale financial and security assistance, and a key reference point within the EU's sanctions policy toward Russia. After granting Ukraine candidate status in June 2022, the European Council decided as early as December 2023 to launch accession negotiations[125], and in June 2024, the first intergovernmental conference took place, formally launching the negotiation process[126].

But, European support for Ukraine goes well beyond the scope of traditional enlargement policy. Brussels is simultaneously deploying financial, economic, sanctions-based, and security levers. It is precisely this synergy that represents a fundamentally new approach to regional order-making. It marks a shift from a concept under which the EU transformed its surrounding region primarily through soft power and the normative appeal of its own model, to a situation in which the Union is compelled to simultaneously transform, defend, and rigorously politically structure this region.

This process naturally leads to the geopolitical dimension of enlargement and neighbourhood policies. In this context, the geopolitical dimension does not mean a watering down of normative criteria or the replacement of reforms with geopolitical expediency. It marks a qualitative shift in the fundamental significance of reforms and membership, as they are increasingly viewed not merely as instruments of the candidates' internal modernisation, but as core elements of new European security architecture.

The EU's current regional strategy effectively synthesises two logics that previously operated largely in parallel. *The first* is based on the transfer of European rules through conditionality, association, and institutional adaptation. *The second* is linked to the development of a strategic space in which the security dimension, sanctions regimes, defence capabilities, and the geopolitical orientation of neighbouring states take on direct, vital

[124] *Larsen J.* The European Union as a Security Actor: Perspectives from the Maritime Domain. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2019. (DIIS Report 2019:06). URL: https://lnk.ua/TkD7G683n
[125] European Council meeting (14 and 15 December 2023) – Conclusions // European Council. Brussels, 2023. URL: https://lnk.ua/g4uNPDcBm
[126] First Accession Conference with Ukraine, 25 June 2024 // Council of the European Union. Brussels, 2024. URL: https://lnk.ua/Ia6FjMF9o

significance for the Union itself. It is precisely this combination that allows us to speak of a qualitative transformation of the EU's regional role.

Thus, enlargement, the neighbourhood policy, sanctions regimes, and security instruments form a unified, multilevel system of European regional influence. This continuum ranges from the most profound institutional transformation and sectoral association to regulation, deterrence, and security responses. A key evolution in the EU's agency lies in the shift from passively attracting partners with its own model to actively using a combination of tools to shape the political environment. The limits of this power remain clear, as the Union is unable to fully control the choices of its partners or automatically convert regulatory proximity into geopolitical loyalty. In light of this, the EU's current regional role is defined by its ability to flexibly construct various regimes of proximity and adapt its levers of influence to the dynamics of the external environment.

The expansion of these instruments beyond the immediate neighbourhood raises another question: to what extent is the EU's regional and regulatory presence capable of ensuring influence in a global environment in which the Union operates alongside other centres of economic, technological, and political power. In the academic discourse, this issue is conceptualised through the category of *the capability-expectations gap*, proposed by *Christopher Hill* as early as the 1990s, which reflects the fundamental paradox of European integration, whereby the presence of substantial material and normative potential does not always translate into the ability to determine the behaviour of external actors and to guarantee the stability of the regional and global security architecture[127].

For a fundamental assessment of the EU's global positioning, it is crucial to distinguish between the primary resources of power and the ultimate consequences of their application. The Union's foreign policy capability should be interpreted as a processual chain: *resource accumulation – institutional conversion mechanism – response of the external environment – ultimate political outcome*. It is precisely at the final stage that the significant limitations of European power become apparent, resulting both from the internal architecture of Brussels and from the reconfiguration of the global environment.

This specificity is most characteristically manifested in the sphere of regulatory power. The aforementioned Brussels Effect demonstrates the EU's ability to extend its own standards far beyond the boundaries of its legal jurisdiction owing to the scale of the single market and the

[127] *Hill C.* The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe's International Role // JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 1993. Vol. 31. Issue 3. P. 305–328. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1993.tb00466.x

corresponding regulatory capacity[128]. The source of this influence lies in economic incentives. Transnational actors often voluntarily adopt European standards in order to minimise transaction costs and maintain access to the high-value market.

The analysis shows that regulatory diffusion is not synonymous with normative or geopolitical hegemony. *First,* the Brussels Effect is selective and depends on a combination of stringent conditions: market rigidity, the indivisibility of technological processes, and the absence of alternatives comparable in scale[129]. *Second,* even when European standards are formally adopted, third countries tend to adapt them selectively. As evidenced by the experience of implementing data protection regimes (such as the GDPR) or digital regulation in authoritarian contexts (particularly in China), EU regulatory frameworks have the potential to be instrumentalised to strengthen internal state control, which contradicts Brussels' original liberal values[130]. Consequently, the Europeanisation of legal norms does not guarantee the Europeanisation of political practice, revealing the boundary where regulatory power comes into conflict with the fundamental interests of state sovereignty.

This limit becomes critical in the context of today's geopolitical fragmentation, as the EU no longer operates in a quasi-monopolistic environment. The emergence of alternative regulatory and technological ecosystems in the United States and China gives third-party actors room to manoeuvre and diversify. As a result, access to the European market is losing its status as the sole lever of influence. In light of this, the EU's global role has traditionally relied on multilateral mechanisms, where European norms are institutionalised through a network of international regimes and organisations[131]. For the EU, commitment to the concept of *"effective multilateralism"* serves as a practical way to compensate for the lack of traditional attributes of state power through collective diplomacy[132].

Amid the crisis of the liberal international order and the rise of polycentrism, multilateral institutions themselves are becoming an arena of

[128] *Bradford A.* The Brussels Effect // Northwestern University Law Review. 2012. Vol. 107. № 1. P. 1–68.
[129] *Bradford A.* The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 404 p.
[130] *Li W., Chen J.* From Brussels Effect to Gravity Assists: Understanding the Evolution of the GDPR-Inspired Personal Information Protection Law in China // Computer Law & Security Review. 2024. Vol. 54. Art. 105994. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2024.105994
[131] The EU's Role in Global Governance: The Legal Dimension / ed. by *B. Van Vooren, S. Blockmans, J. Wouters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199659654.001.0001
[132] *Barbé E., Herranz-Surrallés A., Natorski M.* Contending metaphors of the European Union as a global actor: Norms and power in the European discourse on multilateralism // Journal of Language and Politics. 2015. Vol. 14. Issue 1. P. 18–40. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.14.1.02bar

fierce competition, requiring the Union to reconcile its normative aspirations with the pragmatic protection of its own strategic interests. The most critical internal constraint on the Union's foreign policy capabilities remains the structural disconnect between the supranational nature of its economic resources and its intergovernmental mechanism for strategic decision-making (the "capability-expectations gap"). The existence of the veto power and divergences among Member States' national priorities can prevent the EU from converting its colossal material potential into compelling geopolitical action, especially during acute security crises.

In a context where economic interdependence is being weaponised (weaponised interdependence) and the line between the regulatory and security spheres is becoming increasingly blurred, the EU's positioning is undergoing a forced transformation. The declared course toward "geopolitical leadership" and strategic autonomy requires the Union to move beyond the role of a purely normative or regulatory "rule-maker."

In summary, the European Union should be viewed as a specific, multilevel centre for establishing rules of interaction, whose influence is selective, contextual, and dependent on its ability to convert internal resources into external incentives. Its strength is most evident where the scale of the single market, regulatory authority, institutional capacity, and economic attractiveness align with the interests of external actors. However, where such convergence is absent, European influence weakens significantly, especially if third countries have access to alternative economic, technological, or political centres. Thus, the key question is not whether the EU has power, but what type of power it is capable of exercising, under what conditions this power yields political results, and where the limits of its conversion into geopolitical influence lie.

In this sense, the EU's distinctiveness lies precisely in the combination of various rule-making mechanisms (market-based, regulatory, institutional, diplomatic, and security-related). Taken together, these mechanisms enable the Union to exert a significantly greater influence on international rules than one might assume based solely on its military and political capabilities. This model remains structurally dependent on two variables that cannot be compensated for by the sheer size of the internal market alone: the ability of external actors to adopt or adapt European rules, and the ability of the Member States themselves to act as a politically coordinated collective actor. This is precisely why the limits of European influence are determined by the challenge of politically converting existing resources. The EU may be a rule-maker in certain segments of the international order, but the ability to set rules is not the same as the ability to ensure their universal enforcement or to determine the strategic behaviour of other centres of power. This distinction constitutes the fundamental limit of Europe's order-shaping potential.

CHAPTER 2

THE EUROPEAN UNION AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS OF THE 21 CENTURY

2.1. The European Collective Security System: EU Cooperation with the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe (*Illia Myronov*)

The European security order now rests on a crowded institutional field. Several bodies speak the language of security, yet each does so from a different legal and political position. The United Nations sets the universal frame of peace and international legality. The OSCE carries the Helsinki tradition of dialogue, observation and comprehensive security. The Council of Europe ties security to rights, courts and democratic standards. The European Union adds a policy machine: sanctions, financing, conditionality, civilian missions, and diplomatic coordination and crisis instruments. The Strategic Compass made this self-description more explicit by placing action, protection, investment and partnerships inside one security agenda[1]. Russia's war against Ukraine has forced these elements into contact. Legal condemnation, diplomatic records, accountability and resources have value only when they travel across institutional borders.

The Union occupies a specific place in this arrangement. It has neither the universal authority of the UN Charter system nor the defence commitments of NATO. It also lacks the OSCE's pan-European membership and the Council of Europe's specialised human-rights mandate. Its weight comes from implementation. Brussels can attach costs to legal judgments, finance resilience, coordinate restrictive measures, support reforms and turn political positions into administrative practice. That role is easier to see after 2022 because the same war that exposed institutional limits also increased demand for a body able to connect them.

Scholarship on the EU and international organisations gives a useful starting point. R. Wessel and J. Odermatt describe a dense but uneven

[1] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2022. 47 p. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf

pattern of EU participation in global and regional institutions; effectiveness varies with competences, internal cohesion and the rules of the partner organisation[2]. T. Tardy's work on EU-UN peace operations reaches a similar conclusion from another angle: global-regional cooperation depends less on formal rank than on mandates, capacities and political will[3]. Strategic studies of the Union after 2014 and 2022 add the security context. N. Tocci writes about the EU in a fragile world[4], S. Biscop treats European strategy as an old power's search for a workable future[5], and K. Engelbrekt places the post-Cold War order under the pressure of Russia's invasion[6]. These debates explain the constraint. They say less about the daily division of labour between the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the EU during a major war.

The older literature on security communities also remains useful, although it should be used carefully. K. Deutsch explained stable peace through shared expectations and institutionalised consultation[7], while E. Adler and M. Barnett later treated security communities as practical orders built through identity, trust and repeated interaction[8]. This line of thought helps separate the present topic from collective defence. NATO answers the alliance question. The institutions discussed here operate through legality, consultation, standards, accountability and implementation. Their effects are slower and less visible than military deterrence, but they shape the political environment in which deterrence, recovery and responsibility become possible.

Collective security in the strict sense assumes that aggression against one member of an international community becomes a concern for all. The UN Charter supplies that universal vocabulary through sovereignty,

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[2] *Wessel R.A., Odermatt J.* (Eds.). Research Handbook on the European Union and International Organizations. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019. 720 p.

[3] *Tardy T.* The European Union and UN Peace Operations: What Global-Regional Peace and Security Partnership? In: de *Coning C., Peter M.* (Eds.). United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. P. 231-252. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99106-1_12

[4] *Tocci N.* Framing the EU Global Strategy: A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 168 p. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-55586-7

[5] *Biscop S.* European Strategy in the 21st Century: New Future for Old Power. London: Routledge, 2018. 154 p. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429427442

[6] *Engelbrekt K.* The European Security Order. In: European Security Order and the War in Ukraine. Cham: Springer, 2024. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-54200-8_9

[7] Deutsch K.W., Burrell S.A., Kann R.A., Lee M.Jr., Lichterman M., Lindgren R.E., Loewenheim F.L., Van Wagenen R.W. Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957. 228 p.

[8] Adler E., Barnett M. Security Communities. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 488 p. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511598661

territorial integrity and the prohibition of force[9]. The Helsinki Final Act translates stability into a comprehensive order linking politico-military, economic-environmental and human dimensions[10]. The Council of Europe adds the proposition that peace is fragile where rights protection, local democracy and judicial accountability collapse[11]. The EU works across these fields and tries to make their outputs usable for policy. The result is a layered system: law names the violation, diplomacy preserves the record, democratic standards define the recovery horizon, and EU instruments carry part of the response.

A further institutional detail strengthens this reading. The EU's enhanced participation rights in the General Assembly, granted by Resolution 65/276, gave the Union a formal route for coordinated statements and proposals inside the UN setting[12]. That status is less spectacular than sanctions or defence assistance, but it shapes the way European positions are recorded in universal debates. In a war where legal terminology is contested every week, the ability to speak through a recognised EU voice at the UN has practical value. It keeps the Union's regional response attached to a global forum instead of tying it to a closed coalition of like-minded states.

This structure also explains why the language of 'European project of peace' remains relevant without romanticising integration. Peace in this setting is maintained through routines that reduce room for coercion: consultation, standard-setting, legal review, budgetary leverage, expert reporting and reputational cost. None of these routines stops tanks by itself. Together they create the institutional environment in which aggression becomes costly, documented and politically isolating. That is the part of European security that sits between military defence and moral declaration.

The contrast with collective defence needs to remain visible. Defence commitments promise assistance against an armed attack. Collective security offers a wider legal language and a weaker enforcement mechanism. Cooperative security relies on dialogue and observation; democratic security asks whether institutions can survive coercion, occupation and impunity. Since 2022, all four logics have operated around Ukraine. The EU is central to the last three and adjacent to the first. It

[9] Charter of the United Nations // United Nations. San Francisco, 1945. URL: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter

[10] Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Final Act. Helsinki, 1 August 1975. URL: https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act

[11] Conclusions on EU Priorities for Cooperation with the Council of Europe 2023-2024 // Council of the European Union Brussels, 2023. 30 January. URL: https://lnk.ua/CVyv1TU7R

[12] Resolution 65/276. Participation of the European Union in the Work of the United Nations // United Nations General Assembly. 2011. 3 May. URL: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/702981

organises consequences of aggression more than it guarantees defence against aggression.

Institutional learning since 2014 has also been uneven. The OSCE moved from large-scale field observation to narrower support and documentation after the closure of the Special Monitoring Mission. The Council of Europe converted Russia's expulsion into a broader democratic-security agenda. The EU shifted from neighbourhood management and regulatory conditionality toward sanctions, assistance, defence-related coordination and accountability support. None of these changes created a single European security authority. Their accumulation changed the practical meaning of multilateral security governance.

Table 2.1.1. Functional asymmetries in Europe's multilateral security architecture[13]

Institutional layer	Core output	Vulnerability exposed by the war	EU bridging contribution
UN / collective security	Universal legality; condemnation of aggression; Charter-based language of sovereignty and territorial integrity	Security Council blockage when the violator holds veto power; reliance on General Assembly mobilisation	Aligns sanctions, assistance, diplomatic positions and accountability support with Charter-based principles
OSCE / cooperative security	Dialogue, monitoring experience, confidence-building and comprehensive-security expertise	Consensus rules, budget deadlock, leadership bargaining and the fragility of unarmed monitoring	Keeps the Helsinki acquis politically usable while adding resources and pressure outside the OSCE mandate
Council of Europe / democratic security	Human rights, rule of law, democratic standards, accountability and reparations infrastructure	No coercive tools against aggression; dependence on legal and institutional follow-through	Links recovery, accession reforms, justice-sector support and accountability to democratic-security standards

[13] Compiled by the author on the basis of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, EU-Council of Europe cooperation priorities and EU Strategic Compass documents.

The matrix treats institutional asymmetry as evidence, not as a defect. Each organisation produces a different security output and reveals a different failure mode under stress. Multilateralism weakens when these outputs remain separate. It becomes more durable when legal condemnation, diplomatic practice, democratic standards and material resources reinforce each other.

The UN-EU relationship is the main route through which European regional policy touches universal legality. The General Assembly's Resolution 65/276 gave the European Union enhanced participation rights in the work of the United Nations, including broader possibilities to speak, submit proposals and participate in the Assembly's work. That procedural status matters in practice. It allows the Union to present coordinated positions within the UN setting and gives EU statements a formal place in debates where the rules of international order are contested.

Ukraine also revived an older UN mechanism. Emergency special sessions are linked to the 'Uniting for Peace' procedure, created by General Assembly Resolution 377(V), which allows the Assembly to meet within twenty-four hours when the Security Council is blocked by a lack of unanimity among permanent members[14]. The eleventh emergency special session on Ukraine and Resolution ES-11/1 used that route after the Security Council could not act. The resolution condemned Russia's aggression and demanded withdrawal of Russian forces[15]. For the EU, this was more than a diplomatic backdrop. It supplied a universal legal frame for sanctions, assistance and accountability.

The Uniting for Peace procedure also changes the meaning of UN blockage. A veto in the Security Council can stop enforcement through that body, yet it does not silence the General Assembly. Emergency special sessions create a public legal stage where the majority of states can preserve the basic rule against aggression. For Ukraine, that stage separated the paralysis of one organ from the position of the wider membership. EU diplomacy used the same distinction: Security Council deadlock did not erase the Charter norm.

Operational cooperation with the UN has a narrower scope than the whole field of EU external action. The Council priorities for the UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management for 2022–2024 covered early warning, planning, mediation, Women, Peace and

[14] Emergency Special Sessions // United Nations General Assembly. URL: https://www.un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency.shtml

[15] Aggression against Ukraine: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly // United Nations General Assembly. 2022. 2 March. URL: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3965290

Security, policing, rule of law and security-sector reform[16]. These priorities create a channel through which EU planning, civilian crisis-management experience and financing can complement UN peace operations and political missions.

The EU's UN role also depends on coordination among Member States. In the General Assembly, the Union may speak with a recognised voice, while Member States retain their votes and diplomatic networks. A strong European position therefore requires prior convergence in Brussels and follow-through in New York. The procedure looks administrative, but its political effect is visible during emergency sessions: European states can support a Charter-based majority while presenting the invasion as a challenge to the international system rather than as a bilateral dispute.

The partnership then moved to a more regular strategic format. Council conclusions in 2025 upgraded the EU-UN peace and security agenda[17], and the inaugural EU-UN Strategic Committee on Peace and Security met in New York in March 2026[18]. The institutional gain is concrete. Where the Security Council remains blocked, the UN still supplies legal authority and diplomatic language. The EU supplies many of the practical consequences available to a regional actor: sanctions, financing, mission support, recovery assistance and coordination with partners.

This combination also has limits. The Charter language can classify Russia's aggression with legal clarity, but legality alone cannot enforce itself against a veto-holding power. EU policy therefore works in two registers at once: it relies on the UN order for legitimacy and acts through regional instruments that the Security Council cannot direct. That duality has become a recurring feature of European collective security after 2022.

The OSCE occupies a more fragile layer of the same order. Its value lies in the idea that borders, non-use of force, human rights, economic cooperation and military transparency belong to one comprehensive security system. The Helsinki acquis survived 2022 as a vocabulary of violated commitments. Russia's breach made the need to preserve that acquis more urgent.

The consensus principle has a more complex history than a simple veto. It was designed to preserve ownership of cooperative-security

[16] Taking the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management to the Next Level: Priorities 2022-2024 // Council of the European Union. Brussels, 2022. 24 January. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53958/st05451-en22.pdf

[17] Council Conclusions on Upgrading the EU-UN Strategic Partnership on Peace and Security // Council of the European Union. Brussels, 2025. 20 October. URL: https://lnk.ua/eQj6mcde7

[18] Inaugural EU-UN Strategic Committee on Peace and Security // United Nations Peace Operations. 2026. 3 March. URL: https://lnk.ua/96Xq4rsy1

commitments by all participating States. During the war, the same rule became a bargaining device over budgets, leadership and mandates. This institutional strain matters for the EU because many EU Member States remain OSCE participating States and use the organisation as a diplomatic space. The Union's own instruments then become a way to act when the consensus arena preserves language but cannot deliver implementation.

The Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine remains the clearest example of OSCE practice after 2014. Launched in March 2014 and closed on 31 March 2022, the SMM was an unarmed civilian mission that observed and reported on the security situation[19]. Its daily, thematic and incident reports created an international record of events in conflict-affected areas. The mission also revealed the weakness of unarmed monitoring where access is restricted, staff is exposed to pressure and one party treats transparency as a threat.

The post-2022 OSCE crisis also reached budgets and leadership. The Annual Report 2024 notes that participating States could not reach consensus on a Unified Budget for that year; the last Unified Budget had been approved in 2021[20]. The chairmanship issue carried the same lesson. A 2023 OSCE decision on the 2024 chairmanship recorded regret that Russia and Belarus had impeded Estonia's candidacy, after which Malta became the compromise chair[21]. These episodes give concrete content to the phrase 'consensus blocked by the aggressor'. The OSCE's rules remained formally intact while their political use changed.

After the full-scale invasion, the OSCE's relevance shifted toward targeted support and institutional record-making. The Secretariat Extra-budgetary Support Programme for Ukraine, launched on 1 November 2022, addresses civilian needs, democratic and social resilience, humanitarian demining, disaster-risk reduction, anti-trafficking, rule-of-law support, cyber resilience and assistance to affected communities[22]. The Moscow Mechanism has produced Ukraine-related reports on possible violations of international humanitarian and human-rights law, including reports on Ukrainian prisoners of war and arbitrarily detained civilians[23]. These reports do not replace criminal courts; they preserve evidence, organise legal categories and

[19] The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (closed) // OSCE. URL: https://lnk.ua/MnTZ2AyIw

[20] Annual Report 2024 // OSCE, 2026. URL: https://lnk.ua/033qFft3w

[21] Decision No. 2/23. OSCE Chairmanship in the Year 2024 // OSCE. 2023. 1 December. URL: https://resources.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/1/2/560106.pdf

[22] OSCE Secretariat Extra-budgetary Support Programme for Ukraine // OSCE. 2022. URL: https://www.osce.org/support-programme-for-ukraine

[23] OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Human Dimension Mechanisms: Ukraine-related Moscow Mechanism reports // OSCE. URL: https://odihr.osce.org/odihr/human-dimension-mechanisms

keep facts available for later accountability. EU statements in OSCE bodies keep the findings inside the European security debate[24].

The Moscow Mechanism deserves separate attention because it shows how expert recording can survive political blockage. Ukraine-related reports under the human dimension have addressed violations of international humanitarian and human-rights law, deportation of children, arbitrary deprivation of liberty and treatment of prisoners of war. These reports do not replace criminal courts. They preserve evidence, organise legal categories and keep facts available for later accountability. The EU benefits from that record when it argues for sanctions support to victims and justice mechanisms.

Such activity has modest coercive force and considerable political value. In a war shaped by denial and disinformation, the vocabulary used by institutions affects the later record of responsibility. Aggression can be recoded as an internal crisis; occupation can be softened into a territorial dispute; attacks on civilians can disappear into technical language. OSCE fora help resist that drift. The EU adds sanctions, assistance and political weight to the same vocabulary.

The Council of Europe layer reaches ordinary governance, which makes it easy to underestimate in security analysis. Venice Commission opinions, GRECO standards, judicial reform benchmarks and support for local self-government define whether reconstruction strengthens accountable institutions or merely restores damaged infrastructure. EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2025-2026 keep democracy, human rights, rule of law, anti-corruption and accountability within the security agenda[25].

Russia's exclusion from the Council of Europe on 16 March 2022 and the later end of its status as a party to the European Convention on Human Rights on 16 September 2022 drew a political and legal boundary around the European rights order[26]. The decision did not make past violations disappear. It preserved a channel of judicial memory for the period in which aggression and Convention obligations overlapped.

The Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 'Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction' 2023-2026 then translates democratic security into programmes on justice, vulnerable groups, local governance and

[24] OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No. 1105, Vienna, 14 May // External Action Service. URL: https://lnk.ua/kITOX1VYH

[25] Council Conclusions on EU Priorities for Cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2025-2026 // European External Action Service. Brussels, 17 December 2024. URL: https://lnk.ua/Ryo2qvfas

[26] Russia ceases to be a Party to the European Convention on Human Rights on 16 September 2022 // Council of Europe. URL: https://lnk.ua/enroll1wv

institutional resilience[27]. Recovery is treated there as a legal and administrative task as much as a physical one. A road or energy facility can be rebuilt while courts, municipalities and anti-corruption safeguards remain fragile; the Council of Europe dimension keeps that institutional question visible.

Accountability gives this cooperation its sharpest security meaning. The Register of Damage for Ukraine established in The Hague records claims and evidence of damage, loss or injury caused by Russia's internationally wrongful acts in or against Ukraine[28]. The Reykjavik Declaration placed the war at the centre of the Council of Europe's renewed political purpose and linked values with responsibility for aggression[29]. For the EU, this connection matters because sanctions, frozen-asset debates, reconstruction funding and accession conditionality need a credible legal record.

This democratic-security layer prevents reconstruction from becoming a purely technical exercise. EU funding and reform incentives can support recovery, but Council of Europe standards discipline the institutional side of that recovery. The result is a division of labour: the Union supplies resources and political leverage, while the Council of Europe supplies legal standards, expert review and rights-based accountability.

Taken as a whole, the Ukrainian case tests three assumptions simultaneously. The United Nations affirms the illegality of aggression but remains constrained in enforcing this principle by the paralysis of the Security Council. The OSCE preserves its comprehensive approach to security and continues to generate valuable expert assessments and records despite significant political obstruction. The Council of Europe reinforces democratic standards while developing institutional mechanisms for accountability. The European Union operates across these interconnected layers, translating and integrating elements of their respective outputs into common policies and practical measures. This coordinating function gives the EU significant capacity to shape European responses to security challenges, while also revealing clear institutional and political constraints.

The strongest contribution of the Union appears where legal, diplomatic and democratic functions need a resource-bearing actor. Charter principles gain force through sanctions and assistance; OSCE records gain relevance when they feed political pressure; Council of Europe standards shape recovery when attached to EU funding and accession incentives. None of these links works automatically. They depend on

[27] Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction" 2023-2026 // Council of Europe. URL: https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/ukraine
[28] Register of Damage for Ukraine // Council of Europe. URL: https://rd4u.coe.int/en/
[29] United around our values: Reykjavik Declaration. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2023. URL: https://lnk.ua/oLrgJ5bDR

Member State cohesion, administrative capacity and the ability to maintain attention over years of war.

The future of European collective security will therefore depend less on institutional hierarchy than on the quality of functional coordination. The EU lacks the mandate to replace the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe or NATO. The central problem lies elsewhere. The decisive question is whether European institutions can prevent legal authority, diplomatic memory, democratic standards and material support from drifting apart. Since 2022, Ukraine has become the test case for that problem.

Conclusions. The European Union belongs to the collective-security system as an organiser of consequences. It connects universal legality, cooperative records and democratic-security standards with sanctions, financing, reform incentives and crisis-management tools. This position gives the Union influence without turning it into a classical collective-security organisation. The UN relationship supplies legal depth. Resolution 65/276 matters for EU participation at the United Nations while the Uniting for Peace route and Resolution ES-11/1 show how universal legitimacy can still be generated when the Security Council is blocked. EU action toward Ukraine gains much of its legal authority from that frame.

The OSCE relationship shows the price of consensus under aggression. The closure of the SMM, budget deadlock and the 2024 chairmanship dispute exposed the vulnerability of cooperative security. At the same time, OSCE reports, the Moscow Mechanism and specialised support programmes keep a record of violated commitments that remains necessary for future accountability and settlement. The Council of Europe adds the democratic boundary of the European order. Russia's exclusion, the resulting legal consequences under the Convention, the Action Plan for Ukraine, and the Register of Damage demonstrate the interconnectedness of security, human rights, judicial mechanisms, local democracy, and reparations. These fields are not decorative additions to hard security; they determine whether recovery can become institutionally durable.

Ukraine demonstrates the practical value of coordination among incomplete institutions. The Union's strongest role appears when it links Charter-based legality, OSCE diplomatic memory, Council of Europe standards and its own implementation capacity. European collective security after 2022 is best understood through that linkage.

2.2. The Role of NATO as a Defence Alliance in European Security (*Ihor Todorov, Nataliya Todorova*)

Since 2014, and even more markedly following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the European security landscape has undergone a transformation that calls into question many of the assumptions on which

the post-Cold War order was built. The gradual deterioration of cooperative security mechanisms, the re-emergence of large-scale interstate conflict on the European continent, and the growing use of hybrid instruments have created a qualitatively new strategic context.

In this context, NATO has once again moved to the centre of debates on European security. This renewed attention is not simply a return to earlier patterns, nor can it be explained solely by the Alliance's traditional role. Rather, it reflects the need to reassess how NATO functions under conditions that are both more complex and more uncertain than before. While NATO continues to act as the primary framework for collective defence in Europe, its role has also evolved in response to changing threats, shifting institutional dynamics, and the growing interaction with other actors, particularly the European Union.

The *topicality* of this research is therefore determined by several interrelated developments. One important aspect is Russia's actions that have exposed the fragility of the post-Cold War European security architecture. As a result, NATO re-emerged as the primary guarantor of military security in Europe. Another factor is the nature of contemporary threats that has evolved significantly, shaped by hybrid challenges. These developments blur the traditional distinction between war and peace and require a broader understanding of security beyond purely military dimensions. In this context, NATO's transformation from a traditional defence alliance into a multidimensional security actor raises important analytical questions regarding the scope and limits of its role. To add to this, while NATO is recognised as the cornerstone of collective defence, the EU, in turn, has expanded its role in security and defence through regulatory, economic, and capability-development instruments. Yet implications for the effectiveness and coherence of the relationship between these organisations remain insufficiently clarified in the existing literature.

NATO's role in European security has been addressed in a substantial body of academic research, although often from distinct analytical perspectives. Early post-Cold War publications[30] focused on NATO's conversion from a collective defence alliance into a crisis management organisation, emphasising expeditionary operations and cooperative security. In parallel, studies within the framework of regional security theory[31] analysed European security as a regional complex shaped by shifting patterns of threat perception and interdependence.

[30] *Freedman L.* Deterrence. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004; *Sloan S.R.* Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union and the Transatlantic Bargain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

[31] *Buzan B., Wæver O.* Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. URL: https://cutt.ly/4tF4Sk9O; *Тодоров І.Я.* Євроатлантична інтеграція України. Історія та сучасність. Ужгород: УжНУ, 2022. 391 с.

Following the events of 2014, a new wave of research focused on NATO's return to deterrence and collective defence. Analytical contributions[32] examined the adaptation of NATO's military posture, particularly on the eastern flank, highlighting the shift toward forward presence and enhanced readiness. At the same time, policy-oriented studies[33] demonstrated the limitations of NATO's deterrence posture in the Baltic region and the need for more robust defence measures.

Another important strand of research focused on the relationship between NATO and the European Union. Scholars such as J. Howorth[34] and S. Biscop[35] analysed the development of EU defence initiatives and the concept of strategic autonomy, highlighting both the potential for complementarity and the risks of institutional competition. These studies emphasise both the growing importance of EU–NATO interaction and persistent coordination challenges.

Despite this substantial body of research on NATO and European security, several *gaps* remain. Much of the earlier research continues to reflect assumptions rooted in the post-Cold War security environment. The war in Ukraine fundamentally challenged these assumptions and necessitated a reassessment of NATO's role in a context defined by high-intensity warfare and long-term strategic confrontation.

Existing studies often address NATO's military adaptation, EU security policy, and hybrid threats as separate analytical domains. However, contemporary European security is characterised precisely by their interaction. There remains a need for an integrated analysis that connects NATO's operational transformation with the EU's expanding role and the broader systemic changes in the security environment.

Concurrently, insufficient attention was paid to the internal constraints affecting NATO's effectiveness, including institutional frictions within the Alliance and between NATO and the EU. It is worth recalling that of the 32 NATO member states and the 27 EU member states, 22 are members of both organisations. These factors play a critical role in shaping

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[32] *Major C., Mölling C.* The Framework Nations Concept: Germany's Contribution to a Capable European Defence // SWP. 2019. P. 1-4. URL: https://cutt.ly/ptF4FsxD

[33] *Shlapak D.A., Johnson M.W.* Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016, 16 p. URL: https://cutt.ly/FtF4F9ED; *Потехін О., Клименко Ю.* Геополітика проти безпеки: союзницьке стримування агресії в Європі XX – початку XXI ст. Київ: ДУХ І ЛІТЕРА, 2023. 552 с.

[34] *Howorth J.* Strategic Autonomy: Why It Is Not About Europe Going It Alone. Brussels: Martens Centre for European Studies. Special Report, June 2019. 53 p. URL: https://cutt.ly/2tF4HenL

[35] *Biscop S.* All or Nothing? European and British Strategic Autonomy after the Brexit // Egmont Institute Security Policy Brief. 2016. № 79. URL: https://cutt.ly/8tF4HKHO

the practical implementation of security policies, but are often treated as secondary to external threats.

The *novelty* of this research lies in its integrated approach, which proceeds from the assumption that NATO's role in European security cannot be adequately understood in isolation from broader systemic and institutional dynamics. It seeks to address the identified gaps by offering a comprehensive analysis of NATO as a defence alliance within an EU-centred security architecture, taking into account both external challenges and internal constraints. In doing so, the study contributes to the ongoing debate by integrating military, political, and institutional perspectives and by reassessing established interpretations of NATO's function.

The structure of the paper follows this analytical logic. It begins by examining NATO's role within the contemporary European security architecture, with particular attention to its interaction with the European Union. It then analyses Russia's aggression as a systemic challenge that has reshaped the European security order. The next section explores NATO's operational adaptation, focusing on the eastern flank, evolving deterrence concepts, and planning and readiness mechanisms. This is followed by an assessment of how support for Ukraine has influenced NATO's role beyond its formal boundaries. Finally, the paper addresses internal constraints and EU–NATO tensions that affect the Alliance's effectiveness. Taken together, these sections are to provide a coherent account of NATO's evolving role in European security.

1. NATO within the EU-Centred European Security Architecture. Within the contemporary European security architecture, NATO continues to occupy a central position as the primary framework for military deterrence and collective defence. At the same time, the European Union has gradually expanded its role in areas that extend beyond NATO's traditional mandate. Rather than replacing NATO, the EU has developed a set of instruments that complement its activities, particularly in the domains of regulation, economic policy, and civilian security. As a result, European security today is shaped by a layered institutional structure in which NATO and the EU perform distinct, yet increasingly interconnected, functions.

The foundations of NATO's role remain closely tied to the principle of collective defence, enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which stipulates that an armed attack against one member shall be considered an attack against all, thereby creating a framework for shared security and mutual assistance[36]. In practice, however, the effectiveness of this commitment depends not only on formal obligations but also on the

[36] Collective Defence and Article 5 // NATO. 2025. 12 November. URL: https://cutt.ly/ktF4JInk

Alliance's capabilities and its members' political willingness to act collectively. In this regard, the continued involvement of the United States plays a decisive role, as it provides key military capabilities and underpins the overall deterrence posture of the Alliance[37]. This transatlantic linkage remains particularly significant for states located on NATO's eastern flank, where threat perceptions are shaped by proximity to Russia and historical experience. In this sense, NATO functions not only as a military alliance but also as a political mechanism for risk-sharing and strategic reassurance.

At the operational level, NATO's deterrence and defence posture is based on a combination of forward deployment, multinational forces, integrated command structures, and regular military exercises[38]. These elements ensure readiness, interoperability, and the ability to respond rapidly to potential threats. Since 2014, and particularly following the events of 2022, these mechanisms have been further reinforced. The deployment of multinational battlegroups on the eastern flank, the expansion of high-readiness forces, and the development of more detailed defence planning frameworks all indicate a shift toward a more forward-oriented and operationally robust posture[39], thus reflecting a shift toward a more robust model of forward defence, aimed at strengthening deterrence by denial.

Equally important is to note that the concept of deterrence itself has evolved. In the contemporary context, it can no longer be understood solely in terms of conventional military capabilities. NATO's Strategic Concept (2022) explicitly recognises that threats may arise across multiple domains, including cyber and outer space, and that adversaries increasingly employ hybrid methods designed to undermine security without triggering a conventional military response[40]. As a result, deterrence now also means resilience, preparedness, and the protection of critical infrastructure.

In contrast to NATO's primarily military role, the European Union contributes to European security through a broader set of instruments. It uses regulatory frameworks, economic tools, and civilian crisis management mechanisms. The EU's ability to impose sanctions, regulate financial and technological flows, and support institutional stability allows it to address dimensions of security that fall outside NATO's traditional

[37] *Grenda B.* Increasing Operational Capabilities of NATO In the Face of Modern Challenges and Threats // Security and Defence Quarterly. 2018. № 20 (3). P. 8. (pp. 3-17). URL: https://cutt.ly/3tF4Kgvz

[38] NATO 2022 Strategic Concept // NATO. Madrid. 2022. Para. 20. URL: https://cutt.ly/mtF4LTBr

[39] Warsaw Summit Communiqué // NATO. 2016. Para. 40. URL: https://cutt.ly/utF4ZAuY; NATO. Madrid Summit Declaration, 2022. URL: https://cutt.ly/qtF4XOVJ

[40] Strategic Concept // NATO. Madrid, 2022. Paras. 20–25. URL: https://cutt.ly/mtF4LTBr

scope[41]. In this sense, the EU complements NATO by operating in areas where military instruments alone would be insufficient.

Over time, the EU has also taken steps to strengthen its defence-related capabilities. The EU Global Strategy (2016) introduced the concept of *strategic autonomy*, emphasising the need for Europe to assume greater responsibility for its own security.[42] This objective has been further developed through initiatives such as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF), and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), which aim to enhance European defence capabilities, promote interoperability, and reduce fragmentation among member states. According to J. Howorth, these initiatives represent an effort to build *strategic autonomy*[43] while remaining embedded within the transatlantic framework.

The interaction between NATO and the EU has been formally acknowledged in political documents, most notably in the Joint Declaration on NATO-EU Cooperation adopted in Warsaw in 2016. This document emphasises that the security of both organisations is interconnected and requires enhanced coordination in areas such as hybrid threats, cyber defence, and operational cooperation[44]. Alongside this, it reflects the practical difficulties of aligning two distinct institutional frameworks, each with its own decision-making processes, priorities, and constraints.

From an analytical point of view, NATO and the EU can be understood as representing different but complementary dimensions of security. NATO provides the military foundation, ensuring deterrence and defence against state-based threats, while the EU contributes to what is often described as a 'comprehensive approach,' addressing the political, economic, and societal aspects of security[45]. The effectiveness of European security, therefore, depends not only on the performance of each organisation individually, but also on the quality of their interaction.

However, this relationship is not without tensions. One of the central issues concerns the concept of European strategic autonomy, which reflects

[41] Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe a Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy // European Union. 2016. P. 9–11. URL: https://cutt.ly/ftF4ViwS

[42] Ibidem. P. 9.

[43] *Howorth J.* "Strategic Autonomy: Why It Is Not About Europe Going It Alone". Brussels: Martens Centre for European Studies. Special Report, 2019. June. 53 pages: p. 9. URL: https://cutt.ly/2tF4HenL

[44] Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO-European Union. Warsaw. 2016. 8 July. URL: https://cutt.ly/ZtF41Ct3

[45] *Sloan S.R.* Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union and the Transatlantic Bargain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. P. 223–225.

a desire to reduce dependence on external actors, particularly the United States. While this objective is understandable in light of shifting global dynamics, it must be balanced against the continued importance of NATO as the primary framework for collective defence. As Biscop notes, European efforts to strengthen defence capabilities should be seen as reinforcing the transatlantic partnership rather than replacing it[46].

In addition to strategic considerations, political factors also shape NATO–EU relations. Differences in strategic culture, as well as specific disputes among member states[47], can limit the scope of cooperation. As a result, the interaction between NATO and the EU remains pragmatic and issue-specific, rather than fully institutionalised.

The growing importance of hybrid threats has further highlighted both the necessity and difficulty of NATO–EU cooperation. Challenges like cyberattacks, disinformation and economic coercion exceed the scope of a single entity's mandate. NATO has responded by strengthening its capabilities in areas such as cyber defence and resilience, while the EU has developed complementary tools, including regulatory measures and sanctions frameworks[48]. Taken together, these efforts illustrate the increasingly interconnected nature of European security.

NATO has adapted by recognising cyberspace as an operational domain and by strengthening its capabilities in cyber defence, strategic communications, and resilience[49]. The European Union developed a range of instruments to address hybrid threats, building on the Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats (2016)[50] and elaborated in the Strategic Compass (2022), which emphasises resilience, coordinated response, and the use of regulatory and economic tools[51]. This division of labour illustrates how both organisations contribute to a comprehensive approach to security.

Another important dimension of NATO's role in European security is nuclear deterrence. The Alliance continues to rely on a mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, with nuclear weapons serving as the ultimate guarantee of security[52]. The presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe and the system of nuclear sharing arrangements underscore the transatlantic nature of NATO's deterrence posture. At the same time, NATO

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[46] *Biscop S.* All or Nothing? European and British Strategic Autonomy after the Brexit. Egmont Institute Security Policy Brief. 2026. № 79. P. 6–9. URL: https://cutt.ly/8tF4HKHO

[47] *Howorth J.* Security and Defence Policy in the EU (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. P. 131-133.

[48] *EU* Policy on Fighting Hybrid Threats, 2016. URL: https://cutt.ly/XtHynTL1

[49] Warsaw Summit Communiqué // *NATO*. 2016. Para. 70. URL: https://cutt.ly/utF4ZAuY

[50] EU Policy on Fighting Hybrid Threats, 2016. URL: https://cutt.ly/XtHynTL1

[51] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence // EU. 2022. URL: https://cutt.ly/utF7wtX5

[52] 2022 Strategic Concept. NATO // NATO. Madrid, 2022. Para. 29. URL: https://cutt.ly/etF7e7ih

maintains its commitment to arms control and non-proliferation, reflecting the need to balance deterrence with efforts to reduce strategic risks.

However, the erosion of arms control agreements, including the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, has increased uncertainty in the European security environment[53]. This development has reinforced the importance of NATO's deterrence role while also highlighting the limitations of existing mechanisms for maintaining strategic stability.

Taken together, these developments indicate that European security is no longer organised around a single institutional framework, but rather through a combination of interacting structures. NATO remains the central pillar of military security, providing deterrence and defence against external threats. The EU, in turn, contributes by addressing the broader dimensions of security that lie beyond the military domain. This dual institutional structure provides the analytical foundation for understanding the systemic transformation of European security examined in the following section.

2. Russian Aggression as a Systemic Challenge to the European Security Order. Russia's actions since 2014, and particularly the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, constitute a fundamental rupture in the established European security order. These developments have challenged the core assumptions underlying the post-1991 security architecture, including the principles of territorial integrity, the non-use of force, and the indivisibility of security. As a result, European security has undergone a transition from a cooperative and rules-based framework toward a more confrontational and deterrence-oriented system.

The annexation of Crimea in 2014 marked the first forcible change of borders in Europe since the Second World War in violation of the principles enshrined in the *Helsinki Final Act (1975)* and the *Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990)*. As noted in the *NATO Wales Summit Declaration (2014)*, Russia's actions represented "a serious breach of international law and a major challenge to Euro-Atlantic security"[54]. This event signalled the erosion of the cooperative security paradigm that had characterised Europe in the post-Cold War period. These developments indicate not merely a deterioration of the security environment but a structural transition toward a competitive and deterrence-based European security order.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 further deepened this systemic crisis. The *NATO Strategic Concept (2022)* explicitly identifies Russia as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to

[53] Armaments, Disarmament and International Security // SIPRI, Yearbook, 2020. P. 16. URL: https://cutt.ly/ktF7u4NC
[54] Wales Summit Declaration // NATO. 2014. Para. 2. URL: https://cutt.ly/StF7objM

peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area"[55]. This reflects a decisive shift in NATO's threat perception, moving away from earlier attempts to frame Russia as a potential partner and toward recognition of it as a revisionist power seeking to reshape the European order.

From an analytical perspective, Russia's behaviour can be understood as a challenge to the liberal international order in Europe. As L. Freedman argues, the post-Cold War security system was based on the assumption that interstate war in Europe had become highly unlikely; Russia's actions have demonstrated the fragility of this assumption[56]. Similarly, B. Buzan and O. Wæver emphasise that regional security complexes are shaped by patterns of amity and enmity; the re-emergence of adversarial Russia-West relations has fundamentally altered the European security complex[57].

The systemic nature of this challenge lies not only in the use of conventional military force but also in the employment of hybrid strategies. Russia has combined military operations with cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and political interference, thereby blurring the boundaries between war and peace. As A. Monaghan notes, this approach reflects a multi-dimensional contest in which military and non-military instruments are used simultaneously to achieve strategic objectives[58]. Such practices have exposed vulnerabilities within European societies and required a rethinking of security beyond the traditional military domain.

The consequences of Russia's aggression for European security have been profound. One important fallout is that it has led to the collapse of the cooperative security framework that had developed after 1991. Mechanisms of dialogue and partnership, including the NATO–Russia Council, have been effectively suspended, while arms control regimes have weakened or disintegrated.

Equally important is the fact that Russia's actions have reintroduced the centrality of territorial defence in European security. The assumption that large-scale interstate war was unlikely has been replaced by a renewed focus on deterrence and defence. As C. Major and C. Mölling argue, NATO has undergone a "renaissance of collective defence" in response to the changed security environment[59].

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[55] 2022 Strategic Concept // NATO. Madrid, 2022. Para. 8. URL: https://cutt.ly/etF7e7ih

[56] *Freedman L.* The Future of War: A History. London: Allen Lane, 2019. P. 12–14.

[57] *Buzan B., Wæver O.* Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. P. 343–347. URL: https://cutt.ly/4tF4Sk9O

[58] *Monaghan A.* The New Politics of Russia: Interpreting Change. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. P. 67–69.

[59] *Major C., Mölling C.* The Framework Nations Concept: Germany's Contribution to a Capable European Defence // SWP, 2019. P. 3–5. URL: https://cutt.ly/ptF4FsxD

Furthermore, the aggression has reshaped the geographical focus of European security, particularly along NATO's eastern flank. States in Central and Eastern Europe have become frontline actors, and their threat perceptions have gained prominence within the Alliance, thus rebalancing strategic priorities toward Eastern Europe.

Simultaneously, Russia's actions have reinforced the importance of NATO as the primary guarantor of European security. The deterioration of the broader European security architecture has increased reliance on NATO's collective defence mechanisms, particularly Article 5. As the *Brussels Summit Communiqué (2021)* emphasises, NATO remains committed to ensuring the "credible deterrence and defence posture" necessary to respond to threats from all directions[60].

However, the systemic challenge posed by Russia is not limited to military confrontation. It also raises broader questions about the future of the European security order. The persistence of conflict in Ukraine, the militarisation of the region, and the breakdown of trust between Russia and the West suggest that Europe has entered a new phase characterised by long-term strategic competition.

Thus, Russia's aggression since 2014 and especially since 2022 has fundamentally transformed European security. It has undermined the principles of the post-Cold War order, reintroduced the centrality of military power, and compelled NATO to return to its core function of collective defence. Alongside this, the multidimensional nature of the challenge has required the Alliance to adapt to hybrid threats and a more complex security environment. This transformation sets the context for NATO's subsequent strategic and operational responses, which are examined in the following sections.

3. NATO's Operational Adaptation in Europe. The transformation of the European security environment after 2014, and especially following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has compelled NATO to undertake a significant adaptation of its operational posture. This adaptation is most clearly visible on the Alliance's eastern flank, where the combination of enhanced forward presence, evolving deterrence concepts, and strengthened planning and readiness has fundamentally reshaped the geography and logic of European security.

Following the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in eastern Ukraine, NATO initiated a series of measures aimed at reinforcing deterrence in Central and Eastern Europe. A key step was the establishment of the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), endorsed at the Warsaw Summit in 2016. Multinational battlegroups were deployed in Estonia, Latvia,

[60] Brussels Summit Communiqué // NATO. 2021. Para. 14. URL: https://cutt.ly/htF5s5uz

Lithuania, and Poland. The Warsaw Summit Communiqué describes these forces as "robust, multinational, and combat-ready" and explicitly links them to the strengthening of collective defence[61].

However, despite their political and strategic importance, the limitations of this posture were quickly identified. In their RAND study, Shlapak and Johnson demonstrate that NATO's posture was insufficient to prevent a rapid defeat of the Baltic states in the event of a large-scale attack, highlighting a significant gap in deterrence by denial[62]. This assessment underscored the need for a more credible forward defence posture.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 acted as a decisive catalyst for NATO's military adaptation. The Strategic Concept adopted at the Madrid Summit identifies Russia as the most significant and direct threat to Allied security and emphasises the need to strengthen deterrence and defence across all domains[63]. In this context, NATO committed to reinforcing its forward presence and enhancing its ability to respond rapidly to emerging threats.

A central element of this transformation has been the expansion and reinforcement of forward-deployed forces. In addition to strengthening the existing battlegroups, NATO established new multinational formations in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. These measures were designed to extend deterrence across the entire eastern flank and to ensure a more balanced and resilient force posture. The shift from a limited forward presence toward a more robust defence posture reflects a transition from deterrence by punishment to a model that increasingly incorporates deterrence by denial.

At the same time, NATO has significantly enhanced its readiness and force generation system. According to statements by the NATO Secretary General ahead of the Madrid Summit, the Alliance committed to increasing the number of high-readiness forces to well over 300,000 troops[64], thereby strengthening its capacity for rapid reinforcement. This expansion forms part of a broader transformation of NATO's force structure, aimed at ensuring that sufficient forces are available, deployable, and sustainable in a high-intensity conflict scenario.

These developments are closely linked to the evolution of NATO's defence planning. The Alliance has adopted new regional defence plans that

[61] Warsaw Summit Communiqué // *NATO*. 2016. Para. 40. URL: https://cutt.ly/utF4ZAuY
[62] *Shlapak D.A., Johnson M.W.* Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016. P. 1-4. URL: https://cutt.ly/FtF4F9ED
[63] 2022 Strategic Concept. *NATO,* Madrid, 2022, paras. 8, 21–24. URL: https://cutt.ly/etF7e7ih
[64] *Stoltenberg J.* Pre-Summit press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (Transcript). 2022. 27 June. URL: https://cutt.ly/stF5RhWL

provide detailed operational guidance tailored to specific geographic areas. Unlike earlier, more general contingency planning, these plans integrate forward-deployed forces, reinforcement mechanisms, and national contributions into a coherent defence framework. Improvements in logistics, pre-positioning of equipment, and command and control structures further enhance NATO's ability to sustain operations over time.

From an analytical perspective, these changes reflect a broader transformation in the logic of deterrence. As Freedman argues, the effectiveness of deterrence depends not only on the possession of capabilities but also on their credibility and visibility to potential adversaries[65]. NATO's adaptation can therefore be understood as an effort to make deterrence more credible by ensuring that forces are not only available but also forward-positioned and operationally ready.

The war in Ukraine has also reinforced the relevance of conventional military power in Europe. As Freedman notes in his analysis of contemporary warfare, the conflict demonstrates that large-scale interstate war remains a central feature of international politics, challenging earlier assumptions about its decline[66]. This has prompted NATO to reassess its planning assumptions and to place greater emphasis on high-intensity conflict scenarios.

In addition, NATO's operational adaptation extends beyond conventional military capabilities. The evolving threat environment is characterised by the increasing use of hybrid instruments, including cyber operations, disinformation campaigns, and attacks on critical infrastructure. The Strategic Concept (2022) explicitly recognises that such activities are designed to "target Allies and harm Alliance security"[67]. In response, NATO has integrated resilience, cyber defence, and strategic communications into its operational framework, reflecting a more comprehensive approach to security.

Despite these significant advances, NATO's adaptation faces important constraints. The effectiveness of forward defence depends on the ability to sustain and reinforce forces under conditions of high-intensity conflict, which requires substantial logistical capacity, resilient infrastructure, and sustained political commitment. Differences in national capabilities and priorities may affect the speed and coherence of NATO's response.

In addition, the strengthening of NATO's military posture along the eastern flank raises questions about escalation dynamics. The increased presence of Allied forces in proximity to Russia heightens the risk of

[65] *Freedman L.* Deterrence. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004. P. 26–30.
[66] *Freedman L.* Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine. London: Allen Lane, 2023. P. 21–23.
[67] 2022 Strategic Concept // NATO. Madrid, 2022. Para. 13. URL: https://cutt.ly/etF7e7ih

miscalculation, underscoring the need to balance deterrence with mechanisms for crisis management and risk reduction. This reflects the broader challenge of maintaining stability in a context of renewed strategic confrontation.

Thus, NATO's operational adaptation since 2014, and particularly after 2022, demonstrates a shift toward a more robust, integrated, and forward-oriented defence posture. By reinforcing its eastern flank, enhancing readiness, and developing more detailed defence planning, the Alliance has significantly strengthened its capacity to deter and respond to conventional threats. In parallel, the integration of hybrid dimensions and the need to manage escalation highlight the complexity of maintaining security in the contemporary European environment. These developments also intersect with EU initiatives, particularly in military mobility and defence industrial coordination, highlighting the increasing interdependence between NATO's operational role and EU capability development.

4. Support for Ukraine and the Externalisation of European Security. NATO's response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine has become a defining factor in the transformation of European security and, consequently, in the evolution of the Alliance's role. Although Ukraine is not a NATO member, the scale and nature of Allied support since 2014, and especially after 2022, have significantly expanded NATO's functional relevance beyond its formal collective defence framework. This development reflects a broader shift in European security, in which stability is increasingly shaped by events and actors outside the Alliance's formal boundaries.

Following the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in eastern Ukraine in 2014, NATO began to intensify its political and practical cooperation with Ukraine. The establishment of the *Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP)* at the Warsaw Summit (2016) marked a key step in this process. According to the *Warsaw Summit Communiqué*, NATO committed to supporting Ukraine in areas such as defence reform, capacity building, and resilience[68]. This assistance was primarily aimed at strengthening Ukraine's ability to resist external pressure and contribute to regional stability.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 fundamentally transformed the scale and significance of this support. While NATO as an organisation has not become a direct party to the conflict, its member states have provided extensive military, financial, and intelligence assistance to Ukraine. This support has had a direct impact on the European security environment by enabling Ukraine to resist Russian aggression and preventing a broader destabilisation of the region.

[68] Warsaw Summit Communiqué // NATO. 2016. URL: https://cutt.ly/utF4ZAuY

From an analytical perspective, this development reflects an important shift in NATO's role. The Alliance is no longer limited to territorial defence but increasingly contributes to shaping the broader strategic environment. As Lawrence Freedman notes, the war in Ukraine demonstrates that European security is now influenced by the ability of states to resist aggression beyond formal alliance structures[69].

At the same time, NATO has had to carefully balance its support for Ukraine with the need to avoid direct military confrontation with Russia. This has resulted in a strategy of indirect engagement, whereby the Alliance supports Ukraine while maintaining a clear distinction between assistance and participation in the conflict. As noted in the *NATO Strategic Concept (2022)*, NATO seeks to "support partners to counter malign interference and aggression" while preserving its defensive character[70].

The impact of support for Ukraine on NATO's strategic decision-making is also evident in the strengthening of political cohesion among Allies. The war has reinforced the perception of a shared threat, particularly among Eastern European states, and has contributed to greater alignment within the Alliance, strengthening transatlantic cohesion and renewing NATO's central role in European security[71]. This led to the creation in 2015 of an informal association of countries on the eastern flank of the Bucharest Nine alliance.

Moreover, the conflict has highlighted the importance of Ukraine as a *de facto security provider* in Europe. By resisting Russian military advances, Ukraine has contributed directly to the security of NATO's eastern flank. This dynamic has reshaped the relationship between NATO and its partners, demonstrating that non-member states can play a critical role in the European security system.

Equally important is the fact that the scale of support for Ukraine has exposed certain limitations and challenges. Differences in national capabilities, varying levels of political commitment, and concerns about escalation have influenced the scope and pace of assistance. Furthermore, the reliance on national contributions rather than NATO-led operations reflects the institutional constraints of the Alliance in situations involving non-member states.

Despite these challenges, NATO's support for Ukraine has had a profound impact on European security. It has reinforced the principle of

[69] *Freedman L.* Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine. London: Allen Lane, 2023. P. 45–47.
[70] 2022 Strategic Concept. NATO. Madrid, 2022. Para. 9. URL: https://cutt.ly/etF7e7ih
[71] *Fiott D.* The Fog of War: Russia's War on Ukraine, European Defence Spending and Military Capabilities // Intereconomics. 2022. Vol. 57. № 3. JEL: O33, F50, N 44. URL: https://cutt.ly/btF7su0L

collective resistance to aggression, even beyond formal alliance structures, and has demonstrated the adaptability of NATO's role in a changing strategic environment. As a result, the Alliance has evolved from a traditional collective defence organisation into a broader actor capable of shaping security outcomes across the European continent.

While these developments reflect NATO's conceptual and institutional evolution, its contemporary role in European security is best understood through measurable indicators of military capability and resource mobilisation.

This transformation is not only conceptual but also reflected in measurable indicators of military capability and resource mobilisation. According to the NATO Secretary General's Annual Report (2025), Allied defence spending has increased significantly in response to the deteriorating security environment. Since 2014, European Allies and Canada have increased their defence expenditure every year, with cumulative additional spending exceeding USD 1 trillion in real terms[72].

This trend has accelerated further after 2022. In 2025 alone, defence spending by European Allies and Canada reached approximately USD 574 billion, representing a 20% real-term increase compared to the previous year and accounting for 2.33% of their combined GDP[73]. Notably, all NATO Allies met or exceeded the 2% GDP defence spending benchmark, defined as far back as 2014 by the Wales Summit, thus reflecting an unprecedented level of burden-sharing within the Alliance[74].

At the aggregate level, total Allied defence expenditure exceeded USD 1.4 trillion[75], confirming NATO's position as the most powerful military alliance globally. In parallel, NATO has significantly enhanced its operational readiness, including large-scale multinational exercises and an increase in available forces, with total military personnel across the Alliance exceeding 3 million[76].

These indicators provide empirical evidence that NATO has transitioned from a primarily political and institutional framework into a high-readiness, resource-intensive system of collective defence capable of responding to large-scale conventional threats in Europe.

Thus, NATO's contemporary role is defined not only institutionally but also by its demonstrated capacity to mobilise resources, coordinate multinational forces, and sustain high-intensity deterrence in a rapidly

[72] The Secretary General's Annual Report // NATO. 2025. P. 23. URL: https://cutt.ly/6tF7s5DX
[73] Ibid. P. 23.
[74] Ibid. P. 4.
[75] Ibidem.
[76] Ibid. P. 70.

evolving threat environment. Support for Ukraine represents a key factor in the transformation of NATO's role in European security. It highlights the increasing interconnection between internal and external dimensions of security and underscores the importance of partnerships in addressing contemporary challenges. In this sense, NATO's engagement with Ukraine not only responds to the current crisis but also contributes to the long-term reconfiguration of the European security order.

5. Internal Constraints and EU–NATO Strategic Tensions. Despite its demonstrated capacity for adaptation in response to the deteriorating European security environment after 2014, NATO's effectiveness continues to be shaped by a range of internal constraints and structural tensions. These challenges are closely linked to broader dynamics within the European security architecture, particularly the evolving relationship between NATO and the European Union. Understanding these internal limitations is essential for assessing the sustainability of NATO's role as the primary military guarantor of European security.

One of the most persistent constraints concerns *burden-sharing and disparities in defence expenditure* among Allies. The Wales Summit Declaration (2014) established a political commitment for member states to move toward allocating 2% of GDP to defence within a decade[77]. While defence spending has increased significantly since 2014, particularly following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, substantial asymmetries remain in terms of capabilities, readiness, and contributions to NATO operations. These disparities affect not only the distribution of military burdens but also the credibility of collective defence, as deterrence depends on the perceived willingness and ability of all Allies to contribute to common security.

Closely related to this issue is the structural problem of *transatlantic asymmetry*. The United States continues to provide the majority of NATO's high-end military capabilities, including strategic lift, intelligence, missile defence, and nuclear deterrence. This imbalance reinforces NATO's overall effectiveness but simultaneously creates dependencies that may affect the Alliance's long-term strategic autonomy. As Lawrence Freedman notes, alliance cohesion depends not only on shared interests but also on the distribution of capabilities and the credibility of commitments among members[78]. In the European context, this asymmetry has intensified debates about the need for stronger European defence capabilities.

These debates are reflected in the concept of *European strategic autonomy*, a central element of EU security discourse. EU initiatives such as

[77] Wales Summit Declaration // NATO. 2014. 5 September. Para. 14. URL: https://cutt.ly/StF7objM

[78] *Freedman L.* Deterrence. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004. Pp. 32–34.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF), and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) aim to strengthen European defence capacity and reduce fragmentation. The EU Global Strategy (2016) explicitly calls for "an appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy" to enable Europe to act when necessary[79].

While these initiatives are often presented as complementary to NATO, they have also generated concerns about duplication and institutional competition. From a NATO perspective, the key challenge lies in ensuring that European defence efforts reinforce rather than undermine the Alliance's collective defence framework. As Sven Biscop argues, the effectiveness of European security depends on maintaining a balance between greater European responsibility and continued transatlantic cooperation[80].

Another important dimension of internal tension relates to *divergent threat perceptions among Allies*. States on NATO's eastern flank, particularly Poland and the Baltic countries, prioritise deterrence against Russia and advocate for a strong forward defence posture. In contrast, several Southern European members focus more on instability in the Middle East and North Africa, migration, and terrorism. As Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver demonstrate, regional security complexes are characterised by differing patterns of threat perception, which can complicate the development of unified strategic responses[81].

These differences do not undermine NATO's cohesion but require continuous political negotiation and compromise. They also influence the allocation of resources and the prioritisation of strategic objectives, affecting the balance between territorial defence and crisis management.

Institutional and political frictions further complicate *NATO–EU cooperation*. Although both organisations share overlapping memberships and strategic objectives, their interaction is often constrained by political disputes among member states, as well as by differing institutional frameworks. The Joint Declaration on NATO–EU Cooperation (2016) acknowledges the need for closer coordination, particularly in addressing hybrid threats, cybersecurity, and resilience[82]. However, practical cooperation frequently relies on informal arrangements rather than fully institutionalised mechanisms, limiting its effectiveness.

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[79] Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe (EU Global Strategy) // European Union. 2016. P. 9. URL: https://cutt.ly/ftF7d2Kq

[80] *Biscop S.* All or Nothing? European and British Strategic Autonomy after the Brexit // Egmont Institute Security Policy Brief. 2016. № 79. Pp. 6–9. URL: https://cutt.ly/8tF4HKHO.

[81] *Buzan B., Wæver O.* Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. P. 48–52. URL: https://cutt.ly/4tF4Sk9O.

[82] Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization // NATO-European Union, Warsaw. 2016. 8 July URL: https://cutt.ly/ZtF41Ct3

The rise of hybrid threats has both intensified the need for cooperation and exposed its limitations. Challenges such as cyberattacks, disinformation, and economic coercion transcend the traditional boundaries between military and civilian domains. NATO has responded by recognising cyberspace as an operational domain and strengthening its capabilities in resilience and strategic communications[83]. At the same time, the EU has developed complementary instruments, including regulatory measures, sanctions, and frameworks for countering hybrid threats, notably the Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats (2016)[84].

This division of labour highlights the interdependence of NATO and the EU in addressing contemporary security challenges. However, it also underscores the difficulty of achieving fully coordinated responses across institutional boundaries, particularly in situations requiring rapid decision-making.

Another structural constraint concerns NATO's *consensus-based decision-making process*. While unanimity ensures political legitimacy and unity, it can also slow down decision-making, especially in crises. The need to reconcile diverse national interests may delay responses or lead to lowest-common-denominator outcomes, affecting the Alliance's operational effectiveness.

Finally, the strengthening of NATO's deterrence posture after 2014 and 2022 introduces additional challenges related to *escalation management and strategic stability*. The increased deployment of forces along the eastern flank, combined with heightened confrontation with Russia, raises the risk of miscalculation. This necessitates a careful balance between deterrence and risk reduction, particularly in the absence of robust arms control mechanisms following the erosion of agreements such as the INF Treaty.

Thus, NATO's role in European security is shaped not only by external threats but also by internal constraints and structural tensions. The interplay between burden-sharing, transatlantic asymmetry, strategic autonomy, and institutional coordination defines the conditions under which the Alliance operates.

This is complemented by the fact that the relationship between NATO and the European Union remains a central dynamic in the evolution of European security. While characterised by both complementarity and tension, this interaction is essential for addressing the full spectrum of contemporary challenges. NATO provides the military foundation of European security, while the EU contributes to resilience, governance, and

[83] 2022 Strategic Concept // NATO, Madrid, 2022, para. 13. URL: https://cutt.ly/etF7e7ih
[84] Joint Framework on A European Union response // Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Brussels, 2016. URL: https://cutt.ly/ptF7gSJ1

the broader strategic environment. Their effective coordination, therefore, remains a key prerequisite for the stability of the European security order in the context of ongoing geopolitical transformation, as stated in the Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030[85].

Conclusions. The analysis presented in this paper suggests that NATO's role in European security has undergone not only a process of reinforcement but also a more complex and multidimensional transformation in response to the systemic changes that have unfolded since 2014, and particularly after 2022. While it would be misleading to describe these developments simply as a "return" to the Alliance's original function, it is equally clear that the core logic of collective defence has regained a central place in the organisation of European security. Moreover, this renewed emphasis on deterrence and defence has been accompanied by significant adjustments in NATO's operational posture, strategic thinking, and institutional positioning.

One of the key findings of this study is that NATO has adapted in ways that reflect both continuity and change. On the one hand, the Alliance continues to rely on the fundamental principles that have historically defined its role, most notably the commitment to collective defence and the transatlantic link. On the other hand, the contemporary security environment has required NATO to expand its understanding of security, incorporating hybrid threats, cyber challenges, and issues of resilience into its strategic framework. In this sense, NATO's evolution cannot be understood as a linear process, but rather as an ongoing adjustment to a changing and often unpredictable strategic context.

At the operational level, the strengthening of NATO's posture on the eastern flank illustrates this dual dynamic particularly clearly. Measures such as the deployment of multinational forces, the enhancement of readiness, and the development of more detailed defence planning have significantly increased the Alliance's capacity to deter and respond to potential threats. These developments also highlight the limits of deterrence, especially in an environment characterised by the coexistence of conventional and hybrid forms of conflict. The need to balance deterrence with escalation management remains a central challenge.

Another important conclusion concerns the role of Ukraine in reshaping the broader security environment. Although Ukraine is not a member of NATO, the scale and nature of support provided by Allied states have had a significant impact on the functioning of the European security system as a whole. This suggests that NATO's relevance is no longer

[85] Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030 // European Commission. Brussels. 2025. 19 March. P. 19. URL: https://cutt.ly/KtF7x9n8.

confined strictly to its formal boundaries, but increasingly extends to the wider strategic environment in which it operates. Alongside this, the need to avoid direct military confrontation with Russia has imposed clear limits on the extent of NATO's involvement, illustrating the constraints under which the Alliance operates.

A central argument of this research has been that NATO's role cannot be adequately understood in isolation from the broader institutional context in which it is embedded. The relationship between NATO and the European Union has emerged as a particularly important dimension of contemporary European security. While NATO provides the military foundation of deterrence and defence, the EU contributes through a wide range of instruments that address economic, regulatory, and societal aspects of security. These contributions are not merely complementary in a functional sense; rather, they are increasingly interdependent.

At the same time, this relationship is characterised by a degree of tension that should not be overlooked. The development of EU defence initiatives, including those associated with the concept of strategic autonomy, reflects a growing ambition to strengthen Europe's capacity to act independently. While such developments can enhance the overall resilience of the European security system, they also raise questions about coordination, coherence, and the long-term balance between European and transatlantic frameworks. In this respect, the interaction between NATO and the EU remains a dynamic and, at times, contested process.

The analysis has also highlighted the importance of internal factors in shaping NATO's effectiveness. Issues such as burden-sharing, transatlantic asymmetry, and divergent threat perceptions among member states are not merely secondary concerns, but central elements of the Alliance's functioning. These factors influence not only the distribution of capabilities but also the political cohesion required for collective action. In addition, NATO's consensus-based decision-making process, while ensuring legitimacy, can limit its ability to respond rapidly in certain situations.

In this context, the novelty of this research lies in its attempt to bring together these different dimensions within a single analytical framework. Rather than examining NATO's military adaptation, the EU's evolving role, and the broader transformation of the security environment as separate phenomena, the paper has approached them as interconnected processes. This integrated perspective makes it possible to capture the complexity of contemporary European security more fully and to identify the ways in which different factors reinforce or constrain one another.

By adopting this approach, the study also addresses several limitations in the existing literature. Much of the earlier research was developed under conditions that differed significantly from those of the

present, particularly concerning the perceived likelihood of large-scale interstate conflict. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated that such assumptions need to be reconsidered. In parallel, the increasing importance of hybrid threats and institutional interaction calls for analytical frameworks that go beyond traditional distinctions between military and non-military security.

Looking ahead, it seems likely that European security will continue to be shaped by a combination of competition, uncertainty, and institutional adaptation. The persistence of the conflict in Ukraine, the erosion of arms control regimes, and the broader dynamics of geopolitical rivalry all suggest that the current environment is unlikely to stabilise in the near term. In this context, NATO's ability to maintain credible deterrence, adapt to emerging challenges, and manage internal constraints will remain of central importance.

Equally important is the fact that the effectiveness of the European security system as a whole will depend increasingly on the quality of interaction between NATO and the European Union. Neither organisation, on its own, is capable of addressing the full spectrum of contemporary threats. Their combined efforts, while not always fully coordinated, provide a more comprehensive response to the challenges facing Europe today.

In conclusion, NATO remains the central pillar of military security in Europe, but its role is no longer defined solely in traditional terms. It operates within a broader and more complex system in which military, political, and institutional dimensions are closely intertwined. Understanding this system requires an approach that takes into account not only external threats, but also internal dynamics and inter-organisational relationships. It is in this sense that the integrated perspective developed in this paper offers a more comprehensive basis for analysing the evolving role of NATO in European security.

2.3. Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU: Formation, Legal Foundations, and Implementation Mechanisms (*Bohdan Hrushetskyi*)

The study of the key stages of formation and the legal mechanisms for implementing the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is highly relevant, as it makes it possible to identify the main directions of the process's evolution, ways of improving the regulatory framework, and practical avenues for its implementation. This is especially important at the present stage, when the CSDP is rapidly transforming under the influence of internal factors and external threats. The concept of "strategic autonomy", which was first introduced in 1998 by the Saint-Malo

Declaration, is gaining renewed significance, as without its own effective security mechanisms the EU risks remaining dependent on external partners and lacking the capacity to respond promptly to various crises and threats to its values, integrity, and economic well-being.

Certain aspects of the topic have been addressed in the works of Ukrainian and foreign scholars. In particular, O. Turchenko highlights the process of formation and reform of the Common Foreign and Security Policy through the prism of a gradual transition from declarations to practical implementation[86]. T. Keukeleire and T. Delreux, in their monograph, examine the dependence of European defence capabilities on the United States as a factor that calls into question strategic autonomy[87]. The works of F. Pagani reflect the integration of the Petersberg tasks into the legal foundations of the EU, as a result of which the WEU structures became part of the EU's CSDP[88]. H. Mölder's research reveals the transformation of the British approach to European integration, which had a noticeable impact on the intensification of the EU's defence policy[89]. At the same time, the topic requires further research and generalization in view of contemporary trends and challenges.

European integration in the field of security and defence dates back to the signing of *the Brussels Treaty* in 1948, under which five Western European countries (the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) established the Western Union as an institution of collective defence in the event of, or threat of, aggression by the Soviet Union or the coming to power of revanchist forces in former Axis states. In the context of the early Cold War, the former scenario was naturally more likely. In addition to provisions concerning political and cultural cooperation, the Brussels Treaty contained a clear commitment to the collective defence of its member states: if one of the contracting parties is the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other contracting parties shall afford the party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power[90].

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[86] *Турченко О.Г.* Становлення та реформування Спільної зовнішньої політики та політики безпеки Європейського Союзу // Юридичний науковий електронний журнал. 2015. № 5. С. 241-245. URL: http://www.lsej.org.ua/5_2015/67.pdf

[87] *Keukeleire S., Delreux T.* The Foreign Policy of the European Union. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. 480 p.

[88] *Pagani F.* A new Gear in the CFSP Machinery: Integration of the Petersberg Tasks in the Treaty of European Union // European Journal of International Law. 1998. Vol. 9. P. 737-749. URL: http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/9/4/695.pdf

[89] *Mölder H.* British Approach to the European Union: From Tony Blair to David Cameron. Brexit: History, Reasoning and Perspectives. Cham: Springer, 2018. P. 153-173. URL: https://surl.li/ipaxgc

[90] Brussels Treaty (1948, March). URL: https://surli.cc/gtsrfh

In 1954, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany acceded to the revised Brussels Treaty, in which the provision on collective defence was retained[91]. From that point on, the Western Union formed the basis of the Western European Union (WEU), which in theory was the first integration organization in the field of security and defence, encompassing most of the leading states of Western Europe. However, in practice, the WEU found itself "in the shadow" of a more powerful defence structure – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which included not only the signatory states of the Brussels Treaty but also the United States and Canada. As a result, for almost the entire period of its existence, the WEU failed to become a fully functioning collective security organisation and did not develop its own military structure. Periodic attempts to bring the WEU out of its "lethargic sleep" were unsuccessful, although the Brussels Treaty itself remained in force.

The early 1990s witnessed the emergence of new serious security threats in Europe and worldwide, in particular the wars in the former Yugoslavia and conflicts in the post-Soviet space. As a result, issues of security and defence once again became highly relevant. In response, an attempt was made to revitalise the activities of the WEU on the basis of the principle of "autonomy" of European forces from American troops, should such a need arise. A key step in this direction was the agreement concluded among the WEU member states in 1992, known as the *Petersberg Tasks*. The document stated that, independently of NATO, the military units of WEU member states could be employed for a wide range of missions of a humanitarian, rescue, and peacekeeping nature[92].

On the basis of this agreement, a number of peacekeeping operations were carried out under the auspices of the WEU during the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, in particular in the city of Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), as well as in Albania[93]. To support the performance of WEU functions, the Eurocorps was established in Strasbourg, to which representatives of five countries (France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) joined between 1992 and 1996. In addition, under the auspices of the WEU, British-Dutch and Spanish-Italian amphibious forces were created, as well as the Institute for Security Studies and satellite and situation centres[94]. However, these operations were very limited in nature, relying primarily on

[91] Modified Brussels Treaty (1954, October). URL: https://surl.li/gzfxfz
[92] Petersberg Declaration Made by the WEU Council of Ministers (1992, June). URL: https://surl.li/crngub
[93] *Pagani F.* A new Gear in the CFSP Machinery: Integration of the Petersberg Tasks in the Treaty of European Union // European Journal of International Law. 1998. Vol. 9. P. 737-749. URL: http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/9/4/695.pdf
[94] *Турченко О.Г.* Становлення та реформування Спільної зовнішньої політики та політики безпеки Європейського Союзу // Юридичний науковий електронний журнал. 2015. № 5. С. 241-245. URL: http://www.lsej.org.ua/5_2015/67.pdf

police rather than military forces, and therefore were unable to fully accomplish the tasks of establishing peace in the region.

However, even this limited autonomous activity of the WEU quickly lost its relevance. Moreover, the very necessity of the organization's existence came into question. During the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s, European cooperation in the field of security and defence intensified within a completely different integration track. It was at that time that, on the basis of economic integration structures (the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community, and Euratom), European political cooperation began to take shape, culminating in the creation of the European Union.

Security issues became part of this political cooperation. They were first formally enshrined in the *Single European Act* of 1986, which demonstrated the willingness of the Member States to coordinate their positions more closely on the political and economic aspects of security[95]. As we can see, the military aspect was still not mentioned in the document.

However, within five years, both the political and economic, as well as the military aspects of security would become part of European political integration. The foundation for this was laid in the *Maastricht Treaty* of 1992, which proclaimed the establishment of the European Union. Article J.4 of this document stated that the common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence[96]. Thus, it was precisely in the Maastricht Treaty that a distinction between the concepts of "common defence policy" and "common defence" was established. The common defence policy was defined as the first step toward achieving a common defence.

The Maastricht Treaty did not contain clear obligations in the field of defence integration. It provided for the development of a common defence policy only in the indefinite future, as internal contradictions among EU Member States hindered more precise formulations. As for the issue of a common defence, it was formulated in a highly ambiguous manner. What was the main reason for this? One of the key issues was how to reconcile a distinct European defence with the already existing commitments within NATO. Moreover, European countries lacked the advanced defence-related technologies available in the United States in at least four areas: intelligence, telecommunications, surveillance satellites, and military transport aviation. Europe's capabilities were also insufficient to independently protect its

[95] Single European Act (1987) // Official Journal of European Communities. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11986U/TXT

[96] Treaty on European Union (1992) // Official Journal of the European Communities. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11992M/TXT

interests beyond the continent, particularly to fully address threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or to deal with issues like security in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

A vivid example of the inability of European countries to independently conduct large-scale military operations was the intervention in Libya in 2011, which was initiated by France and the United Kingdom. This operation demonstrated that European countries lacked capabilities in the fields of military intelligence and surveillance, precision-guided munitions, transportation, and air-to-air refuelling. In many cases, it was only the capabilities of the United States that prevented the operation from failing[97].

Therefore, it was impossible to speak of European defence integration until the issue of its compatibility with NATO had been resolved. For this reason, countries such as the United Kingdom and Denmark, which traditionally adhered most strongly to cooperation within NATO, long opposed European defence integration. Two additional protocols to the Maastricht Treaty, adopted at the request of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, stated that the policy of the European Union should not prejudice the specific characteristics of the national defence policies of the Member States and should not contradict NATO policy.

The idea of integrating the Western European Union into the future EU was also blocked, despite the fact that the Maastricht Treaty contained a relevant provision stating that the WEU was an integral part of the development of the Union[98]. The implementation of this provision was long blocked by the United Kingdom. As a result, throughout the 1990s, European operations were carried out within the framework of the WEU rather than the EU.

However, by the end of the 1990s, European defence integration began to move from discussion to practical implementation. On the one hand, Europeans were driven by the escalation and intensification of the Kosovo crisis. On the other hand, a key obstacle disappeared – namely, the critical position of the United Kingdom. The British government of Tony Blair, which came to power in May 1997, demonstrated a much greater commitment to deepening European integration. The newly appointed UK Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, declared that relations with the EU should develop in a constructive spirit of partnership, rather than in a sterile spirit of opposition[99].

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[97] *Keukeleire S., Delreux T.* The Foreign Policy of the European Union. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. 480 p.

[98] Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Communities. NoC 191. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11992M/TXT

[99] *Mölder H.* British Approach to the European Union: From Tony Blair to David Cameron. Brexit: History, Reasoning and Perspectives. Cham: Springer, 2018. P. 153-173. URL: https://surl.li/ipaxgc

Following the shift in the position of the British government, *the Amsterdam Treaty* was adopted in June of the same year, 1997. This document specified the future directions of European defence integration. It was envisaged that the European Council would, in the future, have the authority to decide on the establishment of a common defence policy and even a common defence[100].

During the drafting and discussion of the Amsterdam Treaty, debates arose over how the activities of the WEU and the EU's common defence policy should be correlated. Three options were considered: to maintain the WEU as separate from the EU without any significant changes in their relations, to gradually merge the two organizations, or to incorporate part of the WEU's competences into the Amsterdam Treaty. Ultimately, the third option was chosen as the most acceptable for all parties[101].

Thus, the Amsterdam Treaty formalized an important decision in the discussions regarding the future of the WEU. It was decided to move away from strengthening the WEU as a separate institution: the Treaty provided for the possibility of its integration into the EU, subject to a separate decision of the European Council. Moreover, the Amsterdam Treaty incorporated the provisions of the WEU's Petersberg Tasks. In particular, it specified that the concept of a common defence policy in the Treaty referred to the joint implementation of humanitarian, rescue, and peacekeeping tasks, as well as tasks of combat forces in crisis management[102].

At the same time, the Amsterdam Treaty provided for an exception for one of the EU Member States – Denmark, whose government and population at that time displayed a considerable degree of Euroscepticism. A separate protocol to the Amsterdam Treaty excluded Denmark from European defence integration in accordance with its own preference. The additional protocol stated that Denmark shall not participate in the elaboration and implementation of decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications, but shall not prevent the development of closer cooperation among Member States in this area[103].

After the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty, work on establishing a common defence policy accelerated. The key principles of defence

[100] Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related Acts (1997). URL: https://treaties.fcdo.gov.uk/data/Library2/pdf/1999-TS0052.pdf
[101] *Pagani F.* A new Gear in the CFSP Machinery: Integration of the Petersberg Tasks in the Treaty of European Union // European Journal of International Law. 1998. Vol. 9. P. 737-749. URL: http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/9/4/695.pdf
[102] Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related Acts (1997). URL: https://treaties.fcdo.gov.uk/data/Library2/pdf/1999-TS0052.pdf
[103] Ibidem.

integration were set out in the *Saint-Malo Declaration*, adopted in December 1998 during a meeting between French President Jacques Chirac and UK Prime Minister T. Blair. The declaration stated that the EU must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises[104].

The idea of "strategic autonomy of the EU", enshrined in the Saint-Malo Declaration, became fundamental for the further development of European defence integration. On the one hand, it does not imply complete independence from the support of NATO allies, primarily the United States – transatlantic ties remain fundamental to ensuring European security, and there is no major political force within the EU that would challenge this. On the other hand, the concept of "strategic autonomy" includes the capacity for independent action in the field of security when American involvement is not necessary or is невозможливе for certain reasons.

The Amsterdam Treaty entered into force in 1999 after the ratification process, thus opening the path toward defence integration. EU Member States decided not to delay further steps and, already in the same year, announced the launch of a common defence policy.

Based on the Saint-Malo Declaration, the Cologne Declaration was adopted at the European Council summit in 1999, defining the main parameters of integration processes in the field of security and defence. According to the declaration, the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was announced as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The declaration also proclaimed that the Petersberg Tasks would henceforth be carried out within the framework of the EU rather than the WEU, and that the purpose of the WEU's activities would thereby be exhausted[105]. Subsequently, the institutions of the WEU were gradually integrated within the framework of the EU.

In addition to the provisions set out in the Amsterdam Treaty, the Cologne Declaration also placed significant emphasis on strengthening cooperation among Member States in the field of defence, particularly in areas such as intelligence, strategic transport, command and control, and the harmonization of planning. It also envisaged enhancing military-industrial cooperation, particularly with regard to arms procurement[106].

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[104] Franco–British St. Malo Declaration (1998, December). URL: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable_en.pdf

[105] Cologne European Council Declaration on the common policy on security and defence (4 June 1999). URL: https://surl.li/nicvpd

[106] Ibidem.

The further development of the regulatory and legal framework of European integration in the field of security and defence was driven by the adoption of the *Lisbon Treaty* (signed in 2007 and entered into force in 2009), whose key objective was to unify and reform EU legislation in order to enhance the effectiveness of European policies and institutions. Compared to previous treaties, the Lisbon Treaty contained a significantly broader set of provisions related to security and defence integration. These provisions were, on the one hand, more specific, and on the other, more ambitious and oriented toward deeper integration in the future.

First, the changes affected the very name of the policy. The European Security and Defence Policy was renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union (CSDP). The Lisbon Treaty clarified the institutional nature of the CSDP, as well as the procedures for decision-making and implementation within the policy. The CSDP was definitively incorporated into the framework of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy as its integral component, as stated in Article 42 (1) of the Lisbon Treaty[107].

The Lisbon Treaty retained the key provisions of the WEU's Petersberg Tasks, while significantly expanding their scope. In particular, it states that the Union may use civilian and military assets, including joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilization. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism on their territory. At the same time, the Treaty goes far beyond previous documents by incorporating a number of additional important provisions on defence integration, particularly with regard to the development of common military capabilities[108].

Many provisions of the Lisbon Treaty concerning defence integration, much like those of the Maastricht Treaty before it, were adopted with a long-term perspective in mind. Some of them have been implemented over time, while others remain unrealized. For instance, a common defence policy already existed at the time the Lisbon Treaty was adopted, whereas the provision on a common defence has yet to be implemented due to the absence of a unanimous decision by the European Council. Moreover, it remains unclear what exactly such a decision on the establishment of a common defence should entail. It can only be assumed that this decision may involve the transfer of part of national sovereignty in the military sphere to

[107] Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6655-2008-INIT/en/pdf
[108] Ibidem.

the EU, including changes in the voting system – from consensus to qualified majority – or the introduction of an obligation for Member States to participate in EU operations. In any case, such a decision of the European Council would require ratification by the Member States[109].

Another controversial issue concerns the mechanisms of such a common defence, given the presence within the EU of a number of neutral and non-aligned states. The development of security and defence policy and the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty required neutral and non-aligned EU Member States (Austria, Ireland, Malta, Cyprus, and until 2023–2024 also Sweden and Finland) to determine their position on issues such as collective defence, participation in rapid response forces, and involvement in EU military operations. These questions were answered positively. For example, as a result of its accession to the EU, Austria adopted a special amendment to its Constitution (Article 23f), which stipulates that the Act on Neutrality does not prevent its participation in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Thus, the concept of neutrality in these European countries has been significantly transformed and legally constrained in recent years[110].

An important step toward the establishment of a common EU defence was expected to be the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty provisions on permanent structured cooperation (PESCO). Articles 42(6) and 46 stipulated that Member States may initiate more intensive forms of integration in the field of security and establish stronger commitments toward one another, provided that their military capabilities are at a sufficiently high level[111].

In practice, for some time these conditions proved difficult to implement due to the resistance of the United Kingdom, whose conservative governments traditionally held a sceptical view toward deeper European integration. It was only the onset of Brexit that made the establishment of PESCO possible[112]. A separate agreement on the

[109] *Szép V., Wessel R.A., Sabatino E. Gebhard C. Simon E.* The Current Legal Basis and Governance Structures of the EU's Defence Activities // ENGAGE Working Paper Series. 2021. Vol. 4.
URL: https://pure.rug.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/195851914/ENGAGE_Working_Paper_4_The_Current_Legal_Basis_and_Governance_Structures_of_the_EU_s_Defence_Activities.pdf

[110] *Clapp S.* Implementation of the Strategic Compass: Opportunities, challenges and timelines. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2022. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/739249/EPRS_STU(2022)739249_EN.pdf

[111] Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6655-2008-INIT/en/pdf

[112] *Keukeleire S., Delreux T.* The Foreign Policy of the European Union. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. 480 p.

establishment of PESCO was concluded in 2017. It was signed by 25 of the 27 EU Member States. Denmark and Malta did not join: Denmark did not participate in the CSDP at that time, while Malta expressed concerns that PESCO might contradict its policy of neutrality[113].

Currently, a number of projects are being implemented within the framework of PESCO that contribute to deeper integration in the field of security and defence. For example, one project aimed at removing bureaucratic and other obstacles to the movement of troops and equipment across the EU has involved 23 states led by the Netherlands, including non-EU members such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Another example is the project focused on developing rapid crisis response forces (EUFOR CROC)[114]. PESCO projects also include the development of new types of conventional weapons, for example, ground-based combat missiles guided by drones[115].

However, the most promising element in the formation of a future common EU defence is Article 42(7) of the Lisbon Treaty, which contains a mutual defence clause: if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have an obligation to provide aid and assistance by all the means in their power[116]. The article is similar to Article 5 of the NATO Washington Treaty; however, it does not contain a provision stating that an attack on one country constitutes an attack on all. Therefore, due to its general wording and the absence of specific plans, EU Member States interpret the article at their own discretion: Poland, the Baltic states, Austria, and Ireland tend to be sceptical, while France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Cyprus actively support its implementation. In practice, the article has been invoked only once – after the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015. A promising direction for its implementation is the development of assistance scenarios and the conduct of joint exercises. Experts believe that this would enhance cooperation and help avoid the erosion of security guarantees[117].

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[113] Malta among three countries opting out of EU's new defence agreement // Times of Malta. 2017. URL: https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/malta-among-three-countries-opting-out-of-eus-new-defence-agreement.665421

[114] *Коваль Н.* Безпековий потенціал PESCO та нові можливості для України // Портал зовнішньої політики. 2018. URL: https://surl.li/zsxnrb

[115] *Borell J.* European Foreign Policy in Times of COVID-19. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021. 301 p.

[116] Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union // Council of the European Union. 2008. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6655-2008-INIT/en/pdf

[117] *Clapp S.* Implementation of the Strategic Compass: Opportunities, challenges and timelines. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2022. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/739249/EPRS_STU(2022)739249_EN.pdf

In view of the sharply negative change in the security environment surrounding the EU due to the onset of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, in particular the full-scale invasion in 2022, as well as the escalation of the situation in the Middle East, the EU's legal and regulatory framework requires further improvement. As stated by the High Representative of the EU, Josep Borrell, after the EU has taken steps to address the most urgent needs of Ukraine and the Member States, the time has come to move from emergency response to building long-term EU readiness[118].

An important direction for reforming the EU's CSDP should be the strengthening of the supranational approach. At present, the Lisbon Treaty largely assigns the implementation of tasks to individual Member States and their contingents, including issues related to financing peacekeeping missions. Instead, greater emphasis should be placed on the activities of multinational units under the leadership of common institutions financed from EU funds. Certain steps in this direction have been taken since 2017: the Military Planning and Conduct Capability has been established, the European Peace Facility has been launched, and EU Rapid Deployment Capacity is being prepared. However, these institutions still cover only a relatively small share of the overall activities within the EU's CSDP and remain minimal in comparison with the total military potential of the EU Member States.

Thus, the legal framework of the EU's CSDP has evolved gradually - from the initial provisions of the 1948 Brussels Treaty to a comprehensive system of treaties and implementation mechanisms within the EU. The Single European Act of 1986 already enshrined the intention to more closely coordinate the positions of Member States on the political and economic aspects of security, while the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 established that the Common Foreign and Security Policy should encompass all issues related to the security of the Union, including the possible development of a common defence policy, although it did not provide clear obligations in the field of defence integration. The further evolution of the CSDP has been associated with the specification of its implementation mechanisms and institutional consolidation: the Amsterdam Treaty incorporated the Petersberg Tasks, defining the policy through humanitarian, rescue, peacekeeping, and crisis management tasks, while the Saint-Malo Declaration established that the EU must have the capacity for autonomous action supported by appropriate military

[118] Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence: Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Council (2024). URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/StrategicCompass_2ndYear_Report_0.pdf

capabilities. Final institutional consolidation was achieved through the Lisbon Treaty, which contained a broader range of provisions and envisaged that the Union may use both civilian and military means for a wide spectrum of tasks, as well as a mutual assistance mechanism under which states are obliged to provide aid and support by all means at their disposal. The current stage is characterized by a shift from emergency response to building long-term EU readiness, which determines the further development of the legal and institutional mechanisms of the CSDP, while the EU's legal framework still requires further improvement.

2.4. The Process of Planning and Decision-Making in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (*Bohdan Hrushetskyi*)

The relevance of studying the planning and decision-making process in the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union (CSDP) stems from the profound transformations of the contemporary international security environment. The EU is gradually establishing itself as an independent influential actor capable of responding to a wide range of threats. The course towards strategic autonomy is intensifying, including the formation of a common vision of threats and challenges, independent conduct of missions, and the development of military-industrial cooperation. At the same time, the intergovernmental approach and the principle of consensus in decision-making, on the one hand, take into account the national interests of the Member States and, on the other hand, lead to the risk of delays or the blocking of decisions and undermine the EU's ability to act quickly in crisis situations. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the interaction between the EU institutions and the Member States, as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of existing planning and coordination procedures is of particular importance.

This issue is also important for partner countries, in particular Ukraine as a candidate for EU membership. Understanding the mechanisms of functioning of the CSDP is an important factor in integration into the European security space and contributes to the development of cooperation in the field of defense. All this gives rise to an urgent need to investigate the problem in detail.

At the same time, existing studies are characterized by fragmentation: works analyse individual institutions or specific tools (operations, funds, projects). Therefore, there is a need for synthetic research that combines legal, political and practical aspects of the CSDP functioning. The topic also needs to be researched for other reasons, primarily due to the complexity and multi-level nature of the security policy

management system itself. In addition, research is needed because of the dynamics of the CSDP itself, as it is in a state of constant transformation due to internal reforms (for example, the development of PESCO, CARD, and the European Defense Fund) and external challenges.

The source base of the study of the planning and decision-making process in the CSDP can be divided into several main groups: EU regulations, official documents of institutions, analytical materials of European bodies, as well as scientific works of domestic and foreign researchers. The key place is occupied by the founding treaties of the European Union, in particular the consolidated versions of the Treaty on the EU and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, which determine the legal basis for the functioning of the CSDP and the delimitation of powers of the institutions. This group also includes EU regulations, in particular on the European Defense Fund (2021), as well as on the European Defense Industry Programme (2025), which reflects the trend towards increased integration in the military-industrial sector. An important group is made up of decisions and declarations of the European Council, which determine the strategic directions for the development of the CSDP, in particular Cologne (1999), Helsinki (1999) and Versailles (2022) Declarations.

Among the scientific works, an important place is occupied by the research of European authors, in particular the monograph by S. Keukeleire and T. Delreux, which comprehensively analyses the EU's foreign policy and decision-making mechanisms in the field of security. In this paper, special attention is paid to the problem of the consensus decision-making mechanism and its impact on the effectiveness of the CSDP. A significant contribution to the research is also made by analytical materials by S. Clapp, M. Dobrescu, J.J. Andersson, made under the auspices of European think tanks. Among Ukrainian researchers, it is worth noting the works of O. Moldovan, O. Snigir and N. Koval, which highlight the strategic aspects of the development of the European defense policy, in particular the institutional features of its formation. A separate group is made up of publications by political figures, for example, an article by EU High Representative J. Borrell, which analyses the lessons of the war in Ukraine for the development of EU defense policy.

The formation and implementation of the CSDP depend on many actors. During the formation of the CSDP, it was decided to subordinate it directly to the European Council and the Council of the EU, which are intergovernmental rather than supranational institutions. The role of supranational bodies – the European Parliament and the European Commission – in shaping the CSDP was limited. This approach was intended to alleviate concerns among some Member States that the EU might seek to restrict their sovereignty in such a sensitive area as national

security and defense. However, experience shows that effective integration in the field of security and defense is only possible with close coordination among all EU institutions and Member States.

The *European Council*, acting as the "engine" of European integration, defines the political priorities of the EU's security and defense policy. Although it does not adopt legally binding acts, it plays a key role in high-level decision-making, bringing together heads of state or government. For example, the process leading to the Lisbon Treaty (2007), which shaped the current configuration of the CSDP, began within the European Council. The European Council may also, through its decision, determine the transition of integration in the field of security and defence to a new level – from the CSDP to a defence union, although the very mechanism of such a transition is not entirely clear[119].

Following the summits of the European Council, declarations are adopted, which determine the key vectors for the further development of the CSDP. In particular, the Cologne Declaration of 1999 defined the general tasks and basic parameters of the CSDP[120]. The summit of the European Council on 22–23 June 2017 was extremely important, at which the course towards the military integration of the EU was approved: the formation of permanent cooperation in the defense sector, the harmonization of the military-industrial complex and the formation of a single market for weapons and military equipment[121]. The current course of the EU RAP is determined by the Versailles Declaration (March 2022), which speaks of greater investment in the defense sector and strengthening the EU's ability to act autonomously, "to take greater responsibility for its own security", while stressing that the basis of European security should be close cooperation between the EU and NATO[122].

However, declarative decisions of the European Council are not always implemented in practice. For example, the provisions of the

[119] *Szép V. Wessel R.A. Sabatino E. Gebhard C., Simon E.* The Current Legal Basis and Governance Structures of the EU's Defence Activities // ENGAGE Working Paper Series. 2021. Vol. 4.
URL: https://pure.rug.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/195851914/ENGAGE_Working_Paper_4_The_Current_Legal_Basis_and_Governance_Structures_of_the_EU_s_Defence_Activities.pdf
[120] Cologne European Council Declaration on the common policy on security and defence (4 June 1999). URL: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2003/6/6/ee393bf3-d96f-46b8-8897-15546a0e1c0d/publishable_en.pdf
[121] *Молдован О.* Історичний саміт Європейської ради наслідки для України // Mind. 2017. 26 червня. URL: https://mind.ua/openmind/20173535-istorichnij-samit-evropejskoyi-radi-naslidki-dlya-ukrayini
[122] *Clapp S.* Implementation of the Strategic Compass Opportunities challenges and timelines. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2022. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/739249/EPRS_STU(2022)739249_EN.pdf

Helsinki Declaration of 1999 on the formation by 2003 of the European Rapid Reaction Force with a total strength of 50,000–60,000 personnel, which are extremely relevant in view of the security threats faced by the EU, have not been implemented[123].

The EU Battlegroups report directly to the European Council, although this can be seen as more of a symbolic step, as these units have never been involved in carrying out such tasks since their creation in 2005.

While the European Council only defines the policy in general terms, specific regulations in the field of the CSDP are adopted by the *Council of the EU* in the format of a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the Member States under the chairmanship of the High Representative of the EU. In addition, at the initiative of the High Representative of the EU or the Member States, the Council of the EU may launch a military operation or a civilian mission within the framework of the CSDP[124]. It is worth emphasizing that, unlike economic issues, decisions in the field of security and defense are approved without the participation of the European Parliament.

First of all, the Council of the EU adopts strategies in the field of security and defence. The first such document, the European Security Strategy, was adopted back in 2003 at the suggestion of the EU High Representative Javier Solana. The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, approved by the Council of the EU on 21 March 2022, is currently in force[125]. It is significant that the European Council, during its summit held in Brussels a few days later, expressed support for this document and invited the Council of the EU to immediately start implementing it[126]. This indicates a high level of coherence and coordination in the actions of the European Council and the Council of the EU: both institutions comprise the same Member States and differ only in the level of representation.

Decisions of the Council of the EU concerning the CSDP, as well as decisions of the European Council, are adopted exclusively by consensus, so this leads to the possibility of blocking urgent decisions if at least one Member

[123] Helsinki European Council 10 and 11 December 1999: Presidency Conclusions // European Parliament. 1999. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/hel1_en.htm#b

[124] Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union // Council of the European Union. 2008. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6655-2008-INIT/en/pdf

[125] A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade // European Council. 2022. 21 March. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/

[126] European Council meeting (24 and 25 March 2022) – Conclusions // European Council conclusions. 2022. 24-25 March. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1-2022-INIT/en/pdf

State objects. The most famous example was Hungary during the government of Viktor Orbán, when the leaders of this country periodically "took hostage" the entire EU by blocking decisions under the EU CSDP, in particular on assistance to Ukraine under the European Instrument for Peace.

However, there are many similar examples in the recent history of the EU. For example, due to military and political tensions, Greece and Cyprus strongly opposed Turkey's involvement in Operation Sofia in the Mediterranean, despite the fact that Turkey is a significant maritime power and an important partner of the EU in the fight against illegal migration. Because of this refusal, it was necessary to exclude third-country participation in this operation altogether[127].

No less controversy arises regarding the African vector of the CSDP. In particular, in 2011, disagreements arose over the reaction to the events of the Arab Spring in Libya and Syria: France and Great Britain called for military assistance to anti-government rebels, while Germany advocated non-intervention. Due to the impossibility of initiating a military operation within the framework of the CSDP, France and Great Britain conducted an operation against Muammar Gaddafi's troops in cooperation with the United States and with the involvement of NATO experts[128].

Another example is France's operation against jihadists in Mali, which began in 2013, when France tried to launch this operation within the framework of the CSDP, but faced the fact that other states did not want to provide their contingents to participate in the operation, although they expressed concern about the activities of jihadists. Therefore, it was decided to choose a hybrid approach in the organisation of this mission; however, logistical support was provided to it by other EU countries, as well as the United States. In addition, the EU launched a training mission for the Malian armed forces – EU Training Mission Mali, and also provided financial assistance to the operation of African countries in Mali[129].

Therefore, the introduction of the principle of qualified majority voting in the Council of the EU is the most important prerequisite for the further intensive development of the CSDP towards the defense union. This idea is supported by both many Member States and European institutions, including the European Parliament.

As the planning and decision-making process in the EU CSDP is based on consensus, the *Member States* are extremely important actors. This is best

[127] *Dobrescu M.* Explaining third-country participation in CSDP missions: the case of the association trio – Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova // European Security. 2023. Vol. 32. № 4. P. 539-557. URL: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/09662839.2023.2196018?needAccess=true
[128] *Keukeleire S., Delreux* T. The Foreign Policy of the European Union. P. 234-236.
[129] Ibid. P. 245.

demonstrated by the conduct of peacekeeping operations, because a positive decision of the Council of the EU is not enough for its effective work: each state independently decides whether it will join the mission and what resources it will allocate for its implementation. At the same time, there were cases when EU countries prevented the involvement of their military personnel from battlegroups in performing tasks within the framework of the CSDP, which they did not consider a priority for themselves and which could lead to military losses[130]. This obviously calls into question the readiness of the Member States to comply with joint EU decisions.

In addition, Member States have the opportunity to influence the content of pan-European programmes in the process of their implementation, in particular, each year they jointly determine the priorities for the European Defence Fund within the framework of the EDF Programme Committee[131].

However, some processes of European security cooperation can be implemented bypassing unanimity. First of all, this refers to joint military projects involving individual Member States and the further prospect of enlargement to the entire Union. For example, back in 2007, a Franco-German declaration was adopted on the joint development and production of a new model of a heavy-duty transport helicopter. This program is also open to other members of the European Defense Agency. Another example is a project to unify the personal equipment of infantrymen, which was launched by five countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden)[132]. The use of the potential developed within the framework of joint projects remains in the hands of Member States: they can use them not only in the context of the CSDP, but also within the framework of the UN or NATO[133].

Unlike the institutions of intergovernmental cooperation and the Member States, which are the key actors in the formation of the CSDP, the powers of the supranational institutions – the *European Parliament* and the *European Commission* – are limited to a few, but extremely important issues that lie at the intersection of the defense and security spheres with the economy, technology, cross-border transit, i.e. they have a mixed military-civilian character. This applies to the activities of the European defense fund, the purpose of which is to finance joint research in the field of

[130] Ibid. P. 247.
[131] European Defence Fund: Boosting Cross-Border Defence R&D Cooperation in the EU // European Defence Fund. 2023. URL: https://surl.li/hiacti
[132] *Снігир О.* Європейська політика безпеки та оборони: стратегічні аспекти співпраці України з ЄС – визначення напрямів та формату. URL: http://web.archive.org/web/20191220010510/http://old.niss.gov.ua/monitor/november/2.htm
[133] *Коваль Н.* Безпековий потенціал PESCO та нові можливості для України // Портал зовнышньої політики. 2018. URL: https://surl.li/zxueds

security and defense on a competitive basis[134], the implementation of the Galileo and Copernicus space programs, as well as programs for the movement of military personnel and equipment between Member States. In 2025, the sphere of development of the military-industrial complex was also added to this list, for which payments from the EU budget were provided within the framework of the European Defense Industry Program[135]. The European Parliament, together with the Council of the EU, creates a legislative framework for them and provides funding by adopting the EU budget, while the European Commission develops the relevant draft acts, and after their approval, is directly involved in administration.

As an illustration, we can cite the example of the European Defense Fund. The European Parliament, together with the Council of the EU, has defined the legal basis for the functioning of the Fund, approving the relevant Regulation 2021/697[136], and determines the amount of its funding through the EU budget. The European Commission, in turn, acted as the initiator of the Fund's creation and developed the draft Regulation, and after its adoption it administers the Fund, including announcing calls for proposals, selecting winning projects, and awarding grants within the EU budget.

The *High Representative of the EU* is responsible for the implementation of the CSDP in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty of 2007[137]. However, he is not only the executor of the adopted decisions, but also a key person in the process of their development. He develops draft decisions (in particular on the conduct of operations), which are then submitted for approval to the European Council and the Council of the EU, as well as directly chairs the meetings of the Council of the EU, related to security and defense issues.

The EU High Representative coordinates the activities of a number of specialized agencies, including the European External Action Service and the European Defence Agency. Since 2017, he has also been subordinate to

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[134] The European Defence Fund at a glance. URL: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf-official-webpage-european-commission_en

[135] Regulation (EU) 2025/2643 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2025 establishing the European Defence Industry Programme and a framework of measures to ensure the timely availability and supply of defence products ('EDIP Regulation') (Text with EEA relevance). URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/2643/oj

[136] Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 // European Union. 2021. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R0697

[137] Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union // Council of the European Union. 2008. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6655-2008-INIT/en/pdf

a separate secretariat of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)[138]. The High Representative, together with the European Defence Agency, regularly assesses national plans for the implementation of PESCO commitments, which adds elements of commitment and structure to voluntary cooperation[139].

One of the important tasks of the High Representative is also to shape a common strategic culture within the EU, that is, a shared vision of the world and a common identification of threats and challenges as a basis for a joint response to them[140]. In particular, after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, it was the then High Representative of the EU, Josep Borrell, who put forward a conceptual justification for the future directions of strengthening integration in the field of security and defence. In his article (May 2023), he emphasized that the current conflict demonstrates how quickly equipment becomes inoperative, and therefore it is necessary to maintain large reserves to replace it. This logically leads to the conclusion that a strong military-industrial complex must form the basis of a successful EU defence policy, and that all efforts of European institutions should now be directed toward its strengthening[141].

A key specialized body within the framework of the CSDP is the *European Defence Agency*, established in 2004. Its purpose was defined as promoting deeper integration among EU Member States in the field of defence. In its early years, the Agency was not particularly active; however, its role began to increase after Nicolas Sarkozy assumed the French presidency in 2007, when he set the objective of working to avoid duplication in the resource provision of the armed forces of European countries[142].

The Lisbon Treaty of 2007 legally established the foundations for the activities of the European Defence Agency. The document contains an extensive Article 42(3) devoted to this issue. It states that Member States shall undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities. The European Defence Agency shall identify operational requirements, shall promote measures to satisfy those requirements, shall contribute to identifying and,

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[138] *Keukeleire S., Delreux T.* The Foreign Policy of the European Union… P. 250-251.

[139] *Коваль Н.* Безпековий потенціал PESCO та нові можливості для України // Портал зовнышньої політики. 2018. URL: https://surl.li/zxueds

[140] *Clapp S.* Implementation of the Strategic Compass: Opportunities, challenges and timelines. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2022. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/739249/EPRS_STU(2022)739249_EN.pdf

[141] *Borrell J.* Lessons from the war in Ukraine for the future of EU defence. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/lessons-war-ukraine-future-eu-defence_en

[142] *Снігир О.* Європейська політика безпеки та оборони: стратегічні аспекти співпраці України з ЄС – визначення напрямів та формату. URL: http://web.archive.org/web/20191220010510/http://old.niss.gov.ua/monitor/november/2.htm

where appropriate, implementing any measures needed to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector, shall participate in defining a European capabilities and armaments policy, and shall assist the Council in evaluating the improvement of military capabilities[143].

Since then, one of the main tasks of the European Defence Agency has been to strengthen the European defence technological and industrial base, for which an appropriate strategy was adopted[144]. One of the positive examples was the European Defence Agency's initiative on the construction of air-to-air refuelling aircraft for EU Member States: it was launched in 2012 and successfully implemented over the following 10 years[145].

With the same objective in mind, since 2008 the European Defence Agency has regularly issued the Capability Development Plan (CDP), in which it provides recommendations to Member States regarding their military capabilities. The top priorities in these documents are military intelligence, cyber defence, and strategic and tactical aviation. At the same time, the implementation of these recommendations depends entirely on the goodwill and financial capacities of the Member States, and therefore in practice they are carried out very slowly[146].

Since 2017, the European Defence Agency has also been responsible for coordinating and synchronizing the process of defence planning and the development of the defence sector of EU Member States within the framework of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). With the introduction of the CARD mechanism, Member States began to submit information on the development of their own defence capabilities to the Agency. On this basis, the EDA, together with the EU Military Staff, develops projects of interstate cooperation in the defence field and helps to establish effective practical cooperation[147]. Projects developed within the framework of CARD are subsequently implemented in practice under PESCO, with funding provided by the European Defence Fund.

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[143] Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union // Council of the European Union. 2008. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6655-2008-INIT/en/pdf

[144] *Снігур О.* Європейська політика безпеки та оборони: стратегічні аспекти співпраці України з ЄС – визначення напрямів та формату. URL: http://web.archive.org/web/20191220010510/http://old.niss.gov.ua/monitor/november/2.htm

[145] *Andersson J.J.* Buying Weapons Together (or not): Joint defence acquisition and parallel arms procurement // Brief. 2023. № 7. URL: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_7_Common%20defence%20procurement_0.pdf; MMF (Multinational MRTT Fleet) ACQUISITION // OCCAR. 2017. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20230327040659/https://www.occar.int/programmes/mmf

[146] *Keukeleire S., Delreux T.* The Foreign Policy of the European Union… P. 265.

[147] Coordinated Annual Review on Defence. URL: https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/EU-defence-initiatives/coordinated-annual-review-on-defence-(card)

CARD materials are classified; however, based on them, a press release is prepared containing a list of key problems and recommendations. This format of cooperation also has certain limitations, as each state independently decides what information to provide and what not to provide, and therefore CARD recommendations may be incomplete or inaccurate. Nevertheless, this is still better than nothing.

Since March 2023, the European Defence Agency has also become responsible for implementing the Joint Procurement of Ammunition initiative. From now on, the Agency collects orders from Member States and then forwards them to industrial enterprises. Part of the jointly procured ammunition is subsequently supplied to Ukraine. In the future, it is planned to use the European Defence Agency not only for the joint procurement of ammunition, but also for equipment related to chemical, biological and nuclear safety, as well as equipment for soldiers[148].

In certain aspects of the common security policy, an important role is played by the *European External Action Service* (EEAS). For example, in September 2023, the EEAS Crisis Response Centre began operating within its structure, with the primary objective of protecting EU diplomatic staff abroad. Within a short period of time, the Crisis Response Centre played an important role in the evacuation of EU citizens from Sudan, Niger, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority[149].

As a separate directorate of the European External Action Service, the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) has been operating since 2012, with the task of facilitating the exchange of intelligence information among the national services of Member States. In 2020, it carried out a large-scale analysis of shared threats: the Centre collected data from the intelligence services of all 27 Member States and prepared a joint document identifying global and regional threats posed by both state and non-state actors. The document was not made publicly available, as it is intended for official use only[150].

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[148] *Andersson J.J.* Buying Weapons Together (or not): Joint defence acquisition and parallel arms procurement // Brief. 2023. № 7. URL: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_7_Common%20defence%20procurement_0.pdf

[149] Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence: Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Council, 2024. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/StrategicCompass_2ndYear_Report_0.pdf

[150] *Clapp S.* Implementation of the Strategic Compass: Opportunities, challenges and timelines. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2022. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/739249/EPRS_STU(2022)739249_EN.pdf

Thus, the decision-making and planning process within the EU's CSDP constitutes a complex multi-level system based on an intergovernmental institutional approach. A key role in shaping the policy is played by the European Council and the Council of the EU, while supranational institutions perform auxiliary functions, primarily focused on related civilian and military domains. The principle of consensus, which underpins decision-making in the field of security and defence, simultaneously serves as a guarantee of taking into account the interests of Member States and as a factor that constrains the speed and effectiveness of the EU's response to contemporary security challenges. The practical implementation of decisions largely depends on the political will of individual states, their resources, and their readiness to participate in joint initiatives. A possible expansion of the use of qualified majority voting in the Council of the EU is considered one of the key prerequisites for enhancing the effectiveness of European security policy. The current rapid transformations of the CSDP require further analysis and the development of recommendations for deepening cooperation between partner states, including Ukraine, and European security structures.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND THE EU RESPONSE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

3.1. EU Approaches to Conflict Resolution (*Iryna Habro*)

The contemporary international security environment is characterized by a growing number of conflicts, their increasing complexity, and protracted nature, which together create new challenges for the global security governance system. This issue has become particularly acute in the context of the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which has significantly transformed the architecture of European security and highlighted the limitations of traditional crisis response mechanisms. In this context, the European Union plays an increasingly important role as a multidimensional actor that combines diplomatic, economic, security, and humanitarian instruments of influence.

In academic and analytical literature, EU approaches to conflict resolution are examined both from normative-institutional and applied perspectives. Among scholars and analysts, particular attention should be given to the works of H. Makasak, who studies EU policy toward conflicts in the Eastern Partnership countries, specifically analyzing the effectiveness of EU instruments in addressing "frozen conflicts" and their impact on Ukraine. M. Myronova examines the EU's overall approach to conflict resolution, focusing on mediation, prevention, and post-conflict recovery tools[1]. In the work of K. Andreieva and O. Parkhomenko, practices of mediation in Ukraine and the EU are analysed, particularly the mechanisms of EU involvement in mediation processes[2]. V. Soloviov

[1] *Міронова М.* Підхід ЄС до вирішення конфліктів: наслідки для країн Східного партнерства // Європейські історичні дослідження. 2021. № 20. URL: https://doi.org/10.17721/2524-048X.2021.20.2

[2] *Andreieva K., Parkhomenko O.* Mediation in conflict management: general approaches and practices in Ukraine and EU // Legal Bulletin. 2021. P. 83–89. URL: https://lbku.krok.edu.ua/index.php/legal-bulletin/article/view/332

focuses on specific cases, such as Transnistria, and explores the limitations of EU influence in regional conflicts[3]. However, the EU's integrated approach to conflict resolution is not comprehensively addressed in existing scholarship. Therefore, this issue will be examined in this section.

The formation of EU approaches to conflict prevention and resolution is a complex and multidimensional process that has evolved over recent decades under the influence of both internal institutional changes and transformations in the international security environment. The origins of the EU's contemporary crisis response system are linked to the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in 2000, during the European Council meeting in Santa Maria da Feira[4]. At that time, the foundations were laid for the development of both military and civilian crisis management instruments in accordance with the principles of the United Nations.

The initial stage was marked by the establishment of conceptual and political foundations for conflict prevention. In 2001, the EU adopted the Gothenburg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, which became one of the first comprehensive policy documents in this field. It provided for the definition of clear political priorities for preventive action, improved coordination between early warning mechanisms and political response, enhancement of both short- and long-term conflict prevention tools, and the development of effective partnerships. Thus, from the outset, the EU emphasized not only reaction but also prevention as a key element of its external policy.

Further development of conceptual approaches occurred in 2003 with the adoption of the European Security Strategy, which defined strategic guidelines for strengthening the EU's global role as a security actor[5]. At the same time, in 2009, the Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities was adopted, expanding the mandate of EU Special Representatives and institutionalizing the practice of active involvement of high-level officials in negotiation processes. This marked a gradual transition from declarative support for peace to institutionalized participation in conflict resolution through mediation.

The assessment of the first decade of implementation of the Gothenburg Programme was carried out in 2011 in the Council

[3] *Solovyov V.* Transnistria Reemerges as an Obstacle to Moldova Joining the EU // Carnegie Politika. 2025. 12 December. URL: https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2025/12/moldova-transnistria-eu-integration

[4] Santa Maria da Feira. European council 19 and 20 June 2000. Conclusions of the presidency. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/fei2_en.htm

[5] European security strategy. Brussels, 8 December 2003. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf

Conclusions, which, alongside acknowledging achievements, emphasized the need to further develop the early warning system. As a result, the European External Action Service, together with the European Commission, created the Conflict Early Warning System (EWS), which became fully operational in 2014. This system integrates analytical, political, and operational elements, enabling the EU to more effectively identify conflict risks and formulate preventive strategies[6].

At the same time, financial instruments were evolving: in 2014, the Instrument for Stability was transformed into the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, expanding funding opportunities for conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilization measures. This underscores the importance of the economic dimension within the EU's comprehensive approach to security.

EU participation in conflict resolution is implemented through a combination of direct and indirect mechanisms. Direct engagement includes mediation, military missions, sanctions regimes, and other instruments of coercion or deterrence. Indirect engagement involves addressing the root causes of conflicts through support for democratic institutions, economic development, humanitarian assistance, and the implementation of civilian missions. This distinction reflects the EU's ambition to act not only as a crisis manager but also as a transformative actor shaping a sustainable security environment.

A qualitatively new stage in the development of EU approaches to conflict resolution began with the adoption of the European Global Strategy for Foreign Policy and Security in 2016. The central element of this strategy was an integrated approach to external conflicts and crises, which involves the coordinated use of diplomatic, military, economic and humanitarian instruments[7].

It is within the framework of an integrated approach that the EU has developed a clearly structured conflict prevention cycle that combines analytical, policy and practical tools. A key element of this cycle is the Early Warning System (EWS), which allows for the identification of risks of violent conflict in countries outside the EU based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. It relies, in particular, on the Global Conflict Risk Index, developed by the EU's analytical structures, which assesses the likelihood and potential intensity of conflicts in the medium

[6] The EU conflict Early Warning System. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Factsheet%20-%20EWS.pdf

[7] A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. Brussels, 2016. 14 November. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_implementation_plan_st14392.en16_0.pdf

term (up to four years), taking into account factors such as economic shocks, political instability or the narrowing of civic space.

The early warning cycle includes several interrelated phases: risk scanning, prioritization, joint assessment, follow-up and monitoring. The scanning phase provides an overall picture of the risks, after which the management bodies, the European External Action Service and the European Commission, identify a limited number of priority countries where EU intervention could be most effective. An important criterion in this regard is not only the level of threat but also the availability of EU instruments of influence.

The next stage involves an in-depth conflict analysis conducted through inter-agency missions with the participation of EU representatives on the ground. This analysis covers a broad range of factors, from the legitimacy of political institutions and the state of the rule of law to intergroup relations, the economic situation, the impact of climate change, and the human rights situation. This enables the development of a shared understanding of the nature of the conflict among all EU institutions and the identification of optimal response options.

Monitoring and follow-up actions are an integral part of this process: they involve regular assessment of changes in the risk environment and the effectiveness of measures already implemented. EU delegations and Member States play a key role in this process by ensuring feedback loops and policy adjustments. Thus, the EU's integrated approach helps bridge the traditional gap between early warning and practical action.

In the event of an escalation of the conflict, the EU moves to the crisis management phase, which involves mobilizing the full range of available instruments – from diplomatic to military. Coordination is carried out between different structures, including the European External Action Service, the institutions of the European Commission, and missions within the framework of the CSDP, as well as in cooperation with international partners, such as the United Nations, NATO and the OSCE. Such multi-level coordination allows for a comprehensive response to crisis situations.

A special place in this process is occupied by peace mediation as a tool of preventive diplomacy. Following the adoption of the relevant concept in 2009 and its subsequent update in 2020, the EU has significantly strengthened its role as a mediator in international conflicts. The new concept enshrines the EU's value-based approach, focusing on inclusion, human rights, gender equality, and multilateralism. It also emphasizes the importance of engaging a wide range of actors, from political elites to civil society.

The practical implementation of mediation activities is ensured, in particular, by the Mediation Support Team within the European External

Action Service (EEAS). The tasks of the EEAS Mediation Support Team include:

1. Operational support and expert deployment: The MST can be deployed at short notice to provide mediation support to EU Delegations, EU Special Representatives' offices, CSDP missions, or other relevant EU actors. It can also rely on a facility with access to more than 70 specialized external experts.

2. Training and capacity-building: The MST can conduct individual, team, and group training sessions on a range of topics related to peace processes and mediation.

3. Knowledge management: EU mediation efforts draw on critical and constructive lessons learned from past engagements, as well as thematic expertise and guidance on issues such as power-sharing arrangements or ceasefire mechanisms.

4. Partnerships and outreach: The EU works closely with the United Nations in the field of mediation, co-financing the UN Mediation Standby Team of Experts and deploying UN mediation experts for specific tasks. Joint work on concrete processes, such as the UN Special Envoy for Syria or the Special Envoy for Yemen, adds value to peace processes. In addition, the EEAS maintains ongoing partnerships in mediation support with EU Member States, regional organizations (including the OSCE, African Union, and ASEAN), NGOs, and academic institutions[8].

The effectiveness of this approach is confirmed by the EU's participation in a number of international peace processes, including Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Georgia, the Serbia–Kosovo dialogue, Mali, the Philippines, and Syria. In these cases, the EU has played a variety of roles, from direct mediation to financial and technical support to peace processes, demonstrating the flexibility and multifunctionality of its approach.

The final stage of the conflict cycle is post-conflict stabilization, which involves creating conditions for sustainable peace through the restoration of institutions, ensuring security, developing the economy and supporting democratic governance. This stage is implemented in close cooperation with international partners and is based on the principles of inclusiveness and local ownership.

It should be noted that in 2018 the integrated approach was further specified through the adoption of the Civilian CSDP Compact, which

[8] Conflict Prevention, Peace building and Mediation // The Diplomatic Service of the European Union. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/conflict-prevention-peace-building-and-mediation_en#

provided for the reform of Member States' participation in civilian operations and aimed to enhance their effectiveness.

The integrated approach was institutionalized through the creation in 2019 of the Directorate for the Integrated Approach to Security and Peace (ISP) within the European External Action Service. This body ensures the coordination of EU actions at all stages of the conflict cycle – from early warning to post-crisis stabilization. In case of emergencies, the ISP activates the Crisis Response Mechanism, which brings together different EU institutions to develop a coordinated response policy.

Further consolidation of approaches took place after the adoption in 2022 of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, a document that defines the development of EU security policy until 2030. Its adoption took place against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which significantly changed the security environment in Europe. The Strategic Compass is focused on strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy, developing defence capabilities and the ability to act in crisis situations. It is structured around four key areas: action, investment, partnership and security[9].

The practical implementation of these approaches is reflected in a wide range of EU missions and operations. Among them are the military operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aimed at maintaining a safe and secure environment in the post-conflict period, as well as the maritime operation ASPIDES, which ensures the security of navigation in strategically important regions.

Thus, on 2 December 2004, nine years after the end of the war, the European Union launched the military operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This followed NATO's decision to hand over its own peacekeeping mission, which had been maintaining security in the region since the end of the war. The EU deployed a strong military force (EUFOR) to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton/Paris Agreement and to contribute to a safe and secure environment (SASE) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 2003 Thessaloniki Declaration confirmed that the future of the Western Balkans, of which Bosnia and Herzegovina is a central and important part, lies within the EU. Operation ALTHEA is one aspect of the EU's comprehensive and coherent commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina[10].

[9] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security. Brussels, 2022. 21 March. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf

[10] About EUFOR. European Union Force. URL: https://www.euforbih.org/index.php/en/background

The EU also pays significant attention to civilian missions, in particular the EUMA mission in Armenia, which aims to strengthen confidence and stability in the border areas. The EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) was launched by a decision of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on 20 February 2023, when it also started its operational activities. EUMA is tasked with monitoring and reporting on the situation on the ground, contributing to human security in the conflict-affected areas, and supporting confidence-building between Armenia and Azerbaijan, where possible. The EU established the Mission in response to an official request from the Armenian authorities for the deployment of a fully-fledged EU civilian mission on the ground. This deployment follows the successful experience of the EU Monitoring Capacity to Armenia (EUMCAP), which was previously deployed on the Armenian side of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border from 20 October 2022 to 19 December 2022.

On 30 January 2025, the Council of the European Union extended the Mission's first two-year mandate for a further two years, from 20 February 2025 to 19 February 2027. The second mandate of EUMA will cover up to 225 staff, including 166 international and 59 local staff. EUMA observers and civilian experts represent 25 EU Member States and a third contributing State, Canada. EUMA coordinates all its activities with the Armenian authorities. It also informs the Azerbaijani side of relevant developments as necessary[11].

Globally, the EU is actively involved in conflict resolution in Africa, notably through missions in Somalia, Mali, Niger and the Central African Republic. These operations combine military training, security sector reform and support for state institutions, in line with the logic of an integrated approach.

It is worth mentioning separately the EU's actions to resolve the Transnistrian conflict. The European Union's efforts in the field of post-conflict stabilization of Moldova can generally be assessed as quite effective. The set of measures implemented by Brussels contributed to the removal of the so-called "asymmetric federalization" of Moldova from the political agenda of the Russian scenario, as well as to restraining the further strengthening of the influence of the Russian Federation on the Transnistrian region (in particular, through the well-known "Kozak plan"). An important role in this was played by the joint actions of the EU and the USA in 2003, when, against the backdrop of domestic political protests in Moldova, visa restrictions were introduced for the leaders of Transnistria. These steps made it possible to disrupt the implementation of the relevant

[11] About European Union Mission in Armenia // European Union websites. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/euma/about-european-union-mission-armenia_en?s=410283

Kremlin initiatives, although at the same time they led to a certain aggravation of relations between Chişinău and Tiraspol[12].

The next important stage was the institutional strengthening of the EU's participation in the conflict settlement. In 2005, the position of the European Union Special Representative for Moldova was established, whose mandate provided for a more active role for the EU in the Transnistrian settlement process. It is worth noting that the instrument of special representation proved more effective in the Moldovan context than similar EU activities in the South Caucasus region, which indicates the relative success of the chosen model of engagement.

In the same year, 2005, the European Union joined the negotiation process that led to the transformation of the "5+2" format. Within this framework, the EU and the United States were granted observer status, while the main participants in the negotiations remained Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE. Such institutionalization of the EU's participation contributed to increasing the transparency of the negotiation process and strengthening international oversight of its course.

Particular attention should also be paid to the activities of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), which also began its work in 2005. Its functioning became an important element in the practical implementation of stabilization policy, as the mission contributed to the modernization and increased effectiveness of border and customs services of both states along the Transnistrian segment of the border. In particular, a significant achievement was the disruption of smuggling channels, which in turn led to a reduction in illicit financial flows that had supported the functioning of the de facto authorities in Transnistria.

At the same time, the European Union used economic instruments of influence aimed at stimulating cooperation between Chişinău and Tiraspol. In particular, in 2008, autonomous trade preferences in relations with the EU were extended to Transnistria, followed in 2015 by the extension of the EU–Moldova free trade regime to the region. This contributed to a gradual change in the region's trade orientations, in particular, a partial reorientation of its foreign economic relations from Russia to EU Member States[13].

An important role in further intensification of the negotiation process was played by the initiative of the Federal Republic of Germany, which since 2010 has contributed to restoring the momentum of the dialogue in the "5+2" format. In this context, there has been a certain softening of the EU's

[12] *Максак Г.* ЄС та конфлікти на території Східного партнерства: уроки для України. Київ, 2020. URL: http://eap-csf.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EaPConflicts_Prism_ua.pdf

[13] Ibidem.

approaches to Transnistria. In particular, the Council of the European Union adopted a decision to temporarily suspend visa sanctions against the region's leadership, which can be seen as an attempt to create a more favourable political environment for continuing negotiations and finding compromise solutions. However, this policy of "small steps" by the EU in building trust has not brought the expected result.

Today, the European Union is increasingly pushing Chişinău to work on the reintegration of the separatist region of Transnistria. In December 2025, the EU Ambassador to Moldova, Ivona Pirco, made it clear that Brussels does not intend to divide the country's integration with the EU into two stages, with the issue of Transnistria's integration into the EU being resolved later than the issue of the integration of the rest of the country[14].

This is a change from Brussels' previous position. Before the parliamentary elections in Moldova in September 2025, EU representatives at various levels repeatedly stated that integration with the EU is a higher priority than the reintegration of Transnistria, and that the former cannot and should not depend on the latter.

The old approach largely suited Chişinău: the Moldovan authorities showed little interest in resolving the Transnistrian issue. Until recently, Chişinău's tactic had been to avoid negotiations with Tiraspol and to gradually extend its economic jurisdiction over the region. The closure of the Transnistrian segment of the Moldova–Ukraine border since the beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine has enabled the Moldovan government to control imports into the unrecognized republic and to impose tariffs.

However, sooner or later – and rather sooner than later, given Chişinău's plans to join the EU in the coming years – the Moldovan authorities will have to grasp the complexities of the political dimension of integration. Recently, Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration, Valeriu Chişev (Kiveri), stated that the Moldovan government is developing a reintegration plan with the support of the EU and the United States, although he did not provide any details[15].

Thus, the European Union's approaches to conflict resolution have evolved from predominantly reactive crisis management instruments to a comprehensive, prevention-oriented model. The foundations for the development of the EU's civilian and military capabilities in the field of crisis management were laid as early as the 2000 European Council in Santa Maria da Feira. Further conceptualization took place in the 2003 European Security Strategy, which identified key threats and emphasized

[14] *Solovyov V.* Transnistria Reemerges as an Obstacle to Moldova Joining the EU // Carnegie Politika. 2025. 12 December. URL: https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2025/12/moldova-transnistria-eu-integration
[15] Ibidem.

the importance of a multilateral approach. An important element was the implementation of the Early Warning System, which allows for the identification of risks at an early stage. Subsequently, the 2016 EU Global Strategy established the principle of an «integrated approach», which involves combining diplomatic, economic, security and humanitarian instruments within a single policy.

The current stage of development of EU approaches is reflected in the 2018 EU Council Conclusions and the 2022 Strategic Compass, which detail the mechanisms for implementing an integrated approach, including coordination between institutions and the involvement of missions on the ground (e.g. EUFOR or the EU Mission in Armenia). It should be noted that the internal diversity of Member States' approaches also affects the implementation of EU policy. For example, France traditionally supports a more active military role for the EU and the concept of strategic autonomy, while Germany, Sweden, Finland and Ireland emphasize diplomacy, multilateralism and mediation. This multi-vector nature, on the one hand, makes it difficult to develop a single position, and on the other hand, ensures the flexibility and multifunctionality of EU foreign policy instruments.

3.2. The Effectiveness of EU Sanctions in Addressing International Problems in the 21 Century (*Liudmyla Vovchuk*)

The onset of the post-bipolar era did not eliminate the underlying, albeit often latent, tensions among the principal actors of the international system. On the contrary, these tensions have become increasingly evident in the growing number and frequency of international conflicts, as well as in the intensifying competition between the national interests of major international actors. Collectively, these developments have generated new and increasingly complex threats to international peace and security. Among the most significant destabilizing challenges are the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, international terrorism, violent extremism, and uncontrolled local and regional conflicts, all of which have the potential to undermine international stability.

In response to these challenges and with the aim of strengthening the principles and mechanisms of international order, the international community and the European Union in particular have, since the beginning of the post-bipolar period, increasingly relied on sanctions as an instrument of coercive diplomacy. These restrictive measures are imposed on states, organizations, and individuals whose actions threaten international peace and security. Such actors include the Russian Federation, as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Syria,

and Belarus, which not only violate the fundamental principles of the international legal order but also provide significant political, military, or economic support to Russia in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

EU sanctions are intended to influence the behaviour of the targeted state, constrain its strategic capabilities, weaken its international standing, and publicly signal the international community's rejection of unlawful conduct. By their nature, sanctions are preventive rather than punitive instruments and should comply with the principle of proportionality, serving as an alternative to the use of military force in addressing threats to international peace and security.

Research on this issue has become particularly relevant in the context of the growing instability of the contemporary international system, driven primarily by the Russian Federation's aggressive and unlawful policy towards Ukraine. The study of sanctions as an instrument of international politics dates back to the second half of the 20th century. Pioneering contributions in this field were made by foreign scholars, who laid the theoretical foundations for understanding the concept of sanctions, developed classifications of their various forms, and examined their role and effectiveness in addressing international challenges. Among the most influential scholars are D. Drezner[16], M. Daoudi, M. Dajani[17], M. Doxey[18], and S. Weintraub[19], whose works have significantly advanced the academic discourse on international sanctions and their application in international relations.

The structural transformation of the international system, the evolution of instruments of power, and the emergence of twenty-first-century global security challenges, including hybrid and asymmetric conflicts, as well as the transformation of sanctions from a supplementary policy tool into one of the principal instruments of contemporary international relations have stimulated growing academic and policy interest in sanctions and sanctions policy. This evolving research agenda has been reflected in the works of numerous scholars, including B.R. Early[20], N. Helwig, Ju. Jokela, C. Portela[21], C. Portela[22], B. Taylor[23],

[16] *Drezner D.* The Sanctions Paradox. Economic Statecraft and International Relations. Cambridge University Press, 1999. 342 p.
[17] *Daoudi M., Dajani M.* Economic Sanctions: Ideals and Experience. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983. 263 p.
[18] *Doxey M.* Economic Sanctions and International Enforcement. London: Oxford University Press, 1971. 162 p.
[19] *Weintraub S.* Economic Coercion and US Foreign Policy: Implications of Case Studies from the Johnson Administration. Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1982. 234 p.
[20] *Early Bryan R.* Busted Sanctions: explaining why economic sanctions fail. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015. 275 p.
[21] *Helwig N., Jokela Ju., Portela C.* Sharpening EU sanctions policy for a geopolitical era. Helsinki: Prime Minister's Office, 2020. 206 p.

Yu. Sedliar[24], V. Vedkal, E. Aghamaliev[25], N. Matviichuk[26], and others, whose studies have substantially contributed to the theoretical and empirical understanding of sanctions as an instrument of international governance, foreign policy, and security.

The European Union's sanctions policy has been examined in detail in the collective monograph Economic Sanctions in the Contemporary World Economy by O. Shnyrkov, A. Filipenko, R. Zablotska, and their co-authors[27], as well as in the scholarly works of M. Kapitonenko[28], L. Vovchuk[29], L. Vovchuk and A. Volkivskyi[30], A. Atamanenko[31], O. Vaskiv[32], and others. These studies explore both the evolution of the European Union's sanctions policy and its practical implementation through case studies of restrictive measures imposed on Syria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Belarus, and the Russian Federation. Collectively, these works provide valuable insights into the legal, political, and economic dimensions of EU sanctions, while assessing their effectiveness as instruments of the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The European Union's practice of imposing sanctions can be traced back to 1957, with the signing of the Treaty of Rome and the establishment

[22] *Portela C.* EU Sanctions and Foreign Policy. When and why do they work? London: Routledge, 2010. 206 p.

[23] *Taylor B.* Sanctions as Grand Strategy. London: Routledge, 2010. 123 p.

[24] *Седляр Ю.* Міжнародні санкції у світовій політиці: теорія і практика. Монографія. Миколаїв: Вид-во ЧДУ ім. Петра Могили, 2013. 412 с.; *Седляр Ю.* Формування інституційного механізму ЄС з реалізації політики санкцій (1945–2009 рр.) // Науковий вісник МНУ імені В.О. Сухомлинського. Історичні науки. 2016. № 2 (42). С. 117-124.

[25] *Ведькал В.А., Агамалієв Е.А.* Теоретичні та практичні аспекти санкцій у міжнародному праві // Юридичний науковий електронний журнал. 2021. № 10. С. 575-577.

[26] *Матвійчук Н.В.* Міжнародні санкції як інструмент зовнішньої політики // Вісник Маріупольського державного університету. Серія: історія. політологія. 2022. Вип. 33-34. С. 71-79.

[27] Економічні санкції у сучасному світовому господарстві: монографія / *О.І. Шнирков, А.С. Філіпенко, Р.О. Заблоцька* та ін.; за ред. *О.І. Шниркова*. Київ: ВПЦ «Київський університет», 2019. 279 с.

[28] *Капітоненко М.* Антиросійські санкції: інструмент впливу чи демонстрація безсилля? // Міжнародний центр перспективних досліджень. 2018. URL: https://bitly.ws/34A4M

[29] *Вовчук Л.* Санкційна політика Європейського Союзу проти Ірану у XXI ст. // Acta De Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. 2023. № 5. С. 46-54.

[30] *Vovchuk L., Volkivskyi A.* Implementation of EU sanctions against Belarus // Старожитності Лукомор'я. 2024. № 3. С. 97-105. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33782/2708-4116.2024.3.274

[31] *Атаманенко А., Піддубний В.* Вплив російсько-української війни на енергетичну безпеку ЄС // Acta de Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. 2023. Special Issue. С. 35-47.

[32] *Васьків О.* ЄС посилив санкції щодо Ірану за підтримку Росії у війні проти України // Суспільне новини. 2023. 11 грудня. URL: https://suspilne.media/636934-es-posiliv-sankcii-sodo-iranu-za-pidtrimku-rosii-u-vijni-proti-ukraini/

of the European Economic Community (EEC). However, the development of the EU's sanctions policy has been a gradual process spanning more than seven decades. It was only after 2010 that the Union's sanctions policy entered a transformative phase, during which the EU increasingly relied on economic sanctions as a central instrument of its external action and foreign policy.

The institutional framework governing the EU's sanctions policy involves several key actors. The Council of the European Union, composed of ministers from the Member States, serves as the principal decision-making body. It is supported by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a number of specialized preparatory bodies and working groups. Among those most actively involved in drafting sanctions packages are the Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia (COEST), the Mashreq/Maghreb Working Party (MaMa), particularly with regard to Syria, and the Working Party of Foreign Relations Counsellors (RELEX). Depending on the nature and complexity of the measures under consideration, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER II) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) may also participate in the decision-making process.

The procedure for adopting EU sanctions is characterized by a two-level decision-making process that combines supranational and intergovernmental elements within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Until 2023, decisions on the adoption of restrictive measures required unanimity among the Member States. While this consensus-based approach reflected the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP, it frequently delayed or even impeded the adoption of sanctions, as demonstrated during negotiations on the twelfth and thirteenth sanctions packages against the Russian Federation.

In response to these institutional shortcomings, on 22 November 2023 the European Parliament adopted a resolution proposing amendments to the EU Treaties, including the replacement of unanimity with qualified majority voting (QMV) in selected areas of EU decision-making, including aspects of foreign and security policy. Although the resolution itself does not amend the Treaties and was adopted by a relatively narrow majority, it reflects an increasing political willingness to enhance the efficiency of the Union's external action. The introduction of qualified majority voting would significantly accelerate the adoption of sanctions against states that violate international law and threaten international peace and security. Nevertheless, several Member States, most notably Hungary and Slovakia, continue to oppose such institutional reform, arguing that it could further centralize decision-making within the EU, diminish national sovereignty, and move the Union towards a more

federal model of governance, often described in political discourse as the "United States of Europe".

Sanctions Policy towards Syria. Syria was among the first countries to become the target of the European Union's sanctions policy in the twenty-first century. The wave of popular uprisings known as the Arab Spring, which swept across Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, also reached Syria, where initially peaceful anti-government demonstrations gradually escalated into a protracted civil war. Peaceful protests in major cities such as Homs and Aleppo were met with increasingly violent repression by the Syrian authorities, eventually transforming the unrest into an armed conflict. In an effort to suppress the opposition, government forces employed heavy weaponry, including tanks and snipers, imposed sieges on urban areas, disrupted water supplies, and confiscated food and essential goods from civilian populations. These actions prompted widespread condemnation from the international community, which accused the Syrian government of committing serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Against the backdrop of the controversial military intervention in Libya, the European Union deliberately refrained from direct military involvement in the Syrian conflict. Instead, it opted for a strategy of coercive diplomacy centred on restrictive measures and the progressive political isolation of the Assad regime. The EU gradually concluded that President Bashar al-Assad's government had lost its political legitimacy and repeatedly called upon the Syrian authorities to cease violence against civilians, respect fundamental human rights, and engage in a genuine political dialogue[33]. As these appeals failed to produce any meaningful change in the government's conduct, the Council of the European Union decided to impose a comprehensive sanctions regime. These restrictive measures were designed to compel the ruling elite to alter its behaviour, facilitate conditions for a political transition and for democratic elections, and reduce the Assad regime's capacity to finance and sustain its military campaign against the civilian population[34].

The European Union's restrictive measures against Syria primarily consisted of targeted sanctions directed at individuals and entities directly involved in the repression of the civilian population or in financing and

[33] *Шнирков О.* Система економічних санкцій ЄС щодо третіх країн // Економічні санкції у сучасному світовому господарстві: монографія / *О.І. Шнирков, А.С. Філіпенко, Р.О. Заблоцька* та ін.; за ред. *О.І. Шниркова*. К.: ВПЦ «Київський університет», 2019. С. 6.

[34] Перспективи розвитку політики ЄС: глобальні та регіональні виміри: монографія / колектив авторів; за заг. ред. *О.І. Брусиловської, І.М. Коваля*. Одеса: Одес. нац. ун-т ім. І.І. Мечникова, 2019. С. 108.

sustaining the Syrian regime. In parallel, the EU imposed sectoral sanctions on key areas of the Syrian economy that constituted the financial backbone of the Assad government. These measures included an arms embargo, restrictions on goods and technologies that could be used for internal repression, and a prohibition on the import of Syrian crude oil into the European Union[35].

On 9 May 2011, the Council of the European Union adopted Council Decision 2011/273/CFSP, introducing travel bans and asset freezes against thirteen individuals, alongside an embargo on arms exports to Syria. At that stage, President Bashar al-Assad was deliberately excluded from the sanctions list in an effort to preserve opportunities for diplomatic engagement and encourage the Syrian leadership to enter into negotiations in which the European Union could potentially serve as a mediator. However, the continued escalation of violence and the Syrian government's unwillingness to engage in meaningful dialogue prompted the Council to expand the sanctions regime. Under Council Implementing Decision 2011/302/CFSP of 23 May 2011, President Assad and members of his family were added to the list of designated persons, increasing the total number of sanctioned individuals to twenty-three.

The sanctions regime continued to expand throughout 2011. By Council Decision 2011/522/CFSP of 2 September 2011, the list had grown to include sixty-six natural and legal persons, encompassing not only senior government officials but also businesspersons, companies, and other entities that benefited from or provided material support to the Syrian regime. Despite these progressively stricter restrictive measures, the sanctions failed to produce an immediate change in the Syrian government's behaviour. Consequently, the European Union decided to further strengthen and broaden its sanctions policy towards Syria[36]. These efforts, however, faced persistent political opposition from the Russian Federation, which consistently rejected broader international sanctions and opposed coercive measures against the Assad government within multilateral forums[37].

On 3 November 2011, the European Union further expanded its restrictive measures by broadening travel bans and financial sanctions. The new package included a prohibition on the import of Syrian crude oil, the

[35] *Giumelli F., Ivan P.* The effectiveness of EU sanctions An analysis of Iran, Belarus, Syria and Myanmar (Burma) Europe in the world is… // European Policy Center. 2013. № 76. P. 21.
[36] Европейские санкции: инструмент борьбы с репрессиями в Сирии // Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. 2020. URL: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/ru/dossiers-pays/syrie/les-sanctions-europeennes-un-instrument-de-lutte-contre-la-repression-en-syrie
[37] *Giumelli F., Ivan P.* The effectiveness of EU sanctions An analysis of Iran, Belarus, Syria and Myanmar (Burma) Europe in the world is… P. 21.

suspension of new financing by the European Investment Bank (EIB), and restrictions on trade in gold, precious metals, and newly minted Syrian banknotes and coinage. The Commercial Bank of Syria was also added to the sanctions list after being accused of facilitating the circumvention of EU restrictive measures. Another significant development was the introduction of a ban on luxury goods and on the export of technologies and equipment that could be used for internal repression. Collectively, these measures were designed to undermine the Syrian government's financial capacity by targeting sectors that generated substantial state revenue, particularly the oil industry.

In 2012, the European Union further intensified its policy of diplomatic isolation by reducing official contacts with the Assad regime to the minimum and closing its Delegation in Damascus in December of that year. At the same time, the EU actively supported a range of multilateral diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict peacefully. These efforts included cooperation with the United Nations, the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations Security Council, and the Joint UN–LAS Special Envoys for Syria, all of whom sought to facilitate negotiations and bring an end to the armed conflict. In parallel, the European Union significantly increased its humanitarian and financial assistance to civilians affected by the conflict in order to mitigate the regional consequences of the humanitarian crisis and prevent further destabilization.

Despite these diplomatic, humanitarian, and economic efforts, the conflict continued to escalate. In 2013, the Syrian government was accused by the international community of using chemical weapons against civilian populations, raising the prospect of an international military response[38]. Against this backdrop, the European Union decided to further strengthen its sanctions regime. By May 2013, the EU's sanctions list had expanded to include 179 individuals and 53 legal entities, reflecting the Union's continued commitment to increasing political and economic pressure on the Assad regime while avoiding direct military intervention[39].

The European Union's sanctions imposed on Syria between 2011 and 2013, particularly the embargo on Syrian crude oil had a significant impact on the country's energy sector. Syrian oil production declined dramatically from approximately 345,000 barrels per day in May 2011 to around 71,000 barrels per day by June 2013. This sharp reduction in production contributed to severe fuel shortages and rising domestic energy prices,

[38] Росія критикує санкції ЄС проти Сирії // BBC News Україна. 2011. 3 вересня. URL: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/politics/2011/09/110903_russia_syria_it

[39] *Giumelli F., Ivan P.* The effectiveness of EU sanctions An analysis of Iran, Belarus, Syria and Myanmar (Burma) Europe in the world is... P. 22.

placing an additional economic burden on the civilian population[40]. Nevertheless, the Syrian government was able to partially offset these losses through continued supplies of oil and petroleum products from the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran[41]. This development illustrated the inherent limitations of the European Union's autonomous sanctions when the targeted state continues to receive substantial political and economic support from third countries.

Despite the extensive sanctions imposed by both the European Union and other international actors, the Syrian civil war continued unabated, resulting in widespread civilian casualties, massive humanitarian suffering, and a significant increase in refugee flows towards Europe, particularly to the United Kingdom and France. In response to growing migration pressures and at the request of several Member States, the European Union reassessed certain aspects of its Syria policy, deciding to provide greater political support to opposition forces while maintaining the core elements of its existing sanctions regime. At the same time, recognizing the disproportionate humanitarian consequences associated with the oil embargo, the EU introduced limited adjustments in April 2013 by permitting the import of Syrian crude oil and petroleum products originating from territories controlled by opposition groups[42]. In practice, however, this policy change had only a marginal economic impact, as prior to the conflict the European Union had imported only around 1.5% of its crude oil from Syria.

The EU continued to expand its restrictive measures in subsequent years. In 2016, the Council of the European Union significantly broadened the list of individuals subject to sanctions because of their association with the Syrian government. The sanctions list was expanded to include 217 individuals, while restrictive measures also applied to 69 Syrian entities and public institutions. The sanctions regime continued to encompass a comprehensive range of measures, including the prohibition of trade in Syrian oil, restrictions on investment, the freezing of assets of the Central Bank of Syria held within EU Member States, and embargoes on the export of dual-use goods, advanced technologies, and telecommunications equipment. Through these measures, the European Union sought to further

[40] Ibid. P. 21.
[41] *Bitar N.* When Sanctions Backfire: Syrian War Profiteers Cash In on Insurgency // Spiegel Online. 2012. 6 June. URL: http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/eu-sanctions-have-only-helped-syria-s-war-profiteers-a-837348.html
[42] *Donati J., Payne Ju.* How Russia, Iran keep fuel flowing to Syria // Reuters. 2012. 26 April. URL: http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/26/syria-russia-iran-idUSL6E8F80OV20120426

constrain the Syrian government's financial and military capabilities while maintaining pressure for a negotiated political settlement of the conflict[43].

In January 2019, the European Union expanded its sanctions regime by imposing restrictive measures on eleven Syrian businessmen and five Syrian entities involved in high-profile real estate development projects that were considered to benefit the Assad regime at the expense of the Syrian population. According to the EU, these projects contributed to the consolidation of the regime's political and economic power while facilitating the unlawful expropriation of property and undermining the rights of displaced civilians. Subsequently, in February 2020, the Foreign Affairs Council unanimously adopted additional sanctions against eight businessmen and two Syrian entities for providing financial support to the Syrian government and contributing to its continued repression of the civilian population. By this stage, the EU's Syria sanctions regime encompassed approximately 70 entities and 289 individuals, making it one of the Union's most extensive autonomous sanctions frameworks.

Through these successive sanctions packages, the European Union reaffirmed its commitment to holding accountable not only representatives of the Syrian government but also those economic actors who sustained the regime's wartime economy. The EU argued that these individuals and entities profited from and facilitated practices such as money laundering, corruption, unlawful expropriation of property, smuggling, and extortion, thereby financing the continuation of the conflict at the expense of the Syrian civilian population. Moreover, they were considered to be actively obstructing the United Nations-led political process aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of the Syrian crisis. Many members of Syria's business elite were viewed as having a vested interest in preserving the existing political and economic order, as the continuation of the conflict generated significant financial benefits for networks closely associated with the regime. By that time, the Syrian civil war had already lasted for more than a decade and resulted in the deaths of over 400,000 people, while causing one of the largest humanitarian and displacement crises of the twenty-first century[44].

The parliamentary elections held in Syria in July 2020, which resulted in another victory for President Bashar al-Assad's ruling Ba'ath Party, triggered renewed domestic and international criticism. The election results were rejected by both the Syrian opposition and much of the international community, which questioned the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process given the ongoing armed conflict and widespread political repression.

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[43] *Giumelli F., Ivan P.* The effectiveness of EU sanctions An analysis of Iran, Belarus, Syria and Myanmar (Burma) Europe in the world is... P. 24.

[44] Єврорада розширила список санкцій щодо Сирії // LB.ua 2016. 27 жовтня. URL: https://lb.ua/world/2016/10/27/349107_evrocovet_rasshiril_sanktsionniy.html

At the same time, the continued military, financial, and diplomatic support provided by the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran significantly strengthened the Assad government and contributed to the prolongation of the conflict[45]. The partial withdrawal of United States military forces from northern Syria further altered the strategic balance on the ground, reducing external constraints on the Syrian government's military operations and reinforcing the regime's position in the conflict.

Recognizing the severe humanitarian consequences of the Syrian conflict, the European Union has sought to balance the application of restrictive measures against the Syrian government and its supporters with the need to safeguard humanitarian assistance. Consequently, the EU sanctions regime incorporates a broad range of humanitarian exemptions and derogations designed to facilitate relief operations. These exemptions apply to activities such as the purchase of petroleum products for humanitarian purposes, certain financial and banking transactions, and other operations necessary for the delivery of humanitarian aid. Moreover, EU sanctions do not apply to food products, essential civilian goods, medicines, or medical equipment. Over the past decade, the European Union and its Member States have collectively provided approximately €24 billion in humanitarian, development, and stabilization assistance to the Syrian population. France alone allocated nearly €100 million in humanitarian assistance between 2018 and 2019 to support civilians affected by the conflict[46].

In 2021, the Council of the European Union extended the existing sanctions regime against Syria until 1 June 2022, reaffirming its commitment to maintaining political and economic pressure on the Assad government[47]. On 15 November 2021, the Council imposed additional restrictive measures on four newly appointed Syrian ministers, thereby increasing the number of designated individuals to 287, all of whom became subject to travel bans and asset freezes. At the same time, restrictive measures remained in force against 70 legal entities whose assets within the European Union were frozen. The Council also renewed all previously adopted sanctions, emphasizing that their primary objective was to compel the Syrian authorities to end the repression of civilians and to engage in a genuine political process consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, which provides the internationally

[45] Европейские санкции: инструмент борьбы с репрессиями в Сирии // Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. 2020. URL: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/ru/dossiers-pays/syrie/les-sanctions-europeennes-un-instrument-de-lutte-contre-la-repression-en-syrie

[46] *Войтюк Т.* Рада ЄС продовжила санкції проти режиму Асада // Суспільне новини. 2021. 27 травня. URL: https://suspilne.media/134389-rada-es-prodovzila-sankcii-proti-sirii/

[47] Европейские санкции: инструмент борьбы с репрессиями в Сирии…

recognized framework for a comprehensive political settlement of the Syrian conflict[48].

The repeated use of chemical weapons by the Assad government against civilian populations prompted the European Union to further strengthen its sanctions policy. Accordingly, the Council of the European Union adopted additional restrictive measures targeting individuals and entities associated with Syria's chemical weapons programme and those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law[49].

On 6 February 2023, a devastating earthquake struck southeastern Türkiye and northern Syria, claiming the lives of more than 45,000 people and causing widespread destruction across the affected regions. Humanitarian operations in Syria were particularly challenging due to the fragmented territorial control within the country, as the earthquake affected areas administered both by the Syrian government and by opposition forces. Relief efforts were further complicated when the only United Nations-authorized cross-border humanitarian crossing between Türkiye and Syria was temporarily rendered inoperable as a result of earthquake-related damage, creating significant logistical obstacles to the delivery of emergency assistance[50].

In response to the humanitarian emergency, the European Union adopted a decision on 23 February 2023 introducing a temporary humanitarian exemption from its sanctions regime against Syria. The measure was designed to facilitate the rapid delivery of humanitarian aid by removing the requirement for humanitarian organizations to obtain prior authorization from EU competent authorities before engaging in transactions or providing goods and services involving sanctioned persons or entities. This temporary derogation reflected the EU's broader commitment to ensuring that its restrictive measures would not impede humanitarian relief operations or adversely affect civilian populations in situations of exceptional humanitarian need[51].

Throughout 2023, however, Syria remained politically and economically unstable. The country experienced renewed anti-government demonstrations and labour strikes triggered by rising fuel prices, deepening

[48] *Войтюк Т.* Рада ЄС продовжила санкції проти режиму Асада // Суспільне новини. 2021. 27 травня. URL: https://suspilne.media/134389-rada-es-prodovzila-sankcii-proti-sirii/

[49] ЄС запровадив санкції проти 4 нових міністрів уряду Сирії // Європейська правда. 2021. 15 листопада. URL: https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2021/11/15/7130304/

[50] ЄС продовжив санкції проти осіб із РФ і Сирії за використання хімічної зброї // Європейська правда. 2022. 13 жовтня. URL: https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2022/10/13/7148634/

[51] *Богданюк О., Гудзь І., Собенко Н.* Землетруси в Туреччині та Сирії: загинули понад 45 тисяч людей // Суспільне новини. 2023. 16 лютого. URL: https://suspilne.media/376205-zemletrusi-v-tureccini-ta-sirii-ponad-41-tisaca-ludej-zaginuli/

economic hardship, systemic corruption, and persistent government mismanagement. Protesters demanded the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad and fundamental political reforms. The Syrian authorities largely ignored these demonstrations, with only limited official responses. One of the few public statements came from Omar Rahmoun, Head of the Reconciliation Office, who dismissed the protesters as extremists. Meanwhile, the government in Damascus continued to attribute the country's economic crisis primarily to Western sanctions, despite the significant structural consequences of prolonged armed conflict, institutional deterioration, and economic dependence on external support[52].

The collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024 and the establishment of a new transitional government in Syria prompted the European Union to undertake a comprehensive review of its sanctions policy towards the country. In May 2025, the Council of the European Union adopted a series of legal acts lifting a significant number of sectoral economic sanctions that had been imposed during the Syrian civil war[53]. As part of this policy shift, the Council removed twenty-four Syrian companies and public entities from the EU sanctions list. Those delisted included the Central Bank of Syria, several commercial banks, and enterprises operating in strategically important sectors of the Syrian economy, including oil and gas production, petroleum refining, the cotton industry, and telecommunications. These measures reflected the EU's intention to facilitate Syria's economic recovery and support the country's political transition while encouraging reconstruction and institutional stabilization.

At the same time, the European Union maintained its targeted restrictive measures against individuals and entities associated with the former Assad regime. The Council extended these individual sanctions until 1 June 2026, reaffirming that accountability for serious human rights violations and support for the former regime remained a central element of the EU's Syria policy[54]. Subsequently, on 18 May 2026, the Council removed an additional seven entities from the sanctions list, including the Syrian Ministries of Defence and Interior, reflecting further progress in the country's political transition. Nevertheless, the Council simultaneously prolonged restrictive measures against individuals and organizations linked to the former Assad government until 1 June 2027, emphasizing that

[52] Євросоюз послабив санкції проти Сирії: що сталося // Уніан. 2023. 23 лютого. URL: https://www.unian.ua/world/yevrosoyuz-poslabiv-sankciji-proti-siriji-shcho-stalosya-12157137.html

[53] Євросоюз офіційно зняв санкції з Сирії // Радіо Свобода. 2025. 28 травня. URL: https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-es-znjav-sankciji-z-syriji/33427636.html

[54] ЄС зняв економічні санкції з Сирії // Європейська правда. 2025. 28 травня. URL: https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2025/05/28/7212605/

sanctions would continue to target those responsible for repression, violations of international law, and the destabilization of Syria[55].

Overall, the experience of the European Union's sanctions policy towards Syria demonstrates both the possibilities and the limitations of restrictive measures as an instrument of foreign and security policy. Between 2011 and 2024, EU sanctions did not succeed in bringing an end to the Syrian conflict or compelling the Assad regime to undertake meaningful political reforms. Their principal contribution lay in signalling the international community's condemnation of systematic human rights violations, constraining certain economic and financial resources available to the regime, and increasing international diplomatic pressure. At the same time, the European Union consistently complemented its sanctions policy with substantial humanitarian assistance and reconstruction support, thereby seeking to mitigate the adverse consequences of the conflict for the Syrian civilian population while preserving the distinction between measures directed against the regime and assistance provided to those affected by the war.

The Assad regime ultimately proved unable to withstand the profound geopolitical changes that reshaped the regional balance of power. Russia's deep military engagement in its full-scale war against Ukraine from 2022 onward, combined with the substantial weakening of Iran-backed proxy groups and Hezbollah as a result of escalating conflicts in the Middle East during 2024, significantly reduced the external support upon which the Syrian government had long depended. These developments contributed to the collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024 and the subsequent establishment of a transitional government.

As of mid-2026, Syria has entered a period of gradual political stabilization following the fall of the Assad regime and the reconfiguration of state institutions under the transitional authorities. Nevertheless, the country's security environment remains fragile. Localized clashes continue in areas under Kurdish control, while persistent external security challenges and unresolved political divisions continue to impede a comprehensive national settlement. In recognition of the changed political circumstances, the European Union has lifted virtually all sectoral economic sanctions previously imposed on Syria in order to facilitate economic recovery and reconstruction. At the same time, the EU has maintained targeted restrictive measures against individuals and entities associated with the former Assad regime. These sanctions are scheduled for

[55] *Кузьменко Ю.* ЄС зняв санкції з двох міністерств Сирії, але на рік подовжив обмеження проти оточення Асада // LIGA.net. 2026. 18 травня. URL: https://news.liga.net/ua/politics/news/yes-zniav-sanktsii-z-dvokh-ministerstv-syrii-ale-na-rik-podovzhyv-obmezhennia-proty-otochennia-asada

review in June 2027, reflecting the Union's continued commitment to accountability for serious violations of international law while supporting Syria's political transition and long-term stabilization.

The Effectiveness of EU Sanctions against Iran. Iran's pursuit of an advanced nuclear programme, its persistent lack of full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), support for armed non-state actors in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and, more recently, its military assistance to the Russian Federation in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war have prompted leading international actors, including the European Union, to adopt a broad range of restrictive measures. These actions have been intended to curb Iran's destabilizing regional activities, limit the development of its strategic military capabilities, and encourage compliance with international law and non-proliferation obligations.

In 2010, the European Union substantially reinforced the sanctions regime established by the United Nations Security Council by introducing autonomous economic and financial restrictive measures against Iran while continuing to maintain limited trade and economic relations in sectors not covered by sanctions. Beginning in 2011, the EU also introduced a separate sanctions framework in response to serious human rights violations committed by the Iranian authorities. These measures included travel bans and asset freezes targeting individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses, as well as restrictions on the export to Iran of equipment and technologies that could be used for internal repression or for monitoring telecommunications and suppressing freedom of expression. Together, these measures reflected the European Union's dual-track approach towards Iran, combining non-proliferation objectives with the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms[56].

In 2012, the European Union significantly intensified its sanctions regime by introducing a comprehensive embargo on Iranian crude oil imports. In addition, the EU froze the assets of the Central Bank of Iran, prohibited trade in precious metals, and imposed extensive restrictions on Iran's petrochemical sector, including both exports to and imports from the country. These measures substantially increased the economic pressure on Iran, contributing to declining oil revenues, currency depreciation, rising inflation, and reduced access to international financial markets. While the sanctions demonstrated considerable economic effectiveness, they did not, at that stage, produce a political breakthrough on the issue of Iran's nuclear

[56] *Лисогор І.* У Сирії другий тиждень тривають антиурядові протести. Люди закликають Асада піти у відставку // LB.UA. 2023. 29 серпня. URL: https://lb.ua/world/2023/08/29/572268_sirii_drugiy_tizhden_trivayut.html

programme. Meaningful progress only emerged following the 2013 presidential election, which brought Hassan Rouhani to power and marked the beginning of a more pragmatic approach to Iran's foreign policy and international negotiations[57].

The gradual improvement in relations between Iran and the United States created favourable conditions for renewed diplomatic engagement between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In November 2013, negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme were held in Geneva involving Iran, the E3/EU+3 (P5+1) group comprising the United States, France, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, China, and Germany, and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, who coordinated the negotiations on behalf of the European Union. On 24 November 2013, during the third round of talks, the parties concluded the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA), an interim agreement that established confidence-building measures pending the negotiation of a comprehensive settlement. Under the agreement, Iran committed to halting further construction-related activities at the heavy-water reactor in Arak, which had raised international concerns because of its potential capacity to produce weapons-grade plutonium, and agreed to grant the IAEA expanded access to its nuclear facilities for monitoring and verification purposes.

Furthermore, Iran agreed to cease uranium enrichment above 5 per cent, dilute or convert its existing stockpile of uranium enriched to higher levels into material enriched below the 5 per cent threshold, and suspend several sensitive elements of its nuclear programme. In return, the international community, including the European Union, agreed to provide limited sanctions relief valued at approximately $7 billion, while maintaining the core architecture of the sanctions regime. The interim agreement was designed to remain in force for six months, during which the parties were expected to negotiate a comprehensive and legally binding arrangement addressing the long-term future of Iran's nuclear programme. The Joint Plan of Action ultimately laid the diplomatic foundation for the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in July 2015.

As a consequence of the Joint Plan of Action, on 8 December 2013 the Iranian authorities agreed to permit inspectors from the IAEA to conduct inspections of the Arak heavy-water reactor following the suspension of activities that had raised concerns regarding the potential production of weapons-grade plutonium. Over the following two years, negotiations between Iran and the E3/EU+3 (P5+1) continued with the

[57] Iran: EU restrictive measures // European Council. 2023. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/iran/

objective of reaching a comprehensive agreement on the future of Iran's nuclear programme. These diplomatic efforts culminated in July 2015 with the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), under which Iran accepted substantial limitations on its nuclear activities, enhanced the IAEA monitoring and verification mechanisms, and reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that its nuclear programme would remain exclusively peaceful[58].

The conclusion of the JCPOA paved the way for the gradual lifting of nuclear-related international sanctions. On 16 January 2016, the JCPOA's "Implementation Day", the Council of the European Union lifted virtually all EU economic and financial sanctions linked to Iran's nuclear programme after the IAEA verified that Iran had fulfilled its initial commitments under the agreement. The implementation of the JCPOA resulted in the unfreezing of approximately $100 billion in Iranian assets held abroad and enabled Iran to re-enter international energy markets. The Iranian government announced its intention to increase crude oil exports by approximately 500,000 barrels per day, with plans to raise exports to one million barrels per day in the following months.

The diplomatic progress achieved under the JCPOA was significantly undermined in 2018, when the United States unilaterally withdrew from the agreement and reinstated extensive economic sanctions against Iran under its "maximum pressure" policy. The U.S. administration justified this decision by arguing that the JCPOA failed to address Iran's ballistic missile programme, regional military activities, and long-term nuclear ambitions. The withdrawal was also influenced by intelligence assessments and concerns expressed by Israel that Iran had preserved elements of its nuclear infrastructure and was using the economic benefits generated by sanctions relief to strengthen the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and to finance Iran-backed armed groups operating in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

The United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA was met with deep concern by the European Union, which continued to regard the agreement as a cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. In an effort to preserve the JCPOA and maintain legitimate trade with Iran despite U.S. secondary sanctions, the EU, together with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, established the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX). The mechanism was intended to facilitate lawful trade with Iran outside the U.S.-dominated financial system. In practice, however, INSTEX remained extremely limited in scope and was used

[58] *Вовчук Л.* Санкційна політика Європейського Союзу проти Ірану у XXI ст. // Acta De Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. 2023. № 5. С.48-49.

almost exclusively to facilitate humanitarian trade, including medicines, medical equipment, and food products, without generating significant broader economic engagement between Iran and European partners[59].

Throughout 2019–2020, the European Union undertook a series of diplomatic initiatives aimed at persuading Iran to return to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Among these efforts were attempts by European leaders to facilitate a high-level meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Iranian President H. Rouhani on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly. These diplomatic initiatives, however, failed to produce tangible results. The principal obstacle remained the profound disagreement between Washington and Tehran over the future of U.S. sanctions policy. The United States maintained its "maximum pressure" strategy, seeking to reduce Iran's oil exports to near zero[60], while Iran insisted that meaningful negotiations could only resume after the removal of U.S. economic sanctions.

The situation remained largely unchanged in 2021. The administration of President Joe Biden expressed its willingness to return to the JCPOA but insisted that Iran must first resume full compliance with its nuclear obligations, including reducing its stockpile of enriched uranium and dismantling advanced uranium enrichment centrifuges. Iran, however, remained deeply sceptical of U.S. commitments following Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the agreement in 2018. The Iranian leadership maintained that any return to full compliance with the JCPOA had to be preceded by the lifting of U.S. sanctions and the effective termination of what Tehran described as an "economic war" against the Islamic Republic.

Prospects for restoring the agreement were further undermined by a series of dramatic security developments. The January 2020 U.S. drone strike that killed Major General Qasem Soleimani, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, and the November 2020 assassination of leading Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, widely attributed by international observers to Israeli intelligence, significantly intensified regional tensions and reinforced hard-line political forces within Iran. In response, Tehran accelerated key elements of its nuclear programme. Seeking to increase pressure for the removal of international sanctions, the Iranian Parliament adopted the Strategic Action Plan to Lift Sanctions in December 2020. The legislation required the government to expand uranium enrichment to 20%, install additional advanced centrifuges, and substantially reduce cooperation with the IAEA

[59] *Чебан О., Краскова А.* Труднощі взаємодії ЄС та КНР щодо вирішення іранської ядерної програми // Міжнародні та політичні дослідження. 2021. № 34. С. 156.
[60] *Вовчук Л.* Санкційна політика Європейського Союзу проти Ірану у XXI ст.... С. 50.

if sanctions were not lifted. The European Union viewed these measures with serious concern, warning that they constituted significant departures from Iran's commitments under the JCPOA and further complicated diplomatic efforts to preserve the nuclear agreement[61].

A new phase in the European Union's sanctions policy towards Iran began in autumn 2022, following a series of events that fundamentally reshaped EU–Iran relations. In September 2022, Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, died while in the custody of Iran's so-called morality police after being detained for allegedly violating the country's mandatory hijab regulations. Her death triggered the largest wave of anti-government protests in Iran in more than a decade, with demonstrations rapidly spreading across the country[62]. The Iranian authorities responded with the extensive use of force, resulting in numerous deaths, injuries, and mass arrests. From the European Union's perspective, the violent suppression of peaceful demonstrators constituted a serious violation of fundamental human rights, including the freedoms of expression, assembly, and peaceful protest. The Iranian authorities also imposed severe restrictions on internet access and blocked major social media and messaging platforms, thereby further limiting freedom of expression and access to information.

In response, on 17 October 2022, the European Union adopted the first package of sanctions against Iran under its global human rights sanctions framework. The restrictive measures targeted a number of individuals and entities responsible for serious human rights violations, including those involved in the death of Mahsa Amini and the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations. These measures consisted primarily of travel bans and asset freezes, while also prohibiting EU persons and entities from making funds or economic resources available to those designated under the sanctions regime[63].

Iran's military support for the Russian Federation during its full-scale invasion of Ukraine became an additional and highly significant catalyst for the expansion of EU sanctions. The European Union concluded that Iran had supplied Russia with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), including Shahed drones, which were subsequently used in attacks against Ukrainian cities and critical civilian infrastructure. These strikes caused numerous civilian casualties and extensive damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure, residential areas, and other civilian facilities. The transfer of

[61] *Lister T.* Iran drives another stake into the heart of the nuclear deal // CNN News. 2020. January 6. URL: https://cutt.ly/u1YUyn6

[62] *Вовчук Л.* Санкційна політика Європейського Союзу проти Ірану у XXI ст.... С. 51.

[63] Іран не пустив сім'ю Махси Аміні, чия смерть спровокувала протести, отримати премію в ЄС // Європейська правда. 2023. 10 грудня. URL: https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2023/12/10/7175294/

military equipment to Russia was therefore regarded by the EU as contributing directly to violations of international law and to the continuation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine[64].

Against this backdrop, on 14 November 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted a second package of sanctions, imposing restrictive measures on 29 individuals and 3 entities responsible for serious human rights abuses in Iran. Subsequently, on 12 December 2022, the EU introduced a third sanctions package, significantly expanding the list of designated persons and entities[65]. The measures included travel bans, asset freezes, and a prohibition on EU individuals and organizations engaging in financial transactions with those listed under the sanctions regime. By the end of 2022, the sanctions covered 126 individuals and 11 entities. In addition, the European Union strengthened export controls by prohibiting the supply to Iran of equipment and technologies that could be used for internal repression, surveillance, or the monitoring and restriction of telecommunications and internet communications, thereby reinforcing the EU's broader commitment to protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms[66].

Despite the introduction of restrictive measures in 2022, the European Union's sanctions did not produce a decisive change in Iran's foreign or security policy. Supported by expanding economic and strategic cooperation with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, Iran was able to partially offset the economic effects of Western sanctions through alternative trade routes, energy exports, and financial arrangements outside the Western sanctions regime. At the same time, the European Union remained increasingly concerned about Iran's expanding military capabilities, its support for Russia's war against Ukraine, and its destabilizing activities across the Middle East.

In response, the Council of the European Union adopted six additional sanctions packages during the first seven months of 2023 on 23 January, 20 February, 20 March, 24 April, 22 May, and 20 July. These measures significantly expanded the EU's restrictive framework by prohibiting the export from the European Union to Iran of components and technologies used in the development and manufacture of UAVs. The sanctions also introduced additional travel bans and asset freezes targeting individuals and entities responsible for, supporting, or participating in Iran's military drone programme. Furthermore, the Council designated six additional Iranian individuals for their involvement in supplying military equipment to the

[64] Iran: EU restrictive measures // European Council. 2023. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/iran/
[65] *Вовчук Л.* Санкційна політика Європейського Союзу проти Ірану у XXI ст.... С. 51.
[66] ЄС посилив санкції проти Ірану // Прямий. 2022. 14 листопада. URL: https://cutt.ly/91YUAjd

Russian Federation for use in its war of aggression against Ukraine, particularly Shahed drones, as well as for providing military assistance to the Syrian government, including the supply of air defence systems[67].

The European Union continued to strengthen its sanctions policy at the end of 2023. In December 2023, the Council imposed restrictive measures on six individuals and five Iranian companies, including Baharestan Kish Company, Shakad Sanat Asmari, Kimia Part Sivan Company, Sarmad Electronic Sepahan Company, and Saad Sazeh Faraz Sharif for their involvement in the development and production of unmanned aerial vehicles subsequently supplied to Russia for use in the war against Ukraine. The measures included asset freezes, travel bans, and a prohibition on EU individuals and companies engaging in financial or economic transactions with the designated persons and entities[68].

The sanctions regime was further expanded during autumn 2024 in response to Iran's continued military support for Russia, including the transfer of ballistic missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and related technologies, as well as Iran's broader role in regional weapons proliferation. On 14 October and 18 November 2024, the Council adopted new sanctions packages introducing additional export restrictions on components and technologies used in the design, manufacture, and maintenance of missiles and UAVs. The European Union also prohibited transactions involving ports owned, operated, or controlled by sanctioned persons or entities, or otherwise used for transporting military equipment to the Russian Federation, including drones, missiles, related technologies, and critical components.

In addition, the EU imposed restrictive measures on the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), its Managing Director Mohammad Reza Khiabani, and three Russian shipping companies, MG Flot, VTS Broker, and Arapax, which were accused of facilitating the maritime transportation of military equipment across the Caspian Sea. These measures reflected the European Union's increasingly integrated approach to sanctions policy, linking its response to Iran's domestic human rights violations with broader concerns regarding regional security, missile proliferation, and Tehran's direct military support for Russia's aggression against Ukraine[69].

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[67] *Вовчук Л.* Санкційна політика Європейського Союзу проти Ірану у XXI ст.... С. 52.

[68] Iran: EU restrictive measures // European Council. 2023. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/iran/

[69] Нові санкції ЄС проти Ірану: опубліковано список осіб та компаній // Слово і діло. 2024. 14 жовтня. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2024/10/14/novyna/suspilstvo/novi-sankcziyi-yes-proty-iranu-opublikovano-spysok-osib-ta-kompanij; ЄС розширив санкції проти Ірану за військову допомогу рф // Рубрика. 2024. 18 листопада. URL: https://rubryka.com/2024/11/18/yes-rozshyryv-sanktsiyi-proty-iranu-za-vijskovu-dopomogu-rf/

Despite the successive expansion of the European Union's restrictive measures, the sanctions did not induce the Iranian government to cease its military support for the Russian Federation or to alter its broader regional security policy. Consequently, in January 2026, the European Union further intensified its sanctions regime against Iran by adopting an additional package of restrictive measures targeting both Iran's military-industrial complex and those responsible for serious human rights violations.

The new measures imposed sanctions on four individuals and six entities, including Khojir Missile Development and Production and Sahara Thunder, because of their involvement in the development and production of Iranian ballistic missiles and UAVs. These entities were identified as key components of Iran's defence-industrial infrastructure and were considered to have contributed directly to the production of military equipment supplied to the Russian Federation. The sanctions consisted of asset freezes, travel bans, and prohibitions on making funds or economic resources available to the designated persons and entities.

At the same time, the Council of the European Union broadened its human rights sanctions regime by imposing restrictive measures on fifteen additional individuals and six organizations responsible for serious human rights violations in Iran. Among those designated were the Minister of the Interior, Eskandar Momeni, the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, the Attorney General, the Chief Justice, other senior representatives of the Iranian judiciary, as well as commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and senior law enforcement officials. According to the Council, these individuals were directly involved in the violent suppression of peaceful demonstrations, the arbitrary detention of political activists and human rights defenders, and other systematic violations of fundamental freedoms.

The sanctions were also extended to organizations responsible for restricting freedom of expression and access to information in Iran. These included the Iranian Audio-Visual Media Regulatory Authority (SATRA), the Seraj Cyberspace Organization, and the Working Group for Determining Instances of Criminal Content (WGDICC), all of which were accused of facilitating internet censorship, restricting digital communications, and disseminating state-controlled disinformation. By targeting both military-industrial entities and institutions responsible for domestic repression, the European Union sought to increase pressure on the Iranian authorities while reinforcing the link between its sanctions policy, the protection of human rights, and the maintenance of international peace and security[70].

[70] *Єлагіна С.* Рада ЄС посилила санкції проти Ірану. Під обмеженнями — міністр закордонних справ та голова Ради нацбезпеки // Hromadske. 2026. 29 січня. URL: https://hromadske.ua/europa/258635-rada-yes-posylyla-sanktsiyi-proty-iranu-pid-obmezenniamy-ministr-zakordonnykh-sprav-ta-holova-rady-natsbezpeky

Overall, the European Union's sanctions policy towards Iran demonstrates limited effectiveness, as, despite exerting substantial economic pressure, it has not achieved its principal political objectives. EU restrictive measures have significantly constrained Iran's access to international financial markets, advanced technologies, foreign investment, and export opportunities. Nevertheless, they have failed to compel the Iranian leadership to abandon its nuclear programme, halt the development of ballistic missile capabilities, or discontinue its support for regional proxy actors. One of the principal explanations for this outcome lies in Iran's capacity to adapt to a prolonged sanctions regime by exploiting alternative trade routes, utilizing informal financial networks, and deepening economic and strategic cooperation with states that have not joined the European sanctions framework, most notably the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation.

At the same time, the Iranian case demonstrates that economic sanctions are generally more effective as an instrument of containment and deterrence than as a means of coercing a fundamental change in a state's strategic behaviour. The effectiveness of sanctions depends to a considerable extent on sustained international coordination, the political unity of sanctioning states, the degree of the target country's economic isolation, and the willingness of its political leadership to reassess its national security priorities. In the case of Iran, these conditions have been only partially fulfilled, allowing the country to preserve its core foreign and security policy objectives despite experiencing significant economic losses. Consequently, the European Union's sanctions should be regarded as an important but inherently insufficient instrument of external action. Their long-term effectiveness depends on their integration with broader diplomatic engagement, security cooperation, and international legal mechanisms capable of addressing the complex political and strategic factors that shape the behaviour of the targeted state.

EU Sanctions against North Korea. Another state that not only provides military support to the Russian Federation in its war against Ukraine but also continues to undermine regional and international security is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). North Korea's persistent pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile capabilities has represented one of the most serious challenges to the global non-proliferation regime. Following the DPRK's first nuclear test in October 2006, conducted in violation of international obligations, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted comprehensive sanctions against the country. The European Union subsequently implemented these UN measures while simultaneously introducing additional autonomous restrictive measures designed to reinforce the international sanctions regime.

On 20 November 2006, the Council of the European Union adopted a series of autonomous sanctions that went beyond the requirements established by the United Nations. These measures included a comprehensive arms embargo, asset freezes and travel bans targeting individuals involved in North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, restrictions on the export and import of goods, materials, equipment, and technologies that could contribute to the development of nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, or other weapons of mass destruction, as well as a prohibition on the export of luxury goods to the DPRK. The latter measure was intended to exert pressure on the North Korean political elite while minimizing adverse consequences for the broader civilian population[71].

North Korea's second nuclear test in 2009 provoked widespread international condemnation and prompted a further tightening of the sanctions regime. In response, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1874 (2009), significantly expanding the existing arms embargo and strengthening restrictions on financial transactions, cargo inspections, and the transfer of sensitive technologies. The European Union subsequently reinforced these measures by adopting Council Common Position 2009/573/CFSP on 27 July 2009[72] and Council Regulation (EC) No. 1283/2009 on 22 December 2009[73]. These legal instruments introduced additional autonomous restrictive measures, including expanded export controls on dual-use goods and technologies that could contribute to North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, ballistic missile development, or other weapons of mass destruction[74].

The EU sanctions regime continued to expand in subsequent years. On 19 December 2011, the European Union added three individuals and twelve entities to its sanctions list. These persons and organizations became subject to asset freezes and travel bans because of their involvement in, or

[71] *Оринчук К.* Після санкцій на імпорт титану Ірану має стати не вигідним постачання шахідів до РФ // Biznes Tsenzor. 2022. 23 листопада. URL: https://biz.censor.net/m3381493

[72] Council Common Position 2006/795/CFSP of 20 November 2006 concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea // Official Journal of the European Union. 2006. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006E0795&from=EN

[73] Council Common Position 2009/573/CFSP of 27 July 2009 amending Common Position 2006/795/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea // Official Journal of the European Union. 2009. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009E0573&from=EN

[74] Acts whose publication is obligatory Council Regulation (EU) No 1283/2009 of 22 December 2009 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 329/2007 concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea // Official Journal of the European Union. 2009. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009R1283&from=EN

support for, North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. Through these measures, the European Union sought to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and reinforce coordinated international efforts to prevent the DPRK from advancing its strategic military capabilities in violation of international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions[75].

In response to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2087 (2013), adopted on 22 January 2013 following North Korea's satellite launch using ballistic missile technology, the Council of the European Union introduced additional restrictive measures against the DPRK. These measures further expanded existing export, import, and procurement prohibitions on specified goods, materials, and technologies that could contribute to North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. In addition, EU Member States were instructed to exercise heightened vigilance with regard to the entry into, or transit through, their territories of individuals acting on behalf of, or under the direction of, persons and entities designated under the sanctions regime. The Council also expanded the sanctions list by adding four individuals and nine entities, all of whom became subject to asset freezes and travel bans because of their involvement in activities related to North Korea's prohibited weapons programmes.

Alongside the implementation of United Nations sanctions, the European Union continued to strengthen its autonomous sanctions regime. Pursuant to the Council Conclusions on the DPRK, the EU introduced an extensive package of additional restrictive measures, which included:

– a prohibition on the export of specific goods and materials that could contribute to North Korea's programmes related to weapons of mass destruction, including certain categories of aluminium products;

– a ban on trade in gold, precious metals, and diamonds with the Government of the DPRK;

– a prohibition on supplying newly printed banknotes and minted coinage to, or for the benefit of, the Central Bank of the DPRK;

– restrictions on establishing branches and subsidiaries of North Korean banks, as well as limitations on cooperation between financial institutions of the European Union and the DPRK;

– a prohibition on the issuance, purchase, or trading of government-issued or government-guaranteed bonds of the DPRK;

[75] Adoption of additional restrictive measures against the DPRK: transposition of UN sanctions (UNSC resolution 1874) and further EU autonomous measures // European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/north-korea-sanctions/timeline-eu-restrictive-measures-against-north-korea/

– a ban on establishing new branches, subsidiaries, or representative offices of North Korean banks within the European Union, as well as restrictions preventing North Korean financial institutions from creating joint ventures or acquiring ownership interests in banks operating in EU Member States; and

– a prohibition preventing financial institutions established within the European Union from opening representative offices, branches, or subsidiaries in the DPRK[76].

In January 2013, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched the Kwangmyŏngsŏng-3 satellite using ballistic missile technology, an action widely regarded by the international community as a violation of existing United Nations Security Council resolutions. Shortly thereafter, in February 2013, the DPRK conducted its third nuclear test, further escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and provoking strong international condemnation. In response, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolutions 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013), which significantly strengthened the international sanctions regime against North Korea.

In line with these resolutions, on 22 April 2013, the Council of the European Union expanded its autonomous sanctions framework by adding two individuals and three entities to the EU sanctions list, subjecting them to asset freezes and travel bans. At the same time, the Council introduced a number of additional restrictive measures designed to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of existing sanctions.

These measures included the extension of asset-freezing provisions to natural and legal persons acting on behalf of, or providing assistance to, designated individuals or entities involved in circumventing sanctions. The European Union also imposed stricter limitations on the establishment and maintenance of correspondent banking relationships between EU financial institutions and banks operating in the DPRK. Furthermore, Member States were required to deny access to their ports for any vessel travelling to or from North Korea where there were reasonable grounds to suspect that it was transporting prohibited goods and where the vessel refused to submit to inspection. Similar restrictions were introduced in the aviation sector, requiring Member States to deny take-off, landing, or overflight rights to aircraft suspected of carrying prohibited cargo associated with North Korea's weapons programmes. In addition, the EU called for enhanced monitoring and increased vigilance regarding the activities of North Korean

[76] Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1355/2011 of 20 December 2011 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 329/2007 concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea // Official Journal of the European Union. 2011. № 54. P. 39-47. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2011:338:FULL&from=EN

diplomatic personnel, reflecting concerns that diplomatic missions were being used to facilitate sanctions evasion and support prohibited procurement activities[77].

During 2014–2015, the European Union added 2 entities and 6 individuals to its sanctions list, whose assets were frozen and whose travel was restricted.

North Korea's fourth nuclear test in 2016 prompted the United Nations Security Council to immediately adopt Resolution 2270, which introduced additional sanctions against the DPRK. The European Union also responded promptly to the actions of the aggressor state. On 4 March 2016, the Council of the European Union added 16 individuals and 12 legal entities to the list of persons and entities subject to asset freezes and travel bans. On 31 March 2016, the European Union also expanded its restrictive measures by introducing a ban on the export and import of any goods (except food and medicines) that could contribute to enhancing the operational capabilities of the DPRK's armed forces; mandatory inspection of all cargo to and from the DPRK and a prohibition on flights transporting prohibited items; a ban on the import of certain minerals from the DPRK and the export of aviation fuel to the DPRK; the expulsion of DPRK representatives and third-country nationals involved in the country's illicit programmes; and additional financial measures, including the obligation to close existing branches, subsidiaries, or representative offices of DPRK banks.

On 19 May 2016, the European Union expanded its sanctions list by adding 18 individuals and 1 legal entity. On 27 May, due to the threat posed to international peace and security, the Council of the European Union adopted additional restrictive measures against the DPRK in the areas of trade, investment, finance, and transport. On 8 December 2016, the Member States of the European Union added a further 11 individuals and 10 entities to the list of persons and organizations subject to asset freezes and travel restrictions[78].

Despite a series of significant sanctions imposed by both the United Nations and the European Union, North Korea continued to remain a violator of international peace and security, while at the same time suffering serious economic consequences. The sanctions adopted in 2017 had the most significant impact on North Korea and its foreign economic activities. Between February and October 2017, the Council of the European Union, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution

[77] Joint Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 329/2007 concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Brussels, 2013. 10 p.
[78] Transposition of UN Security Council resolution 2094 of 7 March 2013 // European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/north-korea-sanctions/timeline-eu-restrictive-measures-against-north-korea/

2321, introduced a number of additional restrictive measures against the DPRK. These primarily included restrictions on transactions involving coal, iron, and iron ore from the DPRK; a ban on the import of copper, nickel, silver, zinc, and statues from North Korea; a prohibition on the export of new helicopters and vessels to the DPRK; the strengthening of existing restrictions in the transport and financial sectors; measures to prevent the specialized education or training of DPRK nationals in disciplines that could contribute to the country's nuclear or ballistic missile programmes; and measures to terminate scientific and technical cooperation, with the exception of medical exchanges. The European Union also added 30 individuals and 17 entities to its sanctions list. In addition, four vessels were designated under the sanctions regime[79].

On 26 February 2018, the Council of the European Union completed the transposition into EU legislation of the measures introduced by the latest United Nations Security Council Resolution 2397 (2017). These measures included: strengthening the ban on the export of refined petroleum products to the DPRK by reducing the annual export quota from 2 million barrels to 500,000 barrels; a ban on the import from the DPRK of food and agricultural products, machinery, electrical equipment, earth and stone, and wood; a ban on the export to the DPRK of all industrial machinery and transportation vehicles, as well as the extension of restrictions to cover all iron, steel, and other metals; additional maritime restrictive measures against vessels where there were reasonable grounds to believe that they had been involved in violations of UN sanctions; and a requirement for the repatriation of all DPRK workers employed abroad within 24 months, in accordance with applicable national and international law[80].

During 2019–2022, additional North Korean individuals and entities were designated under the EU sanctions regime. The new listings included heads of institutions involved in the development of the DPRK's missile programme, as well as natural and legal persons participating in sanctions evasion activities that could generate revenue for the country's illicit weapons programmes. At present, the total number of persons included in the European Union's autonomous sanctions list amounts to 65[81].

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[79] Council Regulation (EU) 2017/330 of 27 February 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 329/2007 concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea // Official Journal of the European Union. 2017. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017R0330&from=EN

[80] Timeline – EU restrictive measures against North Korea // European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/north-korea-sanctions/timeline-eu-restrictive-measures-against-north-korea/

[81] North Korea: EU aligns sanctions with latest UN Security Council resolution // Council of the EU. 2018. 26 February. URL: https://www.consilium..europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/02/26/north-korea-eu-aligns-sanctions-with-latest-un-security-council-resolution/

Following the launch of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, North Korea has actively supported the actions of the Russian Federation and its government by providing military assistance, including the supply of missiles that Russia has used in attacks against Ukraine. In view of these developments, on 15 February 2024, the European Union proposed imposing sanctions on the DPRK for supplying ballistic missiles to Russia. Specifically, it proposed adding the Minister of Defence of the DPRK and the General Missile Bureau, the government body responsible for overseeing the country's ballistic missile programme, to the EU sanctions list[82].

In 2025, the European Union continued and strengthened its autonomous restrictive measures against the DPRK in response to its military cooperation with Russia and its support for the war against Ukraine, as well as its ongoing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The main focus was placed on targeted sanctions against North Korean military officials, including Lieutenant General Cha Yong Bom, the updating of sanctions lists, and efforts to combat sanctions circumvention[83].

Throughout 2025, the European Union, together with its international partners, particularly the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea, also focused on disrupting schemes used by Pyongyang to evade United Nations sanctions, including the use of IT workers, maritime transportation networks, and cyber espionage activities carried out by hacker groups such as Lazarus and Kimsuky, which are coordinated by the DPRK's intelligence services[84].

In 2026, the European Union continues to maintain and strengthen its restrictive measures against the DPRK, focusing on countering its nuclear programme and military cooperation with Russia. On 11 June 2026, during the 11th EU–Republic of Korea Summit, the leaders issued a joint statement expressing their "serious concern" over North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and condemning its "illegal military cooperation" with Russia in connection with the war against Ukraine[85]. Since 2023, North Korea has supplied Russia with approximately 12 million

[82] Timeline – EU restrictive measures against North Korea // European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/north-korea-sanctions/timeline-eu-restrictive-measures-against-north-korea/

[83] *Hill A.* EU sanctions North Korean general for role in Russia's war on Ukraine // NK News. 2025. 24 October. URL: https://www.nknews.org/2025/10/eu-sanctions-north-korean-general-for-role-in-russias-war-on-ukraine/

[84] *Antoniuk D.* EU sanctions North Korean tied to Lazarus group over involvement in Ukraine war // The Record. 2025. 24 February. URL: https://therecord.media/eu-sanctions-north-korea-ukraine-war-lazarus-group

[85] *Joon Ha Park* South Korea, EU express 'grave concern' over North Korea's nuclear arsenal // NK News. 2026. 11 June. URL: https://www.nknews.org/2026/06/south-korea-eu-express-grave-concern-over-north-koreas-nuclear-arsenal/

artillery shells, ballistic missiles, and multiple launch rocket systems, while also deploying between 14,000 and 15,000 military personnel to fight alongside Russian forces[86]. The Brussels Summit demonstrated that relations between the European Union and the Republic of Korea are increasingly being shaped by the recognition that European and Indo-Pacific security are no longer separable.

The European Union's sanctions against the DPRK demonstrate limited political effectiveness, as, despite significantly increasing the country's international isolation, they have not led Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. The principal reasons for this outcome include the DPRK's limited economic dependence on the European Union, continued support from China and Russia, the regime's ability to circumvent international sanctions, and the existence of a closed political system in which economic hardship does not translate into domestic political pressure. Moreover, the North Korean leadership regards its nuclear capabilities as the principal guarantee of regime survival, making the economic costs of sanctions an acceptable price for achieving its long-term strategic security objectives.

Consequently, the European Union's sanctions primarily perform a deterrent and constraining function by restricting the DPRK's access to financial resources, advanced technologies, and international markets. However, they have not achieved their principal political objective of altering the state's strategic course. The experience of the EU's sanctions policy towards North Korea demonstrates that restrictive measures can attain maximum effectiveness only when they are implemented universally by all major international actors, combined with effective diplomatic mechanisms, and supported by robust measures to eliminate opportunities for sanctions evasion.

Implementation of EU Sanctions against Belarus. Restrictive measures against Belarus were first introduced in 2004 in response to the non-recognition of the results of the presidential elections and referendum held in October 2004, as well as the unresolved disappearances of two opposition politicians, one businessman, and one journalist during 1999–2000, all of whom were regarded as opponents of the Lukashenko regime[87].

In 2006, in response to these violations and the suppression of opposition demonstrations, the European Union expanded its sanctions

[86] EU and South Korea close ranks against a common threat // Central European Institute of Asian Studies. 2026. 14 June. URL: https://ceias.eu/eu-and-south-korea-close-ranks-against-a-common-threat/

[87] Економічні санкції у сучасному світовому господарстві: монографія / *О.І. Шнирков, А.С. Філіпенко, Р.О. Заблоцька* та ін.; за ред. О.*І. Шниркова*. К.: ВПЦ «Київський університет», 2019. С. 195.

against Belarus in two stages. Beginning in March 2006, the EU imposed a travel ban on 30 Belarusian officials, including President Alyaksandr Lukashenko. In 2007, the United States and Canada joined the sanctions regime by introducing trade sanctions against Belarus. In addition, Washington and Brussels froze the assets of President A. Lukashenko, the heads of the Belarusian security services, the Prosecutor General, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly[88].

In 2011, the Council of the European Union adopted additional restrictive measures against Belarusian officials responsible for violations of international electoral standards, breaches of international human rights law, and the repression of civil society and the democratic opposition. These measures included an arms embargo, a ban on the export of equipment that could be used for internal repression, asset freezes, and travel bans on entry into the Member States of the European Union.

Nevertheless, the European Union expressed its willingness to review and partially ease its restrictive measures provided that Belarus released all political prisoners without exception and conducted future parliamentary elections in accordance with international standards. Four years later, Belarus undertook these steps, contributing to an improvement in its relations with the European Union. On 22 August 2015, all Belarusian political prisoners were released, and on 11 October 2015, presidential elections were held without violence. Consequently, on 15 February 2016, the Council of the European Union decided to lift sanctions against 170 individuals and three Belarusian companies, while maintaining the arms embargo and restrictive measures against four individuals[89]. In 2017, these remaining sanctions were extended until 28 February 2018[90].

On 9 August 2020, presidential elections were held in the Republic of Belarus. According to reports by national observers, the elections did not comply with international standards. The allegedly falsified election results, according to which A. Lukashenko received 80.23% of the vote and Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya 9.9%[91], triggered widespread protests among the Belarusian population, many of whom had voted for S. Tsikhanouskaya at

[88] EU restrictive measures against Belarus // European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-belarus/

[89] ЄС продовжив санкції проти Білорусі ще на рік // РБК-Україна. 2008. 8 квітня. URL: https://daily.rbc.ua/ukr/show/es_prodlil_sanktsii_protiv_belorussii_eshche_na_godo_80420081

[90] Belarus sanctions: EU delists 170 people, 3 companies; prolongs arms embargo // Council of the EU. 2016. 25 February. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/02/25/belarus-sanctions/

[91] ЄС на рік продовжив санкції проти Білорусі // LB.ua. 2017. 28 лютого. URL: https://lb.ua/world/2017/02/27/359862_es_god_prodlil_sanktsii_protiv.html

polling stations where she reportedly received 70–80% of the votes. Following the protests, the Belarusian authorities employed disproportionate force, resulting in at least two deaths and numerous injuries. In response to the unacceptable violence used by the Belarusian authorities against peaceful protesters, as well as intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and detentions, the European Union and its Member States expressed their unwavering support for the Belarusian people by adopting a package of restrictive measures against Belarus on 3 October 2020[92].

The EU sanctions imposed on Belarus significantly limited the country's access to the European Union, particularly with regard to foreign trade operations. Consequently, they had a negative impact on the Belarusian economy. In response, in June 2021, the Belarusian authorities began facilitating flights and the onward movement of migrants from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, who were fleeing difficult conditions in their home countries, towards the external borders of the European Union, particularly Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland. For example, the number of irregular arrivals in Lithuania in 2021 was more than fifty times higher than in 2020. Poland also experienced a significant increase in irregular border crossings from Belarus, while the corresponding figures for Latvia remained considerably lower. Owing to coordinated efforts by the European Union, the number of daily irregular arrivals declined substantially. Nevertheless, migratory pressure along the EU's external border remained high[93].

Therefore, on 21 June 2021, the European Union adopted its fourth package of sanctions against Belarus, introducing restrictive measures against 78 Belarusian individuals and 8 legal entities. In addition, seven individuals and one entity were subjected to sanctions in connection with the forced and unlawful landing of a Ryanair flight in Minsk on 23 May 2021[94]. On 25 June 2021, the leaders of the European Union condemned all attempts by third countries to use migrants for political purposes[95].

In view of the migratory pressure along the European Union's external borders, the EU strongly condemned the Lukashenko regime for deliberately endangering the lives of migrants and fuelling the border crisis

[92] Вибори президента Білорусі: оголошені попередні результати // BBC News Україна. 2020. 10 серпня. URL: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-53719392
[93] Restrictive measures following the 2020 Belarus presidential elections // Council of the EU. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/#borders
[94] European Council conclusions, 24-25 June 2021 // Council of the EU. 2021. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/06/25/european-council-conclusions-24-25-june-2021/
[95] Belarus: fourth package of EU sanctions over enduring repression and the forced landing of a Ryanair flight // Council of the EU. 2021. 21 June. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/06/21/belarus-fourth-package-of-eu-sanctions-over-enduring-repression-and-the-forced-landing-of-a-ryanair-flight/

in an attempt to divert attention from the situation in Belarus. On 18 August 2021, within the framework of the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements, a videoconference of Ministers of the Interior was convened. During the meeting, the participants strongly condemned Belarus's use of migratory pressure, its role in facilitating irregular border crossings into the European Union, and its attempts to instrumentalize migrants for political purposes.

The ministers expressed solidarity with the affected EU Member States and supported the provision of additional assistance along this section of the EU's external border. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), and Europol deployed a substantial number of officers and experts and provided technical equipment. In addition, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism was activated, enabling significant assistance to be mobilized from the Member States and other participating countries[96].

During the European Council meeting of 21–22 October 2021, EU leaders declared that the Union would continue to counter the ongoing hybrid attack orchestrated by the Belarusian regime, including through the adoption of further restrictive measures against natural and legal persons. Accordingly, in November 2021, the Council approved the partial suspension of the EU–Belarus Visa Facilitation Agreement for officials associated with the Belarusian regime[97] and amended its sanctions regime by expanding the designation criteria.

Recognizing the severity of the humanitarian situation faced by migrants from third countries stranded at the Belarusian border, on 17 November 2021 the EU allocated €700,000 in humanitarian assistance to support vulnerable individuals trapped in the border area. On 23 November 2021, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy proposed new measures aimed at preventing and restricting the activities of transport operators engaged in or facilitating the smuggling and trafficking of people into the EU. On 1 December 2021, the Commission proposed a package of measures to provide temporary protection and assistance to Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland in addressing the emergency situation at the Belarusian border. These measures enabled the Member States concerned

[96] European Council conclusions, 24-25 June 2021 // Council of the EU. 2021. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/06/25/european-council-conclusions-24-25-june-2021/

[97] Home affairs ministers express solidarity with the EU member states at the border with Belarus (Slovenian presidency's press release, 18 August 2021) // Council of the EU. 2021. URL: https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20220404122812/https://slovenian-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/

to introduce rapid and orderly procedures for managing the situation while fully respecting fundamental rights and international obligations.

On 2 December 2021, the EU adopted the fifth package of sanctions against Belarus, targeting 17 natural persons and 11 legal entities, including members of the judiciary, state propaganda media involved in sustaining the repression of civil society, the democratic opposition, independent media and journalists, as well as senior officials of the Lukashenko regime and companies (such as the airline Belavia), tour operators, and hotels that assisted in facilitating and organizing the illegal crossing of the Belarus–EU border, thereby contributing to the instrumentalization of migration for political purposes.

On 24 February 2022, the Council of the European Union decided to extend the restrictive measures against Belarus for another year, until 28 February 2023, in light of the deteriorating situation in the country[98].

A new challenge for the EU emerged with Belarus's participation in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, launched on 24 February 2022. The EU strongly condemned Belarus's involvement in Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military invasion of Ukraine. In response, on 2 March 2022, it imposed a package of individual and economic sanctions against 22 senior Belarusian military officials involved in the decision-making process and strategic planning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. These measures included the freezing of assets, a prohibition on making funds available to the listed natural and legal persons, and travel bans on entry into EU Member States.

The Council of the European Union also introduced additional restrictions on trade in goods used for the production or manufacture of tobacco products, mineral fuels, bituminous substances, gaseous hydrocarbon products, potassium chloride products ("potash"), wood products, cement, iron, steel, and rubber. Further restrictions were imposed on the export of dual-use goods and technologies, as well as certain advanced goods and technologies that could contribute to Belarus's military, technological, defence, and security development, together with restrictions on the provision of related services.

This package also included the provision of equipment and supplies to the Armed Forces of Ukraine through the European Peace Facility, a ban on Russian air carriers of all kinds from flying over EU airspace and accessing EU airports, a prohibition on transactions with the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, the exclusion of certain Russian banks from the SWIFT financial messaging system, and a ban on the broadcasting activities

[98] *Vovchuk L., Volkivskyi A.* Implementation of EU sanctions against Belarus // Старожитності Лукомор'я. 2024. № 3. С. 101.

of the Russian state-owned media outlets Russia Today and Sputnik within the European Union.

On 9 March 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted new sanctions against Belarus, including restrictions on the provision of specialized financial messaging services (SWIFT) to three Belarusian banks; a prohibition on transactions with the Central Bank of Belarus; a ban on the listing of, and the provision of services related to, the shares of Belarusian state-owned companies on EU trading venues; significant restrictions on financial inflows from Belarus to the EU; and a prohibition on the supply of euro-denominated banknotes to Belarus.

In response to the continued internal repression of opponents of the authoritarian Lukashenko regime, as well as individuals unwilling to participate in the war against Ukraine, the EU imposed new sanctions on 3 June 2022 against 12 natural persons and 8 legal entities directly involved in these repressive actions or benefiting from them. The new sanctions list included senior government officials, businesspersons and their family members, representatives of the judiciary, and prominent propagandists.

However, the restrictive measures imposed on Belarus failed to compel the country to abandon its ongoing human rights violations or to cease assisting Russia in its military aggression against Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Consequently, on 3 August 2023, the Council of the European Union imposed sanctions on an additional 38 natural persons and 3 legal entities, while extending export restrictions to include firearms and the aviation and aerospace industries. Nevertheless, these sanctions were considerably less stringent than those imposed on Russia. According to the analytical portal *Slovo i Dilo*, one of the reasons for this approach was a request from Ukraine itself. The Ukrainian authorities justified this position by expressing hope that a less severe sanctions regime might reduce Belarusian support for Russia in the Russian-Ukrainian war. However, these expectations proved unfounded, as the Lukashenko regime continued both its domestic repression and its support for Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In view of these circumstances, on 26 February 2024, the EU decided to extend the restrictive measures against Belarus for another year, until 28 February 2025.

As early as 2021, the leader of the Belarusian opposition in exile, S. Tsikhanouskaya, stated before the European Parliament that Belarus was becoming the "North Korea of Europe". The EU sanctions imposed on Belarus have proven to be insufficiently effective. In the Belarusian case, "sanctions are more akin to moral sermons, signals of moral superiority," the implementation of which primarily imposes financial costs on the European Union itself. According to some estimates, the anti-Russian

sanctions introduced following the annexation of Crimea cost Europe approximately €100 billion[99].

On 19 July 2025, the EU adopted its 18th sanctions package against Belarus, under which the Council of the European Union approved a complete ban on financial transactions with the country. Belarusian banks had previously been disconnected from SWIFT, the international financial messaging system. In addition, sanctions against four Belarusian banks – Belagroprombank, Bank Dabrabyt, The Development Bank of Belarus (DBRB), and Belinvestbank – were further strengthened. For the first time, the EU also introduced an embargo on arms imports from Belarus. Furthermore, the list of goods and technologies that could be used for military purposes (including machinery, metals, plastics, and chemicals) or contribute to strengthening Belarus's military and industrial base was expanded, and a ban was imposed on the transit of certain goods through the territory of Belarus[100].

In December 2025, the EU further expanded the scope of its sanctions regime against Belarus to encompass the country's hybrid activities directed against its European neighbours. The Council introduced a new designation criterion allowing sanctions to be imposed on companies and individuals that "benefit from, are involved in, or facilitate actions or policies associated with the Republic of Belarus that undermine democracy, the rule of law, stability, or security in the European Union and its Member States". This new criterion enables the EU to impose sanctions on persons and entities involved in information manipulation and interference. It also covers individuals and organisations engaged in "activities directed against the functioning of democratic institutions, economic activities, or public-interest services of the European Union and its Member States".

The new criterion also encompasses interference with, damage to, or destruction of critical infrastructure, as well as systematic actions resulting in the disruption of such infrastructure. This wording includes, in particular, the situation affecting Vilnius Airport, where the operation of the airport was disrupted by meteorological balloons launched from Belarus[101].

Importantly, on 26 February 2026, the Council of the European Union decided to extend all existing sanctions against Belarus for an additional year, until 28 February 2027[102].

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[99] *Vovchuk L., Volkivskyi A.* Implementation of EU sanctions against Belarus… С. 102-103.

[100] *Журавльова О., Шепелева А.* Нові санкції ЄС: опубліковано список обмежень проти Білорусі // DW. 2025. 19 липня. URL: https://www.dw.com/uk/bilorus-potrapila-pid-zorstkij-paket-sankcij-es-opublikovano-spisok-obmezen/a-73335355

[101] *Ємець М.* ЄС розширив санкційний режим проти Білорусі, включивши до нього "гібридну війну" проти сусідів // Європейська правда. 2025. 15 грудня. URL: https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2025/12/15/7227148/

[102] Євросоюз продовжив санкції проти Білорусі ще на один рік // Слово і діло. 2026. 26 лютого. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2026/02/26/novyna/polityka/yevrosoyuz-prodovzhyv-sankcziyi-proty-bilorusi-shhe-odyn-rik

Thus, an analysis of the EU's sanctions policy towards Belarus allows for the identification of two distinct stages. During the first stage, the EU imposed sanctions in response to the repression of the opposition, human rights violations, widespread electoral fraud during the presidential elections, and the violent suppression of peaceful protests. Between 2004 and 2022, a total of six sanctions packages were adopted against 195 natural persons and 35 legal entities. The measures included asset freezes, a prohibition on EU citizens and companies making funds available to designated persons, travel bans on listed individuals entering the European Union, and other restrictive measures. It should be noted, however, that the EU's sanctions policy remained relatively flexible throughout this period.

The second stage comprises the EU sanctions imposed on Belarus due to its support for and assistance to Russia in its war against Ukraine. Between March 2022 and February 2026, the European Union introduced a series of both individual and economic restrictive measures. Nevertheless, the overall effectiveness of the EU's sanctions policy towards Belarus can be assessed as only partially successful. On the one hand, the sanctions significantly restricted the Belarusian economy's access to European markets, financial resources, technologies, and logistics routes, reduced the export potential of strategic sectors (including the potash industry, petroleum products, timber processing, and metallurgy), and substantially complicated the international activities of state-owned enterprises and the financial sector. Furthermore, personal sanctions against members of the political leadership, security services, and state-owned companies increased the international isolation of the Lukashenko regime and limited its opportunities for cooperation with EU Member States.

At the same time, the sanctions failed to achieve their primary political objectives. They did not lead to the democratization of the political regime, the release of political prisoners, the holding of free elections, or the cessation of Belarusian support for Russia's aggression against Ukraine. One of the principal reasons for this outcome has been Belarus's deep economic, political, and security integration with the Russian Federation. Since 2022, Russia has become the primary source of financial assistance, the principal export market for Belarusian goods, the main supplier of energy resources, and a key transit partner for the Belarusian economy, thereby largely offsetting the losses caused by European sanctions. In addition, the Belarusian regime has actively employed sanctions-evasion mechanisms through third countries, the re-export of goods, and alternative logistical routes.

3.3. Humanitarian Assistance and Civil Protection as Areas of EU Action in Promoting International Peace and Security (*Illia Myronov*)

Humanitarian aid and civil protection usually appear on the civilian side of European external action. That classification is correct as far as mandates are concerned, but it underplays the security significance of civilian continuity. Contemporary wars damage energy grids, water systems, hospitals, shelters, transport corridors, schools, social services and local authorities. Once these systems fail, displacement accelerates, public health deteriorates, administrative capacity weakens and recovery becomes harder. Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) is the Commission service that brings these fields together: it provides humanitarian assistance and civil-protection support guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence[103].

The field is wider than Ukraine. The EU describes itself as a global leading humanitarian donor and entered 2026 with an initial humanitarian budget of EUR 1.9 billion at a time of rising needs and shrinking global funding[104]. Ukraine has become the most visible European case because of the scale and duration of Russia's war, yet the same instruments operate in earthquakes, epidemics, food crises, forced displacement and conflicts outside Europe. This broader view matters for the present chapter. The aim is to analyse an EU field of action, using Ukraine as a demanding test while avoiding a Ukraine-only account.

DG ECHO's institutional design explains the dual character of the field. The same Directorate-General works on humanitarian assistance and civil protection, yet its internal practice distinguishes grants to partners from mobilisation of state capacities. A single political crisis may require cash assistance, shelter support, medical evacuation, transport corridors, emergency stockpiles and field analysis. DG ECHO provides the institutional place where those separate tracks can be sequenced without erasing their different mandates.

Research on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus supplies the first layer of the debate. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation treats the nexus as a framework for linking humanitarian, development and peace-oriented action in fragile and

[103] European Commission. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. URL: https://lnk.ua/dS1EuIuNb
[104] European Commission. Humanitarian Aid. URL: https://lnk.ua/MLkYNNW9R

conflict-affected settings[105]. EU policy adds a second layer. The Commission's 2021 Communication on humanitarian action argues that new geopolitical and operational challenges require stronger capacity while retaining humanitarian principles[106]. Empirical conflict literature gives a third layer and is more cautious. K. Yabe and co-authors show that aid allocation across the nexus varies with donor motives and forms of fragility[107]. Findley and co-authors warn that aid can have ambiguous effects on conflict intensity[108]. S. Zhang and H. Dorussen link the effect of humanitarian aid on violence against civilians to the surrounding protection environment[109].

Ukraine-related scholarship narrows the discussion to allocation and strategic effects. Schmidt explains international aid to Ukraine during the 2022 invasion through need-based, political and strategic factors[110]. M. Tkach, S. Slobodianyk and P. Makoshenets examine financial and technical assistance to Ukraine in 2022 and the first half of 2024[111]. I. Myronov conceptualises strategic assistance as a multidimensional instrument connecting donor motives, resilience and transformation[112]. The unresolved issue here is more specific. Humanitarian aid and civil protection are often described as support tools. Their role in preserving

[105] OECD. DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. OECD/LEGAL/5019 // OECD. 2019. URL: https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf

[106] Communication on the EU's Humanitarian Action: New Challenges, Same Principles. COM(2021) 110 final // European Commission. Brussels, 2021. 10 March. URL: https://lnk.ua/7v3CzDZ3h

[107] *Yabe K., Oprsal Z., Harmacek J., Syrovatka M.* Aid allocation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus: the role of fragility as a donors' motive // Humanities and Social Sciences Communications. 2024. Vol. 11. Article 1176. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03512-5

[108] Findley M., Young J.K., Strandow D., Cat O. Aiding War: Foreign Aid and the Intensity of Violent Armed Conflict // International Studies Quarterly. 2023. Vol. 67. № 3. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqad048

[109] *Zhang S., Dorussen H.* Does Peacekeeping Mitigate the Impact of Aid on Conflict? Peacekeeping, Humanitarian Aid and Violence Against Civilians // Journal of Conflict Resolution. 2025. Vol. 69. № 9. P. 1524-1552. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027251315668

[110] *Schmidt C.* Aid in Conflict: Determinants of International Aid Allocation to Ukraine during the 2022 Russian Invasion // The Economists' Voice. 2024. Vol. 21. № 1. P. 133-158. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/ev-2023-0049

[111] *Tkach M., Slobodianyk S., Makoshenets P.* Analysis of Financial and Technical Assistance to Ukraine from Partner Countries in 2022 – First Half of 2024 // Political Science and Security Studies Journal. 2024. Vol. 5. № 2. P. 7-20. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33445/psssj.2024.5.2.2

[112] *Myronov I.* Strategic Assistance in Wartime As a Multidimensional Instrument of International Support // Acta de Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. 2026. № 12. P. 17-28. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26693/ahpsxxi2026.12.017

civilian continuity as a condition of peace and security requires a separate institutional explanation.

The basic distinction is legal and operational. EU humanitarian aid is needs-based assistance intended to save lives, alleviate suffering and protect human dignity in crises. Council Regulation No 1257/96 provides the legal basis[113], while the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid sets out the shared principles of the EU and its Member States[114]. International humanitarian law (IHL) is also central to the field; the Commission explicitly places the promotion and application of IHL at the heart of external action, with the Geneva Conventions forming the core reference point[115]. Humanitarian aid therefore works through principles, partners and access to affected populations.

International humanitarian law gives the chapter a further legal anchor. The Geneva Conventions do not belong to EU law alone, but EU humanitarian policy treats respect for IHL as a central external-action commitment. This limits the security interpretation of aid. Humanitarian action in conflict zones is framed by the protection of civilians, medical care, humane treatment and access, not by the political preferences of donors. Security relevance arises when those protections keep the civilian domain from collapsing.

Civil protection follows another logic. It coordinates prevention, preparedness and response when disasters or emergencies exceed national capacity. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) operates through requests for assistance, offers from participating states, transport coordination and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)[116]. Decision No 1313/2013/EU established the mechanism[117], and Regulation (EU) 2021/836 strengthened it after the COVID-19 pandemic and repeated cross-border crises[118]. Humanitarian aid protects people through partners and principles; civil protection moves capacities, equipment and technical support. Confusing the two weakens analysis and practice.

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[113] Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid. Official Journal of the European Communities. 1996. URL: https://lnk.ua/A8WoxZFTR

[114] European Parliament, Council and Commission. European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Official Journal of the European Union. 2008/C25/01. URL: https://lnk.ua/gDAywh1Qh

[115] International Humanitarian Law // European Commission. 2026. 27 May. URL: https://lnk.ua/9hKAa6UvL

[116] EU Civil Protection Mechanism // European Commission. 2026. 18 February. URL: https://lnk.ua/F7eSZouZL

[117] Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism // Official Journal of the European Union. 2013. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2013/1313/oj

[118] Regulation (EU) 2021/836 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism // Official Journal of the European Union. 2021. URL: https://lnk.ua/s06oapjmc

Humanitarian financing also has its own legal rhythm. The Commission authorises spending through financing decisions and channels funds through grants and contributions to approved partners[119]. Such procedures create a paper trail that is slow by comparison with emergency rhetoric, yet it protects accountability. It also matters for political science: the EU does not simply 'give aid' as a single act. It allocates resources through a managed relationship among budget authority, DG ECHO, certified partners and field assessments.

The partner structure of humanitarian aid is also part of the instrument. DG ECHO funds relief actions through a wide network of partner organisations, including NGOs, UN agencies and international organisations[120]. Grants, contribution agreements, needs assessments and monitoring procedures make humanitarian aid slower and more rule-bound than public announcements suggest. That slowness protects impartiality, documents eligibility and helps distinguish humanitarian funding from political patronage. In a conflict environment, such distinctions may decide whether an actor can reach people on both sides of a front line or in occupied areas.

The EU has also built instruments that sit between funding and civil protection. The European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) helps the Union respond to sudden disasters and shifts in protracted crises through logistics, stockpiles and partner-based operational support[121]. The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge performs the transport side of that function when normal routes are weak or unavailable[122]. These mechanisms reduce dependence on improvisation: cargo, staff, warehousing, partner demand and delivery routes become traceable parts of the response.

The 2023 earthquake response in Türkiye and Syria illustrates how the same instruments operate outside Ukraine. DG ECHO combined humanitarian funding for Syria with civil-protection disaster-response operations after the earthquake[123]. The trigger was a natural disaster rather than military aggression, and access was shaped by the Syrian conflict, border arrangements and damaged infrastructure. The institutional repertoire remained comparable: partners identified needs, civil-protection channels moved capacities, and EU logistics converted commitments into relief.

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[119] Funding for Humanitarian Aid // European Commission. URL: https://lnk.ua/YJGfvQIaL
[120] Humanitarian Partners // European Commission. 2025. 5 September. URL: https://lnk.ua/XQ4Xfz7xH
[121] European Humanitarian Response Capacity // European Commission, 2023. URL: https://lnk.ua/L9yPuQATN
[122] EU Humanitarian Air Bridge // European Commission. URL: https://lnk.ua/FPKS9bkOB
[123] Earthquake: disaster response operations in Syria and Türkiye continue // European Commission. 2023. 17 February. URL: https://lnk.ua/a1sAgIiyL

The HDP nexus helps explain why emergency relief and resilience now overlap. Crises rarely stay inside one sector. Humanitarian suffering, infrastructure damage, economic disruption, institutional weakness and insecurity reinforce each other. Relief that saves lives while leaving repeated vulnerability untouched remains incomplete. Development or peacebuilding that ignores immediate survival loses credibility among affected communities. In EU external action, the nexus works as a discipline of sequencing: immediate protection, continuity of essential services, recovery of local capacity and conditions for peace.

Strategic assistance is useful only in this narrower sense. Aid becomes strategic when instruments are coordinated across sectors and time horizons while their mandates remain intact. Humanitarian assistance loses credibility if it becomes geopolitical messaging. Civil protection can be linked more openly to preparedness and resilience, since its mandate is logistical and operational. The difficult task is to connect relief, recovery and security effects without dissolving humanitarian principles into political communication.

The empirical literature supports that caution. Aid allocation across the HDP nexus varies by donor priorities and fragility profiles, so coherence cannot be assumed. Foreign aid in ongoing armed conflict may reduce some civilian harm while intensifying other conflict dynamics; outcomes depend on location, targeting and the behaviour of armed actors. The literature on peacekeeping and humanitarian aid makes the same point from a protection angle: aid is safer and more effective where a broader protection environment exists. Ukraine lacks a UN peacekeeping environment, but the lesson remains relevant. Assistance supports security when protection, accountability, local ownership and conflict-sensitive delivery are present.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism is the clearest operational expression of this logic. A country asks for assistance, participating states offer resources, and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre matches needs, offers and transport. The mechanism creates a repeatable capacity-pooling system rather than a standing humanitarian force. That procedural feature is less dramatic than images of delivered equipment, but it is crucial in a prolonged crisis. Hospitals, municipalities and energy services need predictable support over time, not a single surge of symbolic solidarity.

Ukraine changed the scale and duration of that mechanism. Before 2022, many UCPM operations were associated with fires, earthquakes, pandemics or shorter emergencies. Russia's full-scale invasion created a multi-year crisis in which civil protection had to support energy resilience, public health, shelter, evacuation, logistics and critical infrastructure. The response to Ukraine became the largest operation in the history of the mechanism; more than 157,000 tonnes of in-kind assistance had been

delivered through logistical hubs in Poland, Romania and Slovakia by February 2026[124].

Table 3.3.1. Civilian-resilience chain of EU humanitarian and civil-protection instruments[125]

Instrument	Operational channel	Vulnerability addressed	Security-relevant effect	Main boundary condition
Humanitarian funding	DG ECHO financing through UN, Red Cross / Red Crescent and NGO partners	Loss of shelter, food security, health services and protection for civilians	Reduces displacement pressure and local social breakdown	Needs-based allocation and partner autonomy must be preserved
UCPM	ERCC coordination of state offers, transport and in-kind assistance	Delayed or fragmented response when national capacity is overwhelmed	Turns dispersed capacities into repeatable cross-border support	Depends on access, logistics and suitability of offered equipment
EHRC / Air Bridge	EU logistics, transport support, stockpiles and partner-based deployments	Broken humanitarian supply chains in sudden or protracted crises	Moves cargo, staff and emergency items where market routes fail	Requires partner demand and safe operational corridors
rescEU reserves	Strategic stockpiles for specialised or scarce assets	Failure of hospitals, water, heating and emergency services after shocks	Maintains critical services until domestic capacity recovers	Should complement domestic preparedness rather than replace it
Medical evacuation	Cross-border relocation of patients to participating hospitals	Overloaded health system and shortage of specialised care	Protects patients and frees domestic medical capacity	Requires coordination with national authorities and receiving systems

[124] European Commission. Ukraine: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. URL: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/europe/ukraine_en

[125] Compiled by the author on the basis of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, Regulation (EU) 2021/836, rescEU and European Commission materials on Ukraine.

The January 2026 mobilisation for Ukraine and Moldova shows how budgetary and operational tools interact. The Commission announced EUR 153 million in emergency aid, including EUR 145 million for Ukraine and EUR 8 million for Moldova, while winter conditions and attacks on energy infrastructure placed civilians under acute pressure[126]. Funding addressed needs through humanitarian partners. Equipment, logistics and civil-protection deliveries addressed the physical continuity of services. One channel without the other would have been weaker.

The matrix presented in Table 3.3.1 arranges the instruments as a chain. Funding protects people through partners; the UCPM organises state capacities; EHRC and the Air Bridge address logistics; rescEU fills specialised gaps; medical evacuation preserves health-system capacity. Civilian resilience emerges from the interaction of these functions. The sequence is as important as the instruments themselves.

The non-Ukrainian cases keep the argument from becoming a second country chapter. Gaza, Sudan, Syria, the Sahel and earthquake-affected regions raise different combinations of access, insecurity, partner risk and logistics. The EU does not use one template across all of them. Its global humanitarian role depends on the ability to finance partners in more than one political environment while preserving a principled vocabulary of need and protection.

The Middle East allocation for 2026 gives another example of the global field. The Commission confirmed EUR 458 million in humanitarian aid for Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt[127]. This case is useful precisely because it differs from Ukraine. The core problems are conflict, displacement, access, regional spillover and partner security rather than winterisation of a European state at war. The EU instrument is still recognisable: DG ECHO funding, partner implementation, transport constraints, protection needs and pressure on basic services.

Ukraine remains the central stress test because humanitarian need is inseparable from the conduct of the war. OCHA's Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026 estimated that 10.8 million people in Ukraine needed humanitarian assistance and that partners aimed to reach 4.1 million of the most vulnerable[128]. These needs arise from repeated attacks on homes, hospitals, energy networks, local services and civilian

[126] European Commission. EU Announces EUR 153 Million in Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine and Moldova. 29 January 2026. URL: https://lnk.ua/QY84N8SjR

[127] EU announces €458 million in humanitarian aid for Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt in 2026 // European Commission. 2026. 15 March. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_611

[128] Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026 // United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2026. 13 January. URL: https://lnk.ua/pvLrUUWdA

infrastructure. The humanitarian situation therefore reflects the aggressor's strategy and the capacity of Ukrainian society to absorb shocks.

The transport dimension should be read in the same administrative way. Air bridges, stockpiles and logistical hubs reduce the gap between pledges and arrival. In a media cycle, pledges often appear as the key political event. For affected communities, the decisive moment is the arrival of usable goods in the right place, in the right quantity and with the right technical specification. The EU's civil-protection apparatus addresses that less visible part of crisis response.

Medical evacuation demonstrates the link between individual protection and system resilience. By April 2026, the Commission had facilitated the transfer of more than 5,000 patients from Ukraine to hospitals in 22 European countries under the UCPM[129]. The visible result is treatment for injured or seriously ill people. The less visible result is capacity left inside Ukraine: beds, emergency attention, intensive-care resources and specialised staff time available for new casualties.

Energy support shows the same mechanism in a more public form. In January 2026, the Commission deployed 447 emergency generators from EU strategic reserves after Russian strikes left more than 1 million Ukrainians without electricity, water and heating at temperatures around minus 20 degrees Celsius[130]. Generators sent to hospitals, shelters and critical services did more than supply power. They reduced the risk that infrastructure attacks would trigger displacement, public-health emergencies and local administrative breakdown.

External assistance has to reinforce Ukrainian governance. Coordination with ministries, municipalities, humanitarian clusters, the International Organization for Migration (IOM)[131], the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)[132] and local organisations determines whether aid strengthens domestic capacity or creates parallel channels. A fast delivery that bypasses local systems may solve an immediate problem and weaken recovery. Assistance aligned with local capacity helps preserve state continuity during war and prepares the ground for reconstruction.

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[129] 5,000 Patients Medically Evacuated from Ukraine for Urgent Treatment // European Commission. 2026. 16 April. URL: https://lnk.ua/puMqZCsq0

[130] EU Deploys Emergency Generators as Russian Strikes Leave 1 Million Ukrainians without Power in -20 Degrees Celsius // European Commission. 2026. 23 January. URL: https://lnk.ua/QY84N8SjR

[131] Ukraine Crisis Response Plan 2026 // International Organization for Migration. 2026. URL: https://crisisresponse.iom.int/response/ukraine-crisis-response-plan-2026

[132] Ukraine Emergency // United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. URL: https://www.unhcr.org/emergencies/ukraine-emergency

The partner channel is decisive here. Humanitarian funding reaches affected people through organisations able to assess needs, negotiate access and implement programmes on the ground. DG ECHO's partner framework requires certification and agreements that define the humanitarian action and the use of funds. This bureaucratic detail has political consequences. Partner autonomy helps keep humanitarian assistance separate from direct donor administration and protects a degree of trust in contested environments.

The limits of the field are equally important. Politicisation is the first risk. EU support for a state defending itself against aggression exists inside a larger political response. Humanitarian actors still need needs-based targeting and impartial delivery. If humanitarian language becomes indistinguishable from strategic communication, access and trust suffer. The problem is practical, not rhetorical: staff, partners and affected populations may pay the price.

A similar distinction applies to information. Civil protection relies on situation awareness, requests and matching of equipment. Humanitarian aid relies on needs assessments, protection analysis and partner reporting. Both produce knowledge, but the knowledge travels through different channels. Treating every dataset as a strategic indicator would distort the field. The EU response gains strength when these information streams meet at decision points without collapsing into a single political narrative.

A rights-based view of humanitarian aid also protects the argument from exaggeration. In this field, the EU supports peace by protecting civilian life, humanitarian access and essential public services. International humanitarian law gives this restraint a legal vocabulary; humanitarian principles give it an operational vocabulary; civil-protection logistics give it a material vocabulary. These vocabularies overlap during war, yet each performs a different function.

Operational vulnerability forms a second limit. Warehouses, convoys, hospitals, energy infrastructure and local offices can be attacked or made inaccessible. Resources alone guarantee little under active hostilities. Access, deconfliction, local partnerships, information and flexible logistics determine whether assistance reaches people. EU coordination reduces fragmentation, but it cannot remove the physical risks created by war.

Dependency and substitution create a third limit. External assistance may keep essential services functioning, yet it should not displace domestic responsibility or build permanent parallel systems. Ukraine needs emergency support during war and institutional ownership

for reconstruction. Policy design has to manage both demands at the same time: urgent protection today, national capacity tomorrow.

A final risk is analytical inflation. Because humanitarian and civil-protection instruments produce security effects, policy language may label every delivery as strategic. That move weakens the argument. The security relevance of these instruments appears only under specific conditions: protection of civilians, continuity of essential services, support for national and local capacity, and delivery sensitive to conflict dynamics. Their function is condition-sustaining. They keep open the human and institutional space in which peace can later be negotiated, implemented and defended.

The policy boundary matters. Humanitarian aid must remain anchored in principles and partner autonomy. Civil protection can be connected more openly to preparedness, logistics and resilience. The EU's task is to coordinate the two without merging them. In practice that means stronger UCPM and rescEU reserves, reliable humanitarian funding, transport instruments such as the Air Bridge, and reporting that distinguishes aid to people from operational support to systems.

Conclusions. Humanitarian aid and civil protection form a civilian component of EU security practice. Humanitarian aid protects people through principles, partners and needs-based funding. Civil protection coordinates capacities, transport, reserves and technical assistance. DG ECHO sits at the intersection of these fields and gives the EU a permanent administrative base for crisis response. The contribution to peace and security is indirect. These instruments do not impose settlements or replace diplomacy. They preserve the conditions that make diplomacy, recovery and local governance possible: functioning hospitals, water supply, heating, shelters, municipal services, humanitarian access and public trust. The general EU toolbox is broader than the Ukrainian case. Humanitarian funding, UCPM, rescEU, EHRC and the Humanitarian Air Bridge have been used across different types of crises, from earthquakes to protracted conflicts. Ukraine shows the highest-intensity European stress test, but the same institutional logic applies beyond Ukraine.

The Ukrainian experience demonstrates how civil protection changes during prolonged war. In-kind assistance, logistical hubs, medical evacuation, generators and rescEU deployments turned the UCPM into a sustained coordination mechanism. Its importance lies more in repeatability and system support than in one-off emergency symbolism. The main constraint is the need for discipline. Relief, resilience and recovery should be linked without turning humanitarian aid into political messaging. Civil protection can support preparedness more openly; humanitarian aid must keep its principled status. The EU's contribution is strongest when these two logics cooperate while remaining distinct.

Preserving civilian continuity is now a security task. Energy, water, health, shelter, local administration and social trust are among the foundations on which any future peace will rest. The European Union promotes peace in this field by keeping those foundations from collapsing under violence.

3.4. The Kosovo Problem (*Liudmyla Vovchuk*)

The Republic of Kosovo represents a distinctive focal point of instability, not only for the Balkans but also for the European continent as a whole. The recognition of Kosovo's independence established a precedent that has had profound implications for the European security architecture, contributing to its long-term destabilization. Today, Kosovo is recognized primarily by the world's democratic states, many of which are also among Ukraine's strongest political, economic, and military supporters. In contrast, the group of states that continue to withhold recognition includes Serbia, Russia and its limited circle of allies, such as Belarus, as well as China and several countries aligned with its foreign policy.

Nevertheless, the issue is far more complex than a simple geopolitical divide. There are several European Union Member States that do not recognize Kosovo, including Spain, Romania, Greece, and Slovakia, which remain concerned that the so-called "Kosovo precedent" could encourage separatist movements within their own territories and thereby pose challenges to their territorial integrity and domestic political stability. Although fifteen years have passed since Kosovo declared its independence, relations between Belgrade and Pristina continue to be characterized by recurring political and security crises, with the dialogue between the parties progressing from one crisis to another rather than toward sustainable normalization.

Over the past 15 years, a number of academic works have appeared on the Kosovo issue. Both Ukrainian and foreign researchers have emphasized the complexity of this issue and the protracted nature of its resolution due to its unique characteristics caused by the leading actors of international relations: the USA, NATO, and the EU. Among contemporary Ukrainian studies, it is worth highlighting the works of V. Orlyk[133], N. Ishchenko[134], K. Yefremova and I. Maryniv[135], K. Shymkevych[136],

[133] *Орлик В.В.* Косовське питання в контексті без пекової ситуації на Балканах: виклики для України // Політика. Стратегічні пріоритети. 2019. № 3-4 (51). С. 57-69.
[134] *Іщенко Н.* Марш-кидок на Косово-2 // День. 2019. 3 червня. URL: https://cutt.ly/Nwv2rbwV
[135] *Єфремова К., Маринів І.* Визнання держави у сучасному міжнародному праві // Право та інноваційне суспільство. 2020. № 2 (15). С. 18-21.
[136] *Шимкевич К.* Локальний конфлікт в Косово: новий виток Кризи на Балканах // Українські студії стратегічних досліджень. 2022. 4 серпня. URL: https://cutt.ly/hwv2toqS

L. Vovchuk[137]. These studies examine the historical background of the crisis, the position of the international community on the recognition of Kosovo, and the subsequent course of the conflict.

The subject has also attracted considerable interest among foreign researchers (K. Bassuener[138], M. Galeotti[139], D. Bechev[140]), who consider this crisis through the prism of the Russian Federation's influence on the crisis and its efforts to push Serbia and Kosovo into direct confrontation in order to distract the attention of European actors from the implementation of its plans for Ukraine.

Fifteen years have passed since the declaration of independence of Kosovo. However, as the current state of relations between Belgrade and Pristina shows, they function from crisis to crisis. Recently, the usual crises have become somewhat more intense and have made the world talk about the possibility of another war in Europe. Before the EU could resolve the conflict provoked by the withdrawal of the Serbs from the Kosovo institutions through joint efforts with the USA, the crisis with car licence plates arose. The issue of licence plates had just been resolved when tensions arose in connection with the elections in the four Serbian municipalities of Kosovo, which were planned to be held on 18 December. One gets the impression that the Kosovo problem will not have its logical conclusion.

The crisis in Kosovo is not as straightforward as it seems at first glance. The Serbian government, as well as the native Serbs themselves, perceived the desire of the Kosovar Albanians (who were in the majority at the time) to separate Kosovo and establish it as an independent state as the expression of national separatist sentiments and a threat to the country's integrity. Therefore, it is clear that they could not allow this. In turn, for Kosovo Albanians, this desire was dictated by the Serbian government's policy of oppression against them.

In our opinion, the bifurcation point in the crisis in Kosovo is the death of Josip Broz Tito, the long-time Yugoslav helmsman, a Croat by nationality, whose post-war policy was aimed at creating a Balkan confederation, which would include Albania. However, in practice this policy was implemented, in

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[137] *Vovchuk L.* The Kosovo Crisis as a Destabilizing Factor of European Security // Acta De Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. 2023. Special Issue. P. 14–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26693/ahpsxxi2023.si.014

[138] *Bassuener K.* Pushing on an Open Door: Foreign Authoritarian Influence in the Western Balkans // The International Forum for Democratic Studies. The National Endowment for Democracy's. 2019. 3 May. URL: https://cutt.ly/Xwv2eOiP

[139] *Galeotti M.* (April, 2018). Do the Western Balkans face a coming Russian Storm? // The European Council on Foreign Relations. 2018. April. URL: https://cutt.ly/vwv2rgKo

[140] *Bechev D.* (September, 2018). Understanding Russia's influence in the Western Balkans. Strategic Analisys // The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats. 2018. September. URL: https://cutt.ly/Owv2eJFj

particular, by restraining the resettlement of Serbs in Kosovo and providing this region with large subsidies, which contributed to the appearance of a large number of refugees from Albania itself.

In 1980, mass riots broke out in Kosovo, aggravating ethnic tensions throughout Yugoslavia. In 1981, mass demonstrations took place, which later turned into an anti-Serbian uprising with dozens of wounded. The main demand was to give Kosovo the status of a republic. The government sent troops into the region and declared a curfew.

However, from year to year, the nationalist sentiments and rhetoric of Albanians intensified. The situation worsened especially when Slobodan Milošević came to power in Serbia in 1986, who initiated changes to the Serbian constitution that significantly limited the rights of the autonomous regions. The dissolution of the Kosovo parliament, the restriction of the Albanian language in all spheres of social and political life, including educational institutions, and the dismissal of Albanians from key government posts caused a long-term political crisis, mass strikes and inter-ethnic clashes[141].

In 1986, the first manifesto of the Serbian intelligentsia appeared with the demand to "dealbanize" the region. It referred to violations of the rights of the Slavic population of the region and to the threat of Albanian extremism (insulting the state symbols of Yugoslavia, poisoning Serbian wells, burning fertile fields, destroying Christian shrines and many other crimes against Serbs). Such actions of Kosovo Albanians were perceived by the Yugoslav government as genocide against the Serbs. Then S. Milošević brought troops into the territory of Serbia. On 24 April 1987, a large number of Serbs gathered in Kosovo Polje to protest against the Albanianization of the region and to demand stronger state authority and the protection of Serbian culture and traditions.

Since 1990, an indefinite state of emergency has been imposed in the region, which was declared a republic by the local parliament in response to the elimination of autonomy by Belgrade. The Albanians later responded more radically by creating the Kosovo Liberation Army.

The situation began to escalate after the Yugoslav government began resettling Serb refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the territory of Kosovo in 1996–1997. This led to armed conflicts between units of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Yugoslav police and army. From the beginning of 1998, these clashes developed into military hostilities, and the Yugoslav army began to repress the civilian population, which at the end of 1998 and the beginning of 1999 had all the signs of ethnic cleansing.

[141] *Vovchuk L.* The Kosovo Crisis as a Destabilizing Factor of European Security… P. 16.

S. Milošević, who tried to prevent the division of his state, was accused by the West of carrying out ethnic cleansing and genocide of Albanians. Attempts to settle the conflict in Kosovo through negotiations with Albanian leaders mediated by Western powers in Rambouillet in February 1999 were thwarted by the leaders of the Kosovo Albanians, who said they would agree to sign a peace agreement with the leadership of Serbia only on the condition that Kosovo be granted independence. S. Milošević resolutely rejected this ultimatum. Then the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, on the initiative of the United States, began bombing Yugoslavia. As a result, at the beginning of the 21st century, the security of the European region was under threat[142].

On 31 January 2006, at the meeting of the Contact Group at the level of foreign ministers of Russia, the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the EU and NATO, the principles of negotiations on Kosovo were agreed upon. Then it was stated that Kosovo cannot be returned to the administration of Serbia, cannot be divided and cannot be annexed to another state. As a result, on 17 February 2008, the parliament of Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed independence. On the same day, the official symbols of the state – the coat of arms and the flag – were presented.

The international community is divided into two camps on the issue of recognition of Kosovo's independence. A number of countries, including the USA, France, Great Britain, Italy, Afghanistan and Taiwan, were among the first to recognize the independence of the Republic of Kosovo. By the end of 2008, another 63 countries recognized Kosovo as a full subject of international relations. As of 27 February 2017, the number of such countries was already 111. On 4 September 2020, Israel joined such countries. On 1 February 2021, the countries established diplomatic relations. What is interesting in this case is that Kosovo, a territory with a mostly Muslim population, recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which is contrary to the position of the rest of the Islamic world.

Other states, including the permanent members of the UN Security Council, Russia and China, have spoken categorically against the recognition of Kosovo's independence, pointing to the potential consequences of such a precedent, which can lead to further fragmentation of the world map. For the People's Republic of China, recognizing Kosovo could create a dangerous precedent for Taiwan, Tibet and East Turkestan (Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region).

Five EU states opposed the recognition of Kosovo's independence: Spain, Slovakia, Romania, Greece and Cyprus. Spain's position was announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the country, Jose Manuel

[142] *Vovchuk L.* The Kosovo Crisis as a Destabilizing Factor of European Security… P. 16-17.

García-Margallo: "Spain will not recognize the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo until Serbia itself recognizes it. The recognition of Kosovo means the recognition of the destruction of the internal constitutional law of the former Yugoslavia and international law"[143]. The reasons for the position of the Spanish side lie in the separatist tendencies of its two provinces – Catalonia and the Basque Country. The same can be said about Slovakia, in the eastern regions of which a significant percentage of the population consists of Hungarians (southeast) and Lemko Rusyns (northeast).

The official representative of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that Greece's foreign policy is based on the principle of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states. That is why Greece did not recognize Kosovo and does not recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The position of these countries was quite understandable, because the Kosovo case could become a "chain reaction" for other ethnic groups constituting a majority in particular regions of these countries.

Ukraine did not recognize the independence of Kosovo. One of the reasons for this is to some extent the fear that Ukraine will be accused of inconsistency in its position on territorial integrity. In addition, the recognition of Kosovo for the Ukrainian state would mean a weakening of its position on Crimea. However, the Ukrainian government has taken certain steps towards de facto recognition. In particular, in 2020, Ukraine recognized the passports of this state.

According to Ukrainian researchers K. Yefremova and I. Maryniv, non-recognition of Kosovo by Ukraine is a certain compromise with Serbia. Ukraine does not recognize the independence of Kosovo, and Serbia does not recognize the annexation of Crimea.

During 2017–2019, 15 countries (CAR, Palau, Madagascar, Solomon Islands, Comoros Islands, Commonwealth of Dominica, Suriname, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, Papua New Guinea, Lesotho, Grenada, Togo), which had recognized the independence of Kosovo withdrew this recognition. In our opinion, these countries were also subject to pressure from Russia and China, which actively cooperate with them.

According to the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, as of the beginning of January 2023, more countries did not recognize Kosovo's independence (106 countries) than recognized it (84 countries)[144].

By maintaining that the Kosovo case was "unique", the "Western" bloc of states was forced to work to strengthen the principle of state sovereignty, and as far as Europe is concerned, to strengthen the norms of

[143] *Vovchuk L.* The Kosovo Crisis as a Destabilizing Factor of European Security. P. 17-18.
[144] Ibidem.

the OSCE Helsinki Final Act on the inviolability of borders in post-war Europe. In particular, the unconditional validity of these norms is confirmed in the decision of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the EU countries regarding Kosovo. The logic of the principle "the exception proves the rule" consistently puts countries that have recognized Kosovo's independence in the position of opponents of any attempts by other separatist movements and parties in "frozen" conflicts to use it as a precedent. The self-proclaimed leaders of Kosovo themselves find themselves in a similar situation – from now on, being in the "league" of sovereign states, they will be directly interested in preserving this principle.

Thus, in 2014, the Russian authorities, which did not recognize the independence of Kosovo, used this precedent as one of the justifications for recognizing the independence of the Republic of Crimea, which unilaterally separated from Ukraine and was later incorporated into Russia (Ramach, 2014).

In his speech on 18 March 2014, V. Putin stated: "The Crimean authorities relied on the well-known Kosovo precedent, which our Western partners created themselves, so-called, with their own hands, in a situation completely similar to the Crimean one, recognized the separation of Kosovo from Serbia as legitimate, proving to everyone that no permission from the country's central government is needed for a unilateral declaration of independence... We hear from the same United States and Europe that Kosovo is, they say, another special case. What, according to our colleagues, is its uniqueness? It turns out that during the conflict in Kosovo there were many human victims. Is this a legal argument or what? The decision of the International Court of Justice does not say anything about this at all. And then, you know, it's not even double standards anymore. This is some strange primitive and straightforward cynicism. You can't adjust everything so rudely to your own interests"[145].

Thus, the Russian authorities themselves demonstrated their commitment to double standards and outright cynicism. They revealed to European countries and the USA their "voracious appetite" for foreign territories, to which they practically closed their eyes at the time. As a result, this contributed to the start of Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine (24 February 2022), thereby destabilizing the European and international security system.

Understanding the difficulty of reaching a full-fledged compromise in the relations between Serbia and Kosovo, Russia is interested in creating an armed conflict in the Balkans, which should divert the attention of Europeans from the war in Ukraine.

[145] *Vovchuk L.* The Kosovo Crisis as a Destabilizing Factor of European Security... P. 18-19.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine served as a grim reminder that Europe's unresolved problems could flare up again. The escalation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia at the end of 2022 served as a cause for concern among the European guarantors. In November 2022, Kosovo Serbs withdrew from state authorities, political institutions and the police in the northern municipalities of Kosovo. It was a protest against Pristina's decision to re-register vehicle licence plates. The Kosovo authorities resorted to such actions on 1 August last year, when they planned to replace Serbian licence plates with Kosovo ones. In addition, the Government of Kosovo decided to introduce temporary documents for all citizens of Serbia entering/leaving the territory of Kosovo. At that time, the Serbs reacted extremely negatively – they erected barricades, blocked movement at some checkpoints on the administrative border between Serbia and Kosovo. Under pressure from the EU and the U.S., Pristina postponed the introduction of new rules until 1 September, and then postponed it again. On 1 November 2022, the Kosovo police issued the first warnings to drivers using Serbian licence plates.

After that, A. Vučić ordered the army to be on high alert. A few days later, the Serbs staged a political walkout from the institutions in the northern municipalities. And again, the symptoms were temporarily suppressed by the active intervention of the EU and the USA.

With tensions rising in the Balkans at the end of 2022, Germany and France made resolving the outstanding issues between Serbia and Kosovo their top priority for 2023.

At the end of 2022, France and Germany appointed their special envoys to engage with Serbia and Kosovo, and held an EU-facilitated dialogue to settle the dispute between the two countries. The proposed Franco–German agreement consisted of nine articles and was based on a document known as the Basic Agreement of 1972. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron believed that France and Germany's experience in dealing with highly sensitive issues after World War II could help Serbia and Kosovo normalize relations. They suggested that Serbia and Kosovo establish permanent missions, which are similar to embassies but operate at a lower level, as a starting point.

The most important part of the Franco–German proposal is that Kosovo and Serbia were to develop good neighborly relations with each other on the basis of equal rights. The Franco–German proposal offered financial incentives with a deadline of spring 2023 and guaranteed that France and Germany would push for both Serbia and Kosovo to join the EU.

The Franco–German plan satisfied Kosovo because it removed an obstacle to membership in the Council of Europe, the UN and the EU, allowing Kosovo to be recognized by the five EU countries. However, it

turned out to be unacceptable for Serbia, despite the proposed EU investment and the possibility of quick accession to the EU. This position of Serbia was explained by the reluctance to recognize the independence of Kosovo[146].

However, at the beginning of January 2023, Serbian President A. Vučić showed some willingness to compromise on this issue. He stated that he was ready to accept the concept of an agreement on the normalization of relations with Kosovo, proposed by France and Germany. Under the plan, Serbia would no longer object to Kosovo's membership in any international organization, and Kosovo would agree to the creation of a new body that would have the right to speak for all 10 Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo. Both countries would also undertake to support each other's accession to the EU, as well as "continue the dialogue through the mediation of the EU to conclude a legally binding comprehensive agreement on the normalization of relations".

On the initiative of the EU, which has acted as a mediator in the negotiations between the countries since 2011, on 27 February 2023, A. Vučić and the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, agreed to meet in Brussels and discuss ways of implementing European proposals. After all, the previous negotiations between A. Vučić and A. Kurti turned into disputes and mutual accusations.

26 May 2023 marked the beginning of a new stage in the tense relations between Serbia and Kosovo. This time the escalation turned out to be much sharper, and the reaction of Kosovo's international partners was a surprise for the partially recognized state. It was on this day that a rally of pro-government political forces was planned in Belgrade, where A. Vučić addressed his supporters. In his evening address, the Serbian president once again complained about Pristina's illegal actions and the suffering of Serbs in the self-proclaimed republic. On 30 May 2023, clashes broke out with the police in Zvečan (*Eng*. Zvechan), Kosovo, after Serbian demonstrators attempted to occupy the local administration and prevent the appointment of a new Albanian mayor. On the same day, the Armed Forces of Serbia were put on high alert.

It is clear that the president of Serbia would not give an order for the army to cross the administrative border with Kosovo, since this would threaten him to undermine his standing in Brussels and expose him to accusations of starting an escalation. In addition, it is necessary to take into account the fact that Serbia does not need a war, because then Belgrade will be "cut off" from European funds and European integration will become even more distant than it is now. Without European money, A. Vučić's

[146] *Vovchuk L.* The Kosovo Crisis as a Destabilizing Factor of European Security… P. 19.

political life will quickly end. If it were not for the support of Russia and the People's Republic of China, Serbia would hardly have resorted to such threats of military action.

These events were perceived by the leadership of Kosovo Force (KFOR), NATO, the United States and the European Union as absolutely unacceptable. As a result, the representatives put all the responsibility for the escalation on Pristina and the government of A. Kurti. American Ambassador Jeff Gauvenier bluntly stated that the Kosovo authorities are to blame for the outbreak of violence. His words echoed those of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who also said the actions of the Kosovo government led to the escalation. A. Blinken advised A. Kurti to focus on peace talks under the auspices of the EU and not to provoke instability.

The U.S. position was shared by Italy, Great Britain, Germany, and France, which are members of the so-called Quint (an international informal entity created in 2016 to address global security, political, and economic issues). They issued a joint statement condemning the attacks on EULEX[147] representatives in Zvečan and the decision by the Kosovo authorities to allow mayors of Albanian origin to access municipal buildings with the help of the police. Separately, the countries expressed concern that Serbia has put its army on high alert. The statement also called for restraint and urged the parties to avoid inflammatory rhetoric[148].

Due to Kosovo's failure to heed the European Union's calls to implement immediate measures aimed at de-escalating tensions in the northern part of the country, the EU imposed restrictive measures against Kosovo in June 2023[149]. The restrictive measures had a significant adverse impact on Kosovo's economy. Between 2023 and 2025, Kosovo lost more than €600 million in external funding, including financial support earmarked for environmental protection and energy projects[150].

In May 2025, during a press conference in Pristina, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, stated that the EU remained committed to supporting Kosovo but emphasized that the country's political leaders must set aside their differences and prioritize Kosovo's future. Responding to a question regarding the restrictive measures imposed on Kosovo in the summer of 2023, Kallas noted

[147] The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo…
[148] *Vovchuk L.* The Kosovo Crisis as a Destabilizing Factor of European Security… P. 20.
[149] *Завадська Ю.* ЄС запровадить санкції проти Косова за ігнорування вимог для зниження напруги в регіоні — ЗМІ // NV. 2023. 14 червня. URL: https://nv.ua/ukr/world/countries/situaciya-u-kosovo-yes-zaprovadit-sankciji-proti-uryadu-krajini-ostanni-novini-50331765.html
[150] *Лотоцька Н.* Санкції ЄС коштували Косову 600 мільйонів євро на екологічні та екологічні проекти // LB.ua. 2025. 28 травня. URL: https://lb.ua/world/2025/05/28/678749_sanktsii_ies_koshtuvali_kosovu_600.html

that the European Union had begun the process of lifting these measures. At the same time, she stressed that "it is important to understand that we do not want to see any escalation in the north", underscoring that continued de-escalation and constructive engagement remain essential prerequisites for the full normalization of EU–Kosovo relations[151].

In 2026, relations between Kosovo and Serbia remain highly strained. In March of that year, Serbian President A. Vučić stated that Belgrade was closely monitoring the growing military cooperation between Croatia, Albania, and Kosovo, asserting that Serbia was preparing for a potential security threat. These remarks followed the signing of a trilateral Declaration on Defence Cooperation by Croatia, Albania, and Kosovo in Tirana on 18 March 2025, aimed at strengthening security cooperation, enhancing defence capabilities, and improving the interoperability of their armed forces. A. Vučić accused Croatia and Albania of initiating an "arms race" together with what he referred to as the "provisional institutions" in Kosovo, a term used by Serbian officials to denote the Government of Kosovo without recognizing its statehood. In response, the governments of Croatia and Albania rejected these accusations, emphasizing that, as sovereign states, they were under no obligation to seek anyone's permission before concluding security and defence agreements and reaffirming that the declaration was directed toward enhancing regional stability rather than threatening any third party[152]. Such statements by the President of Serbia clearly demonstrate Belgrade's continued position that Kosovo constitutes an integral part of Serbian territory rather than an independent sovereign state.

The principal sources of tension between the two countries remain Serbia's refusal to recognize Kosovo's independence, the stagnation of Kosovo's European integration caused by the lack of meaningful progress in the Belgrade–Pristina dialogue, and the continued non-recognition of Kosovo by five European Union Member States: Spain, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, and Cyprus. These unresolved political and legal disputes continue to impede Kosovo's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions while simultaneously contributing to persistent political instability and security challenges across the Western Balkans[153].

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[151] *Кравченко О.* Кая Каллас: ЄС починає скасовувати запроваджені в 2023 році санкції проти Косово // LB.ua. 2025. 22 травня. URL: https://lb.ua/world/2025/05/22/677836_kaya_kallas_ies_pochinaie_skasovuvati.html

[152] *Бережна Д.* "Ми готуємося до атаки": Вучич заявив, що на Сербію хочуть напасти Хорватія, Косово та Албанія // Фокус. 2026. 13 березня. URL: https://focus.ua/uk/world/747179-mi-gotuyemosya-do-ataki-vuchich-zayaviv-shcho-na-serbiyu-hochut-napasti-horvatiya-kosovo-ta-albaniya

[153] *Науменко М.* Ще одна країна наблизилася до статусу кандидата на вступ до ЄС, але є нюанс // РБК-Україна. 2026. 16 травня. URL: https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/shche-odna-krayina-nablizilasya-statusu-kandidata-1778933993.html

Despite repeated calls from the European Union, no substantial progress has been achieved in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. In June 2026, following another wave of domestic unrest, President A. Vučić announced his resignation and called for early parliamentary and presidential elections in Serbia. The political transition is expected to have important implications for the future of the Belgrade–Pristina dialogue, although it remains uncertain whether a change in Serbia's political leadership will result in a fundamental shift in the country's policy toward Kosovo[154]. However, as of now, no official information has been released regarding the scheduling or conduct of these elections.

At the same time, it should be recognized that the departure of A. Vučić from the Serbian presidency would not, in itself, lead to the automatic normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. The future trajectory of the Serbia–Kosovo dialogue will depend primarily on the political orientation of Serbia's new leadership, the country's domestic political environment, the policies pursued by the European Union and the United States, and the willingness of both parties to engage in meaningful compromise.

Should more pro-European political forces come to power, one could expect renewed momentum in the dialogue process, the implementation of the Brussels and Ohrid Agreements, closer practical cooperation, and the gradual normalization of relations without necessarily requiring Serbia's formal recognition of Kosovo's independence. Conversely, the emergence of a more nationalist-oriented government could intensify confrontation, stall negotiations, increase the likelihood of renewed crises in northern Kosovo, and strengthen Serbia's strategic cooperation with Russia and China.

Nevertheless, the most plausible scenario is the continuation of Serbia's current policy, albeit with possible changes in the style and dynamics of negotiations rather than in their fundamental substance. Serbia's refusal to recognize Kosovo's independence is shaped not only by the personal political views of A. Vučić but also by constitutional provisions, prevailing public opinion, the influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the broad political consensus among much of the Serbian political elite. Consequently, although a change in Serbia's political leadership could facilitate a more constructive dialogue with the European Union and Pristina, it is unlikely to produce a rapid resolution of the Kosovo issue, as the principal obstacles are deeply rooted in political, historical, and

[154] Президент Сербії Вучич оголосив про відставку та дострокові вибори // Слово і діло. 2026. 28 червня. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2026/06/28/novyna/svit/prezydent-serbiyi-vuchych-oholosyv-pro-vidstavku-ta-dostrokovi-vybory

security-related factors that extend well beyond the role of any individual political leader.

Conclusions. Today, the geopolitical consequences of Kosovo's declaration of independence look quite pessimistic. As already mentioned this precedent, created by major Western powers, led by the USA, is used to justify the occupation of the territories of other states, incites separatist movements and contributes to the expansion of the influence of the USA in Europe. And the high crime rate in the region, the unchecked activities of criminal groups, and the lack of effective law-enforcement institutions contribute to further destabilization not only in the Balkans, but also in the whole of Europe.

Representatives of the EU and the USA today clearly understand the consequences of their actions and therefore try to resolve this conflict at any cost in order to demonstrate to the whole world that the situation is under control. Currently exerting pressure specifically on the government of Pristina, these actors are trying to finally achieve full political normalization between Kosovo and Belgrade so that there are no further ethnic tensions in the region or recurrent escalations in the north of the self-proclaimed republic. However, normalization is unlikely to proceed as quickly as the USA and the EU expect. After all, it is unlikely that Serbia will give up part of its territory. Even if Serbia joins the EU, the issue of confrontation with Kosovo will not disappear. Further progress may therefore require continued concessions to Serbia from the EU and the USA, although it remains unclear how far they are prepared to go. Time will tell. Now, we see that the Kosovo issue has developed into a serious security threat in Europe.

In our opinion, the resolution of the conflict is possible under the condition of weakening the Russian Federation, which seeks to undermine relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and the development of mechanisms for the long-term management of the conflict.

Russia is one of the principal external actors supporting Serbia's position on the non-recognition of Kosovo's independence, using this issue as an instrument to preserve its political influence in the Western Balkans and to counter the further expansion of Euro-Atlantic institutions. Above all, Moscow provides Belgrade with substantial diplomatic support in the international arena by consistently refusing to recognize Kosovo's independence and by exercising its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to block initiatives that could facilitate Kosovo's full international legitimisation. This position enables Serbia to continue referring to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) as the principal legal basis underpinning its claims regarding Kosovo.

At the same time, Russia actively employs information and propaganda mechanisms, reinforcing narratives within Serbian society

concerning the alleged "illegitimacy" of Kosovo's independence, criticizing the policies of NATO, the European Union, and Western states in the Balkans, and fostering negative public attitudes toward potential compromises with Pristina.

Another significant instrument of Russian influence lies in the historical, cultural, and religious ties between the two countries, rooted in the concepts of Slavic solidarity and Orthodox Christian unity. These shared identities contribute to the persistence of pro-Russian sentiments among segments of the Serbian population and political elite. Furthermore, Russia maintains considerable economic and energy leverage over Serbia through natural gas supplies, investments, and the activities of Russian companies, thereby providing Belgrade with additional incentives to preserve close relations with Moscow.

For the Kremlin, the Kosovo issue also possesses broader geopolitical significance, serving as a means of challenging Western interpretations of the principle of territorial integrity while simultaneously justifying Russia's own revisionist foreign policy. In particular, Moscow has repeatedly invoked the so-called "Kosovo precedent" in an attempt to legitimize the illegal annexation of Crimea and its occupation of Ukrainian territories. Nevertheless, Russia's influence over Serbian foreign policy should not be overstated. Belgrade continues to pursue a strategy of balancing its strategic partnership with Moscow against its long-term objective of accession to the European Union, while the Serbian leadership is increasingly compelled to accommodate the European Union's demands for the normalization of relations with Kosovo as a prerequisite for further progress in the accession process. Consequently, Russia has a strategic interest in preserving the unresolved nature of the Serbia–Kosovo dispute, as its persistence weakens the coherence of the European security architecture, complicates the enlargement of both the European Union and NATO in the Western Balkans, and provides Moscow with additional opportunities to project political influence throughout the region.

3.5. The Catalan Question as a Destabilizing Factor for Security in the EuropeanUnion
(*Anastasiia Khmel*)

At the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of European security is becoming less and less confined to the traditional military-political dimension. Alongside external threats, issues such as the resilience of democratic institutions, social polarisation, the rule of law, external interference in information flows, and the ability of Member States and the European Union to respond to crises arising at the intersection of domestic

and foreign policy have come to the fore. The Catalan crisis is illustrative in this context: the conflict that has arisen within Spain over the limits of autonomy, collective identity, constitutional sovereignty and the right to self-determination, gained pan-European resonance in 2017, raised questions about the limits of the EU's involvement in the internal territorial conflicts of Member States, and became the subject of external information operations. At the same time, the European Commission's position following the referendum on 1 October 2017 was based on the view that the situation should be resolved within the framework of Spain's constitutional order[155].

The theoretical basis of this study is the expanded concept of security proposed by representatives of the Copenhagen School, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, who, alongside military security, identify the political, economic, social and environmental sectors and regard securitisation as the process of constructing a particular phenomenon as an existential threat to a specific reference object[156]. Of particular significance for the Catalan case is the concept of 'societal security', which allows us to examine the role of collective identity and the ways in which political actors frame threats to Catalan identity and self-government, on the one hand, and to the Spanish constitutional order and territorial integrity, on the other. This approach makes it possible to analyse not the normative question of the status of Catalans as a nation, but the mechanisms of politicisation and securitisation of competing collective identities.

The second component of the analytical framework is the concept of resilience. In contemporary EU policy, strengthening resilience is linked to the ability to better anticipate, detect and respond to threats, in particular hybrid, cyber and information threats; this approach is enshrined in the 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence[157]. The institutional and legal dimension of resilience is examined through the principle of the rule of law, enshrined amongst the EU's fundamental values in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. In European Commission documents, its meaning is linked to legality, legal certainty, the prevention of arbitrary exercise of power, independent judicial review, the separation of powers and equality before the law[158]. In this study, these criteria are used to assess how the constitutional and political confrontation has affected the

[155] Statement on the events in Catalonia, 2 October 2017 // European Commission. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/33168_en

[156] *Buzan B., Wæver O., de Wilde J.* Security: A New Framework for Analysis. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, 239 p.

[157] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. 2022 // European Union / EEAS. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-eu-bolsters-its-work-security-and-defence_en

[158] Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, Art. 2; What is the rule of law? // European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/rule-law/what-rule-law_en

legitimacy, predictability and functioning of Spain's institutional mechanisms, as well as the EU's stance on the crisis.

To analyse the external information dimension, the contemporary concept of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) is used; the European External Action Service defines this as a manipulative, deliberate and coordinated pattern of behaviour by state or non-state actors capable of adversely affecting societal values, procedures and political processes[159]. FIMI may form part of a broader hybrid campaign or be employed on its own[160]. The term is used retrospectively in relation to the events of 2017 as an analytical category and does not imply that EU institutions officially classified the Catalan referendum as FIMI or that external interference was the root cause of the conflict. Instead, it allows for an examination of the possible external exploitation of pre-existing political, informational and identity-based divisions. In 2024, the European Parliament, within the broader context of Russian interference in the EU's democratic processes, specifically expressed concern over reports of contacts between representatives of the Catalan separatist movement and Russian actors, whilst emphasising the need to investigate the relevant circumstances[161].

Based on a combination of the aforementioned approaches, a destabilising security factor, for the purposes of this study, is understood as a process or a set of interrelated processes which, whilst not necessarily constituting a direct military or existential threat to a state or the European Union, are capable of exacerbating institutional, legal, social, informational or economic vulnerabilities, undermine the resilience of democratic institutions, deepen political and social polarisation, and create conditions for external exploitation of existing contradictions. Accordingly, the Catalan issue is analysed through four interrelated channels of destabilising influence: institutional and legal, social, informational and economic.

Gary Marks and Liesbet Hooghe's concepts of multilevel governance and Michael Keating's concept of post-sovereignty are also important for explaining the institutional context of the conflict. Multilevel governance explains the distribution of political power between the supranational, state and sub-state levels in an integrated Europe, whilst Michael Keating demonstrates how transnational integration transforms traditional notions

[159] Beyond Disinformation – What is FIMI? 6 February 2023 // European External Action Service. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/beyond-disinformation-what-fimi_en
[160] Hybrid threats // Council of the European Union. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/hybrid-threats/
[161] Resolution of 8 February 2024 on Russiagate: allegations of Russian interference in the democratic processes of the European Union (2024/2548(RSP) // European Parliament. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0079_EN.html

of sovereignty and opens up possibilities for the shared or joint exercise of political power without necessarily creating a new state[162]. At the same time, Michael Keating himself emphasises that the post-sovereign plurinational order is not a ready-made model for resolving national conflicts and depends on the parties' capacity for political compromise[163].

The Catalan issue has been extensively studied by academics. Luis Moreno has studied the formation of Spain's Estado de las Autonomías and asymmetric territorial decentralisation; Ferran Requejo and Marc Sanjaume have analysed the shift in Catalan territorial policy from demands for political recognition and autonomous accommodation to secessionism; Montserrat Gibernau has focused on the transformation of Catalan nationalism and the intensification of secessionist tendencies; Andrew Dowling has explained the crisis through the interplay of long-term historical, medium-term institutional and short-term political factors[164].

Empirical studies on support for independence constitute a separate area of research. Ivan Serrano emphasised the importance of identity, without reducing the entire complex of secessionist orientations to it alone; Jordi Muñoz and Raúl Tormos found that identity and party affiliation remain the main factors in support for independence, whilst economic expectations have an independent but more limited significance; Tony Rodon and Guinjoan demonstrated that the relationship between identity and secessionist attitudes depends on the social and territorial context, particularly for those with a dual Catalan-Spanish identity[165].

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[162] *Hooghe L., Marks G.* Multi-Level Governance and European Integration. Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, 251 p.

[163] *Keating M.* Plurinational Democracy: Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 212 p.

[164] *Moreno L.* The Federalization of Spain. Frank Cass/Routledge. 2001 DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315038713; *Moreno L.* Scotland, Catalonia, Europeanization and the 'Moreno Question'// Scottish Affairs. 2006. № 54. First Serie. P. 1-21. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.2006.0002; *Requejo F., Sanjaume M.* Recognition and political accommodation: from regionalism to secessionism. The Catalan case // Political Theory Working Paper. 2013. № 13. URL: https://www.academia.edu/65957178/Recognition_and_political_accommodation_from_regionalism_to_secessionism_The_Catalan_case; *Guibernau M.* Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy // Ethnopolitics. 2013. Vol. 12. № 4. P. 368–393. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2013.843245; *Guibernau M.* Nationalism and Intellectuals in Nations without States: The Catalan Case // Political Studies. 2000. № 48 (5). P. 989-1005. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00291; *Dowling A.* The Rise of Catalan Independence: Spain's Territorial Crisis. Routledge, 2018, 202 p.

[165] *Serrano I.* Just a Matter of Identity? Support for Independence in Catalonia // Regional & Federal Studies. 2013. Vol. 23. P. 523–545. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2013.775945; *Muñoz J., Tormos R.* Economic Expectations and Support for Secession in Catalonia: Between Causality and Rationalisation // European Political Science Review. 2015. Vol. 7. № 2. P. 315–341. DOI:

The information security and international dimensions of the Catalan crisis remain relatively less thoroughly researched. Mira Milosevich-Juaristi examined the information activities of Russian state-run and affiliated media surrounding the 2017 referendum in the context of Russia's information strategy and its exploitation of existing domestic political divisions. At the same time, Carlos López-Olano and Vicente Fenoll, having carried out a comparative analysis of the coverage of the Catalan 'procés' in Facebook posts by RT, the BBC and Deutsche Welle, found no statistically significant differences between the media outlets studied, despite RT's documented proximity to the pro-independence discourse[166]. This discrepancy in the results highlights the need to distinguish between the mere fact of external information activity, its attribution, and its proven impact on political orientations or the outcome of the referendum.

In Ukrainian academia, certain aspects of the Catalan issue have been studied by Kateryna Vakarchuk, who examined the international and media dimensions of the referendum; Nataliia Stetsiuk and Mariana Sheketa, who analysed the historical and ethnopolitical roots of separatism; Anastasia Khmel and Anna Stekolshchikova, who investigated trends in the development of separatism in Spain between 2004 and 2015; and Alina Mozolevska and Anastasiia Khmel, who analysed the mechanisms of constructing Catalan national identity based on the political discourse of Carles Puigdemont[167].

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773914000174; *Rodon T., Guinjoan M.* When the Context Matters: Identity, Secession and the Spatial Dimension in Catalonia // Political Geography. 2018. Vol. 63. P. 75–87. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2018.01.004.

[166] *Milosevich-Juaristi M.* The "Combination": An Instrument in Russia's Information War in Catalonia. Real Instituto Elcano, 2017. URL: https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/the-combination-an-instrument-in-russias-information-war-in-catalonia/; *Milosevich-Juaristi M.* El poder de la influencia rusa: la desinformación. Real Instituto Elcano, 2017. URL: https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/el-poder-de-la-influencia-rusa-la-desinformacion/; *López-Olano C., Fenoll V.* La polarización mediática en el proceso de independencia en Cataluña. Estudio comparativo del tratamiento en RT // Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación. 2020. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 261–272. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM2020.11.1.22

[167] *Vakarchuk K.* The Impact of the Media on the Catalonia Referendum // Rhetoric and Communications Journal. 2020. Issue 43 (April). URL: https://dspace.onu.edu.ua/server/api/core/bitstreams/173411b0-7ce1-4887-a4a6-6d229990a90c/content; *Стецюк Н., Шекета М.* Історія та витоки сепаратизму в Каталонії // Вісник Прикарпатського університету. Політологія. 2019. Том 1. № 13. С. 168–177. URL: https://journals.pnu.edu.ua/index.php/politics/article/view/5738; *Стекольщикова А.В., Хмель А.О.* Тенденції розвитку сепаратизму в Іспанії на початку XXI ст. // Наукові праці. Історія. 2015. Т. 264. № 251. С. 74–77; *Mozolevska A., Khmel A.* Catalonia and Catalans in Carles Puigdemont Political Discourse: In Search of National Identity // East European Historical Bulletin. 2020. № 14. P. 214–224. DOI: https://doi.org/10.24919/2519-058x.14.197192

Consequently, the research gap lies not in the absence of studies on Catalan nationalism or the 2017 crisis, but in the fragmentation of existing explanations: constitutional and legal, identity-based, economic, institutional and informational aspects are predominantly examined in isolation. The aim of this section is to bring these together within a comprehensive model that allows us to trace the mechanisms by which an internal territorial-political conflict within a Member State transforms into a destabilising factor in the wider EU security environment. The source base comprises the Spanish Constitution of 1978, the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 2006, the decision of the Spanish Constitutional Court STC 31/2010, regulatory and policy documents relating to the 2017 crisis, documents and statements from EU institutions, EEAS materials on FIMI, and the 2024 Amnesty Act; sociological, statistical, media and digital materials are also utilised[168]. Methodologically, the study combines historical-political, institutional, political-legal and discursive analysis with elements of case study and process tracing.

To understand the background of the current Catalan crisis, it is helpful to briefly outline the historical evolution of the Catalan question, without delving into the controversial aspects of its historiographical interpretation.

Table 3.5.1. A Historical Overview of the Development of the Catalonia Issue

Date or period	Event	Significance
Late 8th – 10th centuries	The territories of present-day Catalonia formed part of the Marca Hispanica of the Carolingian Empire. During the 9th–10th centuries, the Catalan counties gradually became increasingly independent of Frankish rule.	Formation of the foundations of a distinct political and territorial tradition in the Catalan counties.
1137	A dynastic agreement and betrothal between Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, and Petronila of Aragon established the basis for the dynastic union of the House of	The dynastic union eventually gave rise to the Crown of Aragon, within which the constituent territories retained their own laws and institutions.

[168] Constitución Estado (29 de diciembre de 1978). URL: https://www.boe.es/eli/es/c/1978/12/29%20%28texto%20actualizado%29; Ley Orgánica 6/2006, de 19 de julio, de reforma del Estatuto de Autonomía de Cataluña. URL: https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2006/07/19/6; La Sentencia 31/2010, de 28 de junio, del Tribunal Constitucional sobre el Estatuto de Cataluña // BOE, n. 172, de 16 de julio de 2010, 491 p. URL: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2010-11409; Ley Orgánica 1/2024, de 10 de junio, de amnistía para la normalización institucional, política y social en Cataluña. URL: https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2024-11776

	Barcelona and the Kingdom of Aragon. The marriage itself took place later, in 1150.	
1469–1479	Marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469; Ferdinand inherited the Crown of Aragon in 1479.	The marriage laid the foundations for the dynastic union of the Crowns of Castile and Aragon. Their territories nevertheless continued to preserve distinct legal and institutional arrangements; Catalan institutions remained in place.
1640–1652	The Reapers' War (Guerra dels Segadors): rebellion against the Spanish monarchy, alliance with France and temporary separation from the Hispanic Monarchy; Barcelona returned to the authority of the Spanish monarch in 1652.	One of the major early conflicts between Catalan institutions and the monarchy. Royal control increased after 1652, although the Catalan constitutional and institutional framework was not abolished at that stage.
1714–1716	Following the fall of Barcelona in September 1714 and the defeat of the Catalan institutions that had supported the Habsburg claimant during the War of the Spanish Succession, Philip V introduced the Decreto de Nueva Planta for Catalonia in 1716.	A major institutional turning point. Traditional Catalan political institutions, including the *Diputació del General (Generalitat)* and other representative bodies, were suppressed or fundamentally reorganised, and a more centralised Bourbon administrative system was introduced. The reforms substantially reduced Catalonia's previously distinct political and institutional autonomy.
1850s – early 20th century	Renaixença – revival of the Catalan language and culture, accompanied by the gradual emergence of modern political Catalanism and Catalan nationalism.	Cultural distinctiveness increasingly acquired political meaning and became connected with demands for recognition and self-government.
1914–1925	Establishment of the Mancomunitat de Catalunya, bringing together the four Catalan provincial councils.	The first modern institution to unite the four Catalan provinces administratively and an important institutional precursor to later Catalan self-government; it did not, however, constitute political autonomy in the later statutory sense.
1923–1930	Dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera. The Mancomunitat de Catalunya was abolished in 1925.	Curtailment of Catalan institutional initiatives and restrictions on Catalan political and cultural expression.
1931–1932	Following the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic, negotiations between Catalan and central authorities resulted in the Statute of Autonomy of 1932 (Estatut de Núria) and the	Catalan self-government was legally institutionalised within the Second Spanish Republic. The *Generalitat* included legislative and executive institutions, while Catalan and Castilian were recognised as official

	institutional restoration of the Generalitat de Catalunya.	languages in Catalonia; competences were transferred in areas including public order and other fields.
1938/1939–1975	The Franco authorities formally abolished the 1932 Statute in 1938; after the occupation of Catalonia in 1939, the autonomous institutional system ceased to function under the Franco dictatorship.	Interruption of Catalan institutional autonomy, suppression of the Generalitat within Spain and severe restrictions on Catalan political and cultural public life.
1977–1979	Provisional restoration of the Generalitat de Catalunya in 1977; adoption of the Spanish Constitution of 1978; adoption of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 1979 (Estatut de Sau).	Formation of the modern constitutional model of Catalan autonomy. National sovereignty remained vested in the Spanish people, while the Constitution recognised and guaranteed the right to autonomy of Spain's nationalities and regions. The 1979 Statute established Catalonia as an Autonomous Community, restored the Generalitat, and recognised Catalan and Castilian as official languages in Catalonia.
2006	Adoption of the reformed Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, Organic Law 6/2006, following the reform process commonly associated with the Estatut de Miravet.	The reform substantially revised the framework of Catalan autonomy, including language policy, competences, financing, judicial governance and the external action of the Generalitat. The preamble recorded that the Parlament de Catalunya had defined Catalonia as a "nation", while Article 1 legally defined Catalonia as a "nationality" exercising self-government as an Autonomous Community. The Statute also provided for the Agència Tributària de Catalunya and mechanisms for external representation within the sphere of Catalan competences.
2010	Judgment STC 31/2010 of the Spanish Constitutional Court concerning the 2006 Statute.	The Court declared several provisions or parts of provisions unconstitutional and subjected others to constitutionally conforming interpretation. It held that the references in the preamble to "Catalonia as a nation" and the "national reality of Catalonia" had no legal interpretative effect. The judgment also affected provisions concerning language, judicial governance, competences and financing and became an important

		point of reference in the subsequent political conflict.
2014	On 9 November 2014, the Generalitat organised a participatory process concerning Catalonia's political future after the originally planned consultation had been suspended.	An important stage in the institutionalisation of the strategy centred on the "right to decide". The Constitutional Court subsequently held that the Generalitat's actions connected with the 9 November participatory process exceeded its constitutional competences.
2015–2016	The elections of 27 September 2015 were presented by the main pro-independence forces as having a plebiscitary character. Junts pel Sí won 62 seats and CUP 10, giving the two pro-independence groups 72 of the 135 seats. On 9 November 2015, the Parlament de Catalunya adopted Resolution 1/XI on the initiation of the political process in Catalonia. In January 2016, Carles Puigdemont became President of the Generalitat.	Institutional reorientation of the parliamentary pro-independence majority towards a programme aimed at establishing an independent Catalan state. Importantly, the November 2015 resolution was adopted by the Parlament, not by the Generalitat as an executive institution.
1 October 2017	An independence referendum was held after the Law 19/2017 on the Referendum on Self-Determination and the related decree had been suspended by the Constitutional Court; the Court subsequently declared the law unconstitutional and null. Police interventions occurred during the voting.	The conflict entered an acute constitutional and political phase involving competing claims of legality, democratic legitimacy and political self-determination.
27 October 2017	The Parlament de Catalunya approved a declaration of independence. On the same day, the Spanish Senate authorised measures under Article 155 of the Constitution.	The President and Government of the Generalitat were dismissed, the Parlament de Catalunya was dissolved and certain functions of the Catalan administration were temporarily exercised by authorities designated by the Spanish Government until a new Catalan government could take office. It is therefore more precise to describe this as temporary direct central-government intervention under Article 155, rather than as a legal abolition of Catalan autonomy.
2 June 2018	A new Catalan government headed by Quim Torra took office.	The application of Article 155 measures came to an end and ordinary autonomous self-government resumed, although the broader political dispute remained unresolved.
14 October	The Spanish Supreme Court	The conflict increasingly acquired a

2019	delivered its judgment concerning 12 political and civic leaders prosecuted in connection with the events of 2017. Nine were sentenced to prison terms for sedition, with some also convicted of misuse of public funds; three were convicted of disobedience and fined.	judicial as well as political dimension.
2021	The government of Pedro Sánchez granted partial pardons to the nine convicted leaders who were serving prison sentences. The pardons remitted the remaining prison terms but did not remove the disqualification penalties.	The Spanish Government presented the measure as part of an effort to promote dialogue, coexistence and political de-escalation; it should therefore be described as a governmental strategy rather than as proof that the conflict had already been resolved.
2024	Adoption of Organic Law 1/2024 on amnesty for institutional, political and social normalisation in Catalonia. In the Catalan elections of 12 May 2024, Junts+, ERC and CUP together no longer held an absolute parliamentary majority.	The Amnesty Law explicitly framed its purpose in terms of institutional, political and social normalisation and the promotion of dialogue. The electoral results marked a change in the parliamentary balance, with the principal pro-independence parties no longer commanding an absolute majority of seats. The law itself subsequently remained subject to constitutional and judicial scrutiny.

Source: Compiled by the author based on sources[169].

The historical evolution of the Catalan question illustrates the long-standing coexistence of two interrelated trends: the desire to preserve or expand Catalonia's distinct political and institutional status, and the periodic strengthening of the Spanish states centralising mechanisms.

[169] This table was compiled based on information from the following articles: Chronology. URL: https://patrimoni.gencat.cat/en/catalunyapaisdarxius/digital-resource/resource/chronology/; History of the Generalitat. URL: https://web.gencat.cat/en/generalitat/qui-som/historia-generalitat/diputacio-general; La institució parlamentària en la història. URL: https://www.parlament.cat/wp/pcat/parlament/historia-del-parlament/; Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado; Britannica Editors. Spanish Civil War // Encyclopedia Britannica. URL: https://www.britannica.com/event/Spanish-Civil-War; *Stanley P.G.* Francisco Franco // Encyclopedia Britannica. URL: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francisco-Franco; *Vicente R.* Catalonia // Encyclopedia Britannica. URL: https://www.britannica.com/place/Catalonia; *Sala M., Posner R.* Catalan language // Encyclopedia Britannica. URL: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Catalan-language; *Elliott J.H.* Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion. (Chapter 2. Rebellion and Its Aftermath 1625–1707/1716). Yale University Press, 2018. P. 39-88. DOI: https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300240719-006; *Dowling A.* Catalonia: A New History. Routledge Studies in Modern European History: Taylor & Francis, 2022. 184 p.

However, the current Catalan crisis is not a direct continuation of previous historical conflicts. Its institutional parameters are determined primarily by the democratic constitutional model established after 1978, within which the right to autonomy is reconciled with the principles of unified national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the state. Therefore, to understand the mechanisms behind the transition from a dispute over the extent of autonomy to the open constitutional crisis of 2017, it is first necessary to examine the relationship between the provisions of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, the 2006 Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia and their interpretation by the Constitutional Court in judgment STC 31/2010. The Constitutional Court has consistently held that statutes of autonomy are acts of self-government subject to the Constitution, rather than an expression of separate sovereign power[170].

In the analytical model proposed by this study, regulatory conflict is viewed not merely as a dispute over the allocation of powers, but as one of the mechanisms leading to systemic vulnerability. A destabilising effect arises when political discord undermines the ability of the institutional and social system to resolve conflict within established procedures without a prolonged loss of trust, functionality and social cohesion. For this reason, the subsequent analysis is conducted through four interrelated channels – institutional-legal, societal, informational and economic – whilst multilevel governance and post-sovereignty are employed to explain the interaction between the Catalan, Spanish and European levels of politics. This approach makes it possible to avoid equating Catalan nationalism or the very demand for self-determination with a 'threat to security', and instead to examine the specific mechanisms through which political conflict can affect the stability of state and European institutions.

A comparative analysis of the 1978 Spanish Constitution[171], the 2006 Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia[172] and Constitutional Court ruling STC 31/2010[173] shows that the main constitutional disputes did not centre on

[170] Constitución Estado (29 de diciembre de 1978). URL: https://www.boe.es/eli/es/c/1978/12/29%20%28texto%20actualizado%29; Ley Orgánica 6/2006, de 19 de julio, de reforma del Estatuto de Autonomía de Cataluña. URL: https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2006/07/19/6; La Sentencia 31/2010, de 28 de junio, del Tribunal Constitucional sobre el Estatuto de Cataluña // BOE, n. 172, de 16 de julio de 2010. 491 p. URL: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2010-11409

[171] Constitución Estado (29 de diciembre de 1978). URL: https://www.boe.es/eli/es/c/1978/12/29%20%28texto%20actualizado%29

[172] Ley Orgánica 6/2006, de 19 de julio, de reforma del Estatuto de Autonomía de Cataluña. URL: https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2006/07/19/6

[173] La Sentencia 31/2010, de 28 de junio, del Tribunal Constitucional sobre el Estatuto de Cataluña // BOE. n. 172, de 16 de julio de 2010. 491 p. URL: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2010-11409

the issue of Catalan independence per se, but rather on the limits of autonomous self-government within the Spanish state. When assessing the 2006 Statute of Autonomy, a distinction must be made between the initial draft, adopted by the Catalan Parliament in September 2005, and the final text, agreed following negotiations with Spain's central institutions.

The 2005 bill, supported by 120 of the 135 members of the Catalan Parliament, provided for a significant expansion of elements of political recognition and self-government: the legal definition of Catalonia as a nation, the strengthening of the status of the Catalan language, broader exclusive powers for the Generalitat, and greater financial autonomy. Ferran Requejo and Marc Sanjaume regard this document as an attempt to deepen Catalonia's political accommodation within the existing constitutional system[174].

The 2006 Statute did not contain any provisions regarding Catalonia's right to unilateral self-determination or secession from Spain; however, it significantly expanded the symbolic and institutional elements of autonomy: it reinforced the importance of historical rights, the status of the Catalan language, the powers of the Generalitat, and financial autonomy. The 2010 ruling by the Constitutional Court, which narrowed or constitutionally reinterpreted a number of these provisions, marked a turning point not only in legal terms but also politically. It had a significant impact on the transformation of Catalan political discourse, shifting it from demands for greater autonomy to increasingly broad calls for self-determination and independence[175].

Table 3.5.2. The status of Catalonia's autonomy according to the documents of the Kingdom of Spain

Topic	The Spanish Constitution 1978	The Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia 2006	Constitutional Court Ruling 31/2010
Source of sovereignty	National sovereignty belongs to the Spanish people, from whom the powers of the State derive (Article 1.2).	It does not establish a separate Catalan sovereignty. Article 1 defines Catalonia as a 'nationality'	The Court confirmed that the Statute is subordinate to the Constitution and that autonomy does not constitute an exercise

[174] *Requejo F., Sanjaume M.* Recognition and political accommodation: from regionalism to secessionism. The Catalan case // Political Theory Working Paper. 2013. № 13. URL: https://www.academia.edu/65957178/Recognition_and_political_accommodation_from_regionalism_to_secessionism_The_Catalan_case

[175] La Sentencia 31/2010, de 28 de junio, del Tribunal Constitucional sobre el Estatuto de Cataluña // BOE. n. 172, de 16 de julio de 2010. 491 p. URL: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2010-11409

		which exercises self-government as an autonomous community in accordance with the Constitution and the Statute.	of separate sovereign power.
Territorial integrity	Article 2 bases the Constitution on the 'indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation' whilst at the same time recognising and guaranteeing the right to autonomy of nationalities and regions.	It does not establish a right to unilateral secession and operates within the framework of Spain's constitutional order.	Catalonia's constitutional autonomy is interpreted solely within the framework of the Constitution, which remains the supreme legal basis for its autonomous status
The status of Catalonia	The Constitution does not explicitly define Catalonia as either a 'nation' or a specific 'nationality'; Article 2 refers generally to 'nationalities and regions'.	The preamble states that the Parliament of Catalonia has defined Catalonia as a 'nation', whilst Article 1 legally defines Catalonia as a 'nationality'.	The court ruled that the preamble's references to 'Catalonia as a nation' and 'the national reality of Catalonia' have no legal interpretative force
Historical rights	It does not grant Catalonia a separate claim to state sovereignty on the basis of historical rights.	Article 5 also links Catalonia's self-government to the historical rights of the Catalan people, its secular institutions and its legal tradition.	The Court permitted such a reference only within constitutional limits: these historical rights are not an autonomous source of powers and are not identical to the special 'foral rights' protected by the First Additional Provision of the Constitution.
The Catalan language	Castilian is the official language of the state; other Spanish languages may be co-official in the respective autonomous communities in accordance with their statutes (Article 3).	Article 6 defined Catalan as the 'llengua pròpia de Catalunya' and provided for its 'normal and preferential use' by the authorities and public media of Catalonia.	The Court ruled that the word 'preferential' (preferente) was unconstitutional, as co-official status does not permit the establishment of a general normative preference for one official language over another.
Powers of the Generalitat	The system of separation of powers is laid down in the	Articles 110–112 set out in detail the categories of	The Court did not abolish the system of powers, but ruled that

	Constitution, specifically in Section VIII and Articles 148–149.	exclusive, shared and executive powers of the Generalitat.	statutory definitions cannot restrict the powers of the State as enshrined in the Constitution; part of the wording of Article 111 was declared unconstitutional
The judicial system	The judiciary has a nationwide constitutional basis; the principle of the unity of jurisdiction is fundamental to its organisation.	Articles 95–101 provided for the Tribunal Superior de Justícia de Catalunya and the Consell de Justícia de Catalunya as part of the organisation of the judiciary in Catalonia.	Article 97, which established the Consell de Justícia de Catalunya, was declared unconstitutional; certain parts of the related Articles 98–101 were also declared unconstitutional.
Funding	Articles 156–158 enshrine the financial autonomy of the autonomous communities in coordination with the state financial system and the principle of solidarity.	Section VI, Articles 201–210, set out in considerable detail the mechanisms for financing, tax powers and Catalonia's participation in the national system.	The Court did not abolish financial autonomy as such, but partially declared certain provisions unconstitutional or gave them a constitutionally restrictive interpretation, in particular Articles 206 and 210.

It is important to note that the Catalan crisis cannot be viewed as a linear continuation of the traditional independence movement. As Ferran Requejo and Marc Sanjaume note, at the beginning of the 21st century, autonomist and federalist demands remained dominant in the Catalan political landscape, whilst over the following decade there was a gradual shift from regionalism to secessionism. Consequently, one of the key objectives of this analysis is to identify the factors that brought about this transformation in political orientations[176].

The consequences of STC 31/2010 should be considered not as a set of separate legal measures, but in terms of three interrelated areas identified by Ferran Requejo and Marc Sanjaume: political recognition, powers and financial relations. This approach reveals that the constitutional dispute did not concern a single provision, but rather the

[176] *Requejo F., Sanjaume M.* Recognition and political accommodation: from regionalism to secessionism. The Catalan case // Political Theory Working Paper, 2013. № 13. URL: https://www.academia.edu/65957178/Recognition_and_political_accommodation_from_regionalism_to_secessionism_The_Catalan_case

broader question of the permissible limits of Catalonia's political and institutional differentiation within Spain.

In Catalan academic literature, the 2010 decision is often regarded as one of the key catalysts for the subsequent radicalisation of territorial demands. In particular, Ferran Requejo and Marc Sanjaume link the protracted process of revising the Statute and its final outcome to the spread, amongst a section of Catalan society, of the view that there were limited possibilities for further expansion of autonomy within the existing constitutional framework. At the same time, this link should not be interpreted as a one-dimensional causal relationship: the subsequent escalation occurred in conjunction with the economic crisis, fiscal disputes, party competition and mass public mobilisation.

Following the Constitutional Court's ruling, the constitutional dispute shifted increasingly from the institutional level to the sphere of mass political mobilisation. Slogans such as 'We are a nation. We decide'[177] and the spread of unofficial municipal referendums signaled a shift in the debate from the issue of autonomous powers to a discussion about a political entity endowed with the right to determine its own future. From the perspective of the concept of public security, this process is significant, as the political conflict has increasingly been structured around competing notions of collective identity, sovereignty and the legitimate political order.

The constitutional and legal escalation should not be viewed in isolation from the economic context. Ferran Requejo and Marc Sanjaume point out that the rise in support for the 'right to decide' occurred in parallel with the economic crisis, budget cuts, debates over Catalonia's fiscal balance and the failed attempt in 2012 to agree on a separate fiscal regime. It is therefore appropriate to view the economic factor not as an independent root cause of secessionism, but as one of the factors that exacerbated an already existing institutional and political conflict.

An analysis of the Catalan crisis shows (see Table 3.5.1) that its impact was not confined to the sphere of constitutional and legal relations between the central government of Spain and Catalonia. Between 2005 and 2024, the conflict gradually evolved from a dispute over the scope of autonomous powers into a multidimensional process encompassing the institutional-legal, social, informational and economic spheres. This evolution allows the

[177] *López-Olano C., Fenoll V.* La polarización mediática en el proceso de independencia en Cataluña. Estudio comparativo del tratamiento en RT // Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación. 2020. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 261–272. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM2020.11.1.22; *Muñoz J., Tormos R.* Economic Expectations and Support for Secession in Catalonia: Between Causality and Rationalisation // European Political Science Review. 2015. Vol. 7. № 2. P. 315–341. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773914000174

Catalan crisis to be viewed not only as a domestic political conflict within an EU Member State, but also as an example of how territorial disputes can affect the security environment of the European Union.

The matrix presented below summarises the main channels through which such influence is exerted. It is based on a combination of the Copenhagen School's concepts of public security and securitisation (Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde), the multi-level governance approach (Gary Marks, Lisbeth Hooghe), Michael Keating's concept of post-sovereignty, and contemporary research on the Catalan conflict (Luis Moreno, Ferran Requejo, Montserrat Guibernau, Andrew Dowling and others). The matrix illustrates the cause-and-effect relationships between key events in the Catalan crisis, the mechanisms driving their development, and their impact on Spain's stability and the security environment of the European Union (see Table 3.5.3).

Unlike some members of the Catalan government who remained in Spain and were arrested following the invocation of Article 155 of the Constitution and the opening of criminal proceedings, Carles Puigdemont travelled to Belgium, where he continued his political activities and international information campaign in support of Catalan independence, seeking to 'Europeanise' the Catalan question. This strategy enabled him to avoid immediate arrest and to use Brussels as a political platform for internationalising the Catalan question. Puigdemont was counting on more than just political support. Puigdemont stated that the Catalan issue was not merely an internal affair of Spain, but also a matter of European democracy; he appealed to the principles of democracy, human rights and the right of citizens to be heard; after leaving for Belgium, he continued his political activities from the territory of an EU Member State, seeking to maintain the international dimension of the conflict[178]. He had hoped that the EU would act as a mediator. But this did not happen. The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, on the contrary, urged him not to declare independence, to avoid escalation and to seek a solution through dialogue. Following the symbolic declaration of independence on 10 October 2017, Puigdemont even temporarily suspended it, partly in response to these calls and the reaction of international partners.

[178] *David M*. Herszenhorn and Hans von der Burchard. President of Catalonia vows to go ahead with independence vote 'Europe cannot look the other way,' Carles Puigdemont tells MEPs. January 24, 2017. URL: https://www.politico.eu/article/president-of-catalonia-vows-to-go-ahead-with-independence-vote-referendum-spain/; Catalan government suspends declaration of independence. President Carles Puigdemont says he will pursue negotiations with Spanish government in hope of resolving conflict. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/10/catalan-government-suspends-declaration-of-independence; Speech of President Carles Puigdemont. Brussels, 31st October 2017. URL: https://www.politico.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Speech-of-President-Carles-Puigdemont-Brussels-31st-October-2017.pdf

Table 3.5.3. An analytical framework for the transformation of the Catalan crisis into a destabilising factor for security

Channel	Key manifestations	Mechanism	Security implications	Impact on Spain's stability	Significance for the EU	Analytical framework
Institutional and legal[1]	STC 31/2010; the escalation of the constitutional conflict from 2010 to 2017; the referendum of 1 October 2017; the parliamentary declaration of 27 October 2017; the application of Article 155; the 2024 Amnesty Act and its subsequent constitutional and EU-law review	Conflict between claims to democratic self-determination and autonomous political representation, on the one hand, and the constitutional principles of legality, sovereignty vested in the Spanish people, and the distribution of competences between the State and the Autonomous Community, on the other	Contestation of the legitimacy of institutional and judicial mechanisms and competing interpretations of the constitutional order	Escalation of conflict between State and Catalan institutions; political contestation of Constitutional Court rulings; a test of the legal system's capacity to manage territorial conflict	Illustration of the limits of the EU's role in an internal constitutional conflict and of the priority accorded by EU institutions to constitutional legality and the rule of law	Rule of law; institutional resilience; multilevel governance
Society[2]	Mass political mobilisations; the 2017 referendum; polarised positions on independence	Politicisation of Catalan and Spanish identities; construction of a discursive "us vs. them" opposition; interaction of identity with social	Political and identity-based polarisation around the territorial question	Societal polarisation surrounding issues of territorial status, identity, and the political future of Catalonia	A demonstration of how internal identity-based and territorial conflicts within Member States can create vulnerabilities for societal resilience.	Societal security; politicisation of identity

[1] Tribunal Constitucional de España. Sentencia 114/2017, de 17 de octubre de 2017. Recurso de inconstitucionalidad 4334-2017, contra la Ley del Parlamento de Cataluña 19/2017, de 6 de septiembre, denominada "del referéndum de autodeterminación" // BOE. Núm. 256, 24 de octubre de 2017. P. 102543–102570. URL: https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2017-12206; Ley Orgánica 1/2024, de 10 de junio, de amnistía para la normalización institucional, política y social en Cataluña. URL: https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2024-11776; Statement on the events in Catalonia, 2 October 2017 // European Commission. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/33168_en

		and territorial contexts				
Information[3]	Heightened information activity surrounding the referendum; coverage by RT and Sputnik; documented bot activity in online discussions; reports and allegations of external information interference	Potential external exploitation of pre-existing political, legal, and identity-based conflicts through the dissemination and amplification of polarising and manipulative narratives	Increased information vulnerability and exposure to polarising content; the potential for external actors to exploit an internal conflict without having caused it	Potential intensification of information fragmentation and polarisation; however, the attribution of specific activities and their actual political impact require separate substantiation	An illustration of the potential exploitation of a Member State's internal societal vulnerabilities within a cross-border information environment	FIMI; information resilience
Economic[4]	Increased political and institutional uncertainty in autumn 2017; transfers of companies' registered offices; deterioration in some short-term economic expectations	Uncertainty regarding the political and legal environment, future regulatory arrangements, the investment climate, and the possible economic consequences of secession	Increased economic uncertainty and reduced predictability, without evidence of an immediate systemic economic shock	A temporary deterioration in business expectations and transfers of registered offices; the magnitude of the economic impact depended on the duration and intensity of political uncertainty	Illustration of how political uncertainty in an economically significant EU region may affect corporate decisions and economic expectations within an integrated market; no evidence is presented here of a systemic shock to the EU economy	Economic resilience; political economy

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of the sources cited; the identification of the channels, mechanisms and security effects constitutes the author's analytical synthesis.

[2] *Serrano I.* Just a Matter of Identity? Support for Independence in Catalonia // Regional & Federal Studies. 2013. Vol. 23. № 5. P. 523–545. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2013.775945; *Rodon T., Guinjoan M.* When the Context Matters: Identity, Secession and the Spatial Dimension in Catalonia // Political Geography. 2018. Vol. 63. P. 75–87. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2018.01.004; *Mozolevska A., Khmel A.* Catalonia and Catalans in Carles Puigdemont Political Discourse: In Search of National Identity // East European Historical Bulletin. 2020. № 14. P. 214–224. DOI: https://doi.org/10.24919/2519-058x.14.197192

[3] *Milosevich-Juaristi M.* The "Combination": An Instrument in Russia's Information War in Catalonia. Real Instituto Elcano, 2017. URL: https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/the-combination-an-instrument-in-russias-information-war-in-catalonia/; *Milosevich-Juaristi M.* El poder de la influencia rusa: la desinformación. Real Instituto Elcano, 2017. URL: https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/el-poder-de-la-influencia-rusa-la-desinformacion/; *López-Olano C., Fenoll V.* La polarización mediática en el proceso de independencia en Cataluña. Estudio comparativo del tratamiento en RT // Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación. 2020. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 261–272. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM2020.11.1.22; 2024/2548. Resolution on Russiagate: allegations of Russian interference in the democratic processes of the European Union. URL: https://oeil.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/en/procedure-file?reference=2024/2548(RSP)

[4] Banco de España – Boletín Económico 4/2017 URL: https://www.bde.es/f/webbde/Secciones/Publicaciones/InformesBoletinesRevistas/InformesEstabilidadFinanciera/17/IEF_Noviembre2017.pdf; Banco de España – Informe de Estabilidad Financiera, noviembre de 2017. URL: https://www.bde.es/f/webbde/SES/Secciones/Publicaciones/InformesBoletinesRevistas/BoletinEconomico/descargar/17/T4/Fich/be1704.pdf; La constitución de sociedades disminuye un 7,2% en 2017. 2018. Registro de entrada del Colegio de registradores URL: https://www.registradores.org/navegacion-por-categorias/-/asset_publisher/eXXttUcwzL5U/content/la-constitucio-n-de-sociedades-disminuye-un-7-2%25-en-2017

The concepts ´Catalonia´, ´Catalans´, ´our country´, ´our people´ are systematically used to construct a separate political community[179]. A detailed analysis of Carles Puigdemont's political discourse goes beyond this subsection, having already been the subject of a separate study by the author. In this section, the individual provisions of the said work are used only to the extent that they allow explaining the transformation of the Catalan problem into a factor of the security of the European Union. As shown in the author's previous study, the political discourse of Carles Puigdemont was based on the construction of the Catalan political community through the categories of democracy, the right to expression and European values, and not through ethnic criteria.

Puigdemont constructs a separate political people. «We – the Catalan people – the democratic community – have the right to decide. And in parallel: they are the Spanish state – the central government – Madrid – the Constitutional Court. So, he very rarely talks about the "Spaniards" as a people. He almost always talks about the Spanish state. Therefore in Puigdemont's political discourse the construction of a separate Catalan political nation through the opposition of the Catalan community to the institutions and political center of the Spanish state. Puigdemont almost always talks not about the past, but about the future. He is building a future state. That is, his discourse is not so much historical as projective. He talks about future democracy, future state, future Europe. That is why his discourse is much closer to civic nationalism than to classical ethnic nationalism:

1) The construction of the Catalan political nation is taking place.

2) The constant opposition of "we" and "they" as a mechanism for the formation of political solidarity.

3) Legitimation of the right to self-determination through democracy rather than ethnic origin.

4) Integration of the Catalan project into the European democratic space.

If you look through Buzan's prism, Puigdemont actually creates a reference object of public security. Not just Catalonia, and the Catalan political community, and it is she who presents it as in need of protection.

It is here that the Catalan question is connected with the theory of societal security. The article A. Mozovlevska and A. Khmel[180] demonstrates how a separate political community is formed through language strategies, which becomes a reference object of security.

[179] *Mozolevska A., Khmel A.* Catalonia and Catalans in Carles Puigdemont Political Discourse: In Search of National Identity // East European Historical Bulletin. 2020. № 14. P. 214–224. DOI: https://doi.org/10.24919/2519-058x.14.197192

[180] Ibidem.

The crisis has highlighted the limitations of the concepts of multi-level governance and post-sovereignty when it comes to the territorial integrity of EU Member States. The EU has, in effect, maintained a single position: that the situation surrounding Catalonia, the referendum and the political crisis is an internal matter for Spain. Representatives of the European Commission and other heads of EU institutions made the following statements: the referendum was unlawful under the Spanish Constitution; the conflict must be resolved in accordance with constitutional procedures; the EU supports unity and stability; dialogue is needed, but within the framework of the Constitution. This position was emphasised by: Jean-Claude Juncker[181]; Frans Timmermans[182]; Donald Tusk[183]; and in a statement by the European Commission[184]. In other words, the EU supported the rule of law rather than the right to self-determination.

In this context, the distinction made by Mira Milosevich-Juaristi back in 2017 between disinformation and the broader concept of information warfare is useful. The researcher considered disinformation not as a self-sufficient phenomenon, but as one of the tools of a wider «combination» (kombinaciya), which can combine information and cyber tools, propaganda, social media activities and other forms of influence. Particularly important for the analysis of the Catalan case is its emphasis on the interdependence of the cybernetic and information dimensions and on the use of already existing internal vulnerabilities of society as a medium for external information influence.

This approach is not identical to the modern concept of FIMI, but allows us to trace a certain conceptual continuity in the transition from the analysis of individual false messages to the study of broader models of manipulative behavior, ways of their coordination and exploitation of social and political contradictions. The current EEAS approach defines FIMI precisely as the deliberate and coordinated manipulative behavior of state or non-state actors, capable of negatively affecting public values, procedures and political processes; at the same time, FIMI is often aimed at

[181] Transcript of Juncker's comment on Catalonia in Euronews interview. Euronews 2026. URL: https://www.euronews.com/2017/09/15/heres-exactly-what-juncker-said-on-catalonia

[182] Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the Commission. – Mr President, today's debate is carefully worded as being about the Constitution, the rule of law and fundamental rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2017-10-04_EN.html#creitem32

[183] European Council Speech 10 October 2017. Address by President Donald Tusk to the European Committee of the Regions. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/10/10/tusk-committee-regions/

[184] Statement on the events in Catalonia Brussels, 2 October 2017. European Commission. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/statement_17_3626/STATEMENT_17_3626_EN.pdf

strengthening polarization and divisions. The EU Council also directly links FIMI to the possibility of strategic use of already existing cultural and social contradictions within broader hybrid campaigns.

As noted in the introduction to this subsection, the concept of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (hereinafter FIMI) is particularly useful for analysing the external information dimension of the Catalan crisis. The European External Action Service (hereinafter EEAS) defines FIMI as a predominantly non-illegal but manipulative, intentional, and coordinated pattern of behaviour carried out by state or non-state actors, including their proxies, which threatens or has the potential to adversely affect public values, procedures, and political processes. FIMI should not be equated with a hybrid threat, since it may constitute either an independent form of external interference or a component of a broader hybrid campaign. It should be recalled that hybrid threats represent a broader category and encompass the coordinated use of various instruments. Alongside information manipulation, these may include cyberattacks, economic pressure, covert political interference, coercive diplomacy, or the threat of force[185].

In the Catalan case, FIMI is a more precise operational concept than "hybrid threat", since the available source base makes it possible to examine the external exploitation of already existing political, constitutional, and identity-related divisions, but does not permit the events of 2017 to be unreservedly characterised as a coherent Russian hybrid operation. The Council of the EU explicitly links FIMI to the strategic and coordinated creation or exploitation of cultural and societal divisions with the aim of deceiving and destabilising democratic societies[186].

The concept of FIMI is applied here retrospectively as a contemporary analytical category to the information-related activity of 2017. This does not imply either that EU institution officially classified the Catalan case as FIMI at the time or that external interference caused the Catalan crisis or determined the outcome of the referendum. Rather, this approach makes it possible to distinguish between the internal sources of the conflict and external attempts to exploit existing vulnerabilities, distrust, and political polarisation in order to intensify them further[187].

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[185] Hybrid threats // Council of the European Union. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/hybrid-threats/

[186] Foreign information manipulation and interference: Council approves conclusions stepping up EU's engagement and ability to respond. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/07/18/foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-council-approves-conclusions-stepping-up-eu-s-engagement-and-ability-to-respond/

[187] 1st EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats, 7 February 2023. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/1st-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats_en; European Parliament. Resolution of 8 February

Empirical materials regarding the Catalan case have different levels of evidentiary force, which requires distinguishing information activity, its use and proven political effect. Mira Milosevich-Juaristi interprets Russian information activity surrounding the Catalan crisis as an attempt to exploit pre-existing internal divisions and deepen political polarisation. Mira Milosevich-Juaristi interpreted Russian activism around the Catalan referendum through the concept of kombinaciya – a combination of propaganda, disinformation, cyber tools and interaction with actors capable of increasing internal contradictions. The researcher proposes an important explanatory model, which in itself is not evidence of centralized management of all recorded manifestations of information activity[188]. David Aladente analysis of more than five million digital messages published between September 29 and October 5, 2017, recorded a significant spread of RT and Sputnik materials and their amplification by account networks; however, such data attest primarily to the structure and intensity of digital spread and do not prove causal influence on political behavior or voting outcome[189]. At the same time, a comparative study by Carlos López-Olano and Vicente Fenoll of Facebook's coverage of process by Russian RT, the British BBC and the German DW, despite RT's perceived closeness to the pro-independence discourse, did not establish statistically significant differences between these media, which warns against an automatic transition from the fact of Russian media presence to the statement of proven political effect[190].

Finally, the European Parliament resolution of 8 February 2024 expressed serious concern about reports of Catalan separatist figures' links with Russian representatives and large-scale Russian disinformation campaigns, but fundamentally used the conditional wording: Russian intervention in Catalonia, «if confirmed», would fit into a broader strategy of internal destabilisation and disunification of the EU[191].

2024 on Russiagate: allegations of Russian interference in the democratic processes of the European Union (2024/2548(RSP). URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0079_EN.html

[188] *Milosevich-Juaristi M.* The "Combination": An Instrument in Russia's Information War in Catalonia. Real Instituto Elcano, 2017. URL: https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/the-combination-an-instrument-in-russias-information-war-in-catalonia/

[189] *Alandete D.* Russian network used Venezuelan accounts to deepen Catalan crisis. Ediciones EL PAÍS. URL: https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2017/11/11/inenglish/1510395422_468026.html

[190] *López-Olano C., Fenoll V.* La polarización mediática en el proceso de independencia en Cataluña. Estudio comparativo del tratamiento en RT // Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación. 2020. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 261–272. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM2020.11.1.22

[191] Resolution of 8 February 2024 on Russiagate: allegations of Russian interference in the democratic processes of the European Union (2024/2548(RSP) // European Parliament. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0079_EN.html

In the conceptual model of this study, FIMI completes the logical transition from internal sources of vulnerability to the possibility of their external exploitation. The approach of Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde through societal security makes it possible to define collective identity and political community as possible reference security objects[192]; the EU concept of resilience shifts the emphasis to the ability of the political and societal system to confront crises and restore functionality, while the rule of law concretizes its institutional-legal dimension through legality, legal certainty, independent judicial control, the separation of powers and prevention of arbitrary exercise of powers[193]. FIMI, in turn, allows tracing how already established societal and institutional vulnerabilities can become the object of external information manipulation without attributing to an external actor the origin of the conflict itself[194].

In the following sequence: (1) societal security – 2) resilience – 3) rule of law – 4) FIMI – the operational notion of «destabilizing security factor» encompasses processes capable of exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, reducing the resilience of democratic institutions and deepening polarization; the Catalan crisis is accordingly analyzed through four interrelated channels: institutional-legal, societal, informational and economic.

Conclusions. The Catalan crisis has demonstrated that the multilevel governance of the European Union creates additional channels of political representation for the regions, but does not replace the member state as the main bearer of sovereignty. Despite the active use of the European political space by the leadership of Catalonia, the EU institutions did not support the logic of unilateral self-determination, giving priority to the principles of constitutional legality, the rule of law and the territorial integrity of the member states. Thus, the Catalan crisis outlined the practical limits of the concept of multi-level governance in matters related to state sovereignty. The theories of Keating, Moreno, Gibernau, Requejo explain the mechanisms of

[192] *Buzan B., Wæver O., de Wilde J.* Security: A New Framework for Analysis. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998. 239 p.

[193] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. 2022 // European Union / EEAS. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-eu-bolsters-its-work-security-and-defence_en; Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, Art. 2 // European Commission; What is the rule of law? // European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/rule-law/what-rule-law_en

[194] 1st EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats, 7 February 2023. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/1st-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats_en; Foreign information manipulation and interference: Council approves conclusions stepping up EU's engagement and ability to respond // Council of the EU. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/07/18/foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-council-approves-conclusions-stepping-up-eu-s-engagement-and-ability-to-respond/

regional participation in EU politics, but the empirical case of Catalonia shows that when the conflict passes into the plane of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the constitutional order and the rule of law of the member state have priority for EU institutions. It is this kind of conclusion that I think could become one of the strongest in the whole unit.

The events of 2017 proved the gap between the expectations of part of the Catalan political leadership regarding the possible role of the EU institutions and the real position of the Union, which consistently supported the constitutional order of Spain. This allows us to raise the question of the extent to which the strategy of internationalization of the conflict was capable of providing political support for the process of unilateral self-determination. Over the decades, Catalonia's participation in EU institutions, the development of multi-level governance and the expansion of channels of regional representation have formed part of the Catalan political elites' expectation that the European Union will act as a political mediator in the event of an escalation of the conflict with Madrid. However, the events of 2017 demonstrated that in matters related to state sovereignty and territorial integrity, EU institutions give unconditional priority to the constitutional order of member states.

Unlike the widespread perception of an immediate economic collapse after the 2017 referendum, most economic studies pay attention primarily to the sharp increase in legal and political uncertainty. It was she who caused the transfer of legal addresses of a significant number of companies, the containment of investment activity and the deterioration of the expectations of economic agents. Thus, the economic dimension of the Catalan crisis manifested itself primarily through a weakening of economic resilience, and not through an immediate sharp deterioration of macroeconomic indicators.

The adoption of the Amnesty Law of 2024 and the resumption of political dialogue between the Spanish government and Catalan political forces do not indicate a final settlement of the Catalan problem. Rather, it is about the transition of the conflict from a phase of open institutional confrontation to a phase of controlled political de-escalation. Fundamental contradictions regarding the nature of Catalan political subjectivity, constitutional limits of autonomy and models of territorial organization of the state remain unresolved, which preserves the potential of repeated political escalation due to changes in the domestic political or international situation.

If we analyze the situation as of 2026, drawing attention to the fact that there are no mass protests on the scale of 2017–2019, some of the political and judicial contradictions have been lifted thanks to the amnesty, and Catalan parties are again participating in the usual political process,

then the situation looks like it has stabilized. But it is worth remembering that the issues of self-determination, the status of Catalonia and the limits of autonomy have not disappeared, so perhaps the conflict may be in a latent stage. And taking into account the theory of the possibilities of information international intervention and manipulation (FIMI), in particular on the part of the Russian Federation, the conflict can be used both against the possibilities of its settlement by the Kingdom of Spain, and to spoil the positive image of the EU in the eyes of Catalans who seek to expand autonomy.

The institutions of the European Union have consistently proceeded from the primacy of the constitutional order, the rule of law and the territorial integrity of the Member States, treating the Catalan crisis as an internal matter for Spain, to be resolved within its constitutional system.

CHAPTER 4

THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR (2014–2026): CHALLENGES FOR THE EU AND GLOBAL STABILITY

4.1. Preconditions, Causes and the Current State of the War (*Pavlo Hai-Nyzhnyk*)

Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the Russian Federation (RF) has never intended to reconcile itself to the restoration of Ukraine's state independence. Thus, the outbreak of Moscow's war aimed at subjugating Ukraine was merely a matter of time. Unfortunately, neither the Ukrainian political establishment of that period nor the present-day one has acquired the ability to think geostrategically from the perspective of national security. This concerns both the Budapest Memorandum (in particular, both its expediency and its content), for which the highest state officials (L. Kravchuk and L. Kuchma) bear personal and direct responsibility, as well as the subsequent development, or rather degradation, of the military-industrial complex and the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). It should be recalled that as early as October 1991, the possibility of a preventive nuclear strike against Ukraine in the event of its withdrawal from the Kremlin's satellite (neo-colonial) orbit was discussed behind closed doors within the Russian leadership.

As early as 21 May 1992, the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation adopted Decree No. 2809-1 "On Legal Assessment of Decisions of the Supreme Bodies of State Power of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, Concerning the Change of the Status of Crimea, as Adopted in 1954", according to which the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR of 5 February 1954 "On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR" was declared to have "no legal force from the moment of its adoption".

Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has consistently sought both to avoid the definitive loss of, and eventually to restore, its geopolitical power in the post-Soviet space and in the world at large. Objectively, it was evident that Moscow would require time and considerable effort. During the first stage, it aimed to preserve its own integrity and maintain leadership in the post-Soviet space. The second stage envisaged restoring financial and

economic strength, as well as rearming and modernizing the military. Ultimately, the third stage was to mark Russia's return to the club of global powers, thereby granting it the opportunity and the means to implement a geopolitical project directed toward dismantling the established system of influence and equilibrium and establishing a new world order on the planet.

The neo-imperial revanchist foreign policy and Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine, which has already evolved into a global proxy war, were not merely expansionist in nature. They also constituted the principal component of the Kremlin's large-scale geostrategy aimed at an existential confrontation with the so-called collective West. Its far-reaching objective was the destruction of the global security system and the establishment of a new world order.

The first Russian foreign policy concept was adopted in 1993 during the presidency of B. Yeltsin[1]. It was entirely peaceful in character and envisaged the establishment of stable positive relations with the countries of the near abroad in order to overcome the destabilizing disintegration processes across the territory of the former USSR. Nevertheless, in that same year Russia, in its military doctrine, failed to reaffirm the obligation declared by the Soviet Union not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Even at that time, the Kremlin's logic was based on the premise that renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons contradicted the principal thesis according to which such weapons were viewed not as a means of waging war, but rather as a means of deterring a potential aggressor.

The "Strategic Course of Russia with the CIS Member States" of 14 September 1995 differed substantially from the 1993 foreign policy concept. Thus, for example, this document clearly stipulated that the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) constituted the sphere of the principal state priorities and geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation, as well as the foremost priority of its foreign and domestic policy. Consequently, the strengthening of the influence of other global powers within the CIS countries was interpreted as a threat to the national security of the Russian Federation. In turn, the Foreign Intelligence Service of the RF reported in its analytical assessments that influential circles in the West were obstructing Russia in its attempt to reassert itself as a superpower[2]. Russia was also considerably irritated by the prospect of signing the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine.

[1] Концепция внешней политики РФ утверждена распоряжением Президента Российской Федерации Б. Н. Ельциным от 23 апреля 1993 г. Twitter. URL: http://www.twirpx.com/file/1822127/

[2] *Полещук А.* Служба внешней разведки России прогнозирует сценарии развития событий в СНГ // Независимая газета. 1994. № 181. 22 сентября. С. 1, 2.

The next foreign policy concept of the RF was approved already during the presidency of V. Putin in 2000, and its central theme became the integration of Russia and Belarus (effectively implying the latter's absorption) alongside the claim to a new place for the Russian Federation within the global political order.

It should be emphasised that issues of national security and defence were scarcely raised in a thorough (rather than merely formal) manner during, for example, presidential election campaigns. The crisis surrounding Tuzla Island in October 2003 likewise failed to become a warning signal regarding Russia's intentions for the Ukrainian political establishment[3].

However, in its 2003 foreign policy concept, Moscow demonstratively asserted its claimed right to launch a preventive strike without prior warning and without the consent of international institutions. A rehearsal for the internal disintegration of Ukraine took place in 2004[4]. The separatists who held their congress in Sievierodonetsk in 2004 were never punished because, under President V. Yushchenko and O. Turchynov, Head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the criminal cases against the conspirators were shelved[5].

V. Putin's Munich speech at the Security Policy Conference on 10 February 2007 was not merely a threat, but also a warning signalling the beginning of the Kremlin's preparations for dismantling the global security system[6]. Putin's address became the starting point of a new Cold War, which Russia – strengthened and "risen from its knees" through gas and oil revenues – declared against the United States and the West. That speech about the destruction of the bipolar world and the impossibility of a unipolar one, however, more closely resembled the speech of a person suffering from bipolar disorder (which is, in fact, indicative of psychosis)[7]. This tirade indicated that the Kremlin was preparing for confrontation with the so-called

[3] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Загострення навколо острова Коса Тузла 2003 р. як складова геостратегічної операції Російської Федерації щодо оволодіння акваторією Азовського моря та окупації-анексії Криму // Південь України: етноісторичний, мовний, культурний та релігійний виміри: збірка наукових праць. Вип. 6. Херсон: ФОП Грінь Д.С., 2017. С. 86–93.

[4] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Руйнація і поглинання: плани керівництва Російської Федерації щодо розколу і зруйнування держави Україна (2014–2015 рр.) // Гілея. 2018. Вип. 134 (№ 7). С. 358–370.

[5] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Росія проти України (1990–2016 рр.): від політики шантажу і примусу до війни на поглинання та спроби знищення. К.: «МП Леся», 2017. 332 с.

[6] Выступление и дискуссия на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности // Президент России. 2007. 10 февраля. URL: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034

[7] *Гай-Нижник П.* Сенсові ідеологеми В. Путіна: наративи ціннісних маніпуляцій та casus belli геополітики і геостратегії РФ. К.: Саміт-книга, 2025. 440 с.

collective West. In effect, it amounted to a declaration of war against the West. Already in July 2007, the RF introduced a unilateral moratorium on compliance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

It did not take long to witness the beginning of the gradual implementation of such a geostrategy and a demonstrative example proving that V. Putin's threats and challenges, comprehensively outlined in Munich, were not empty words, and that the new Cold War was neither a political bluff nor a phantom from the past. Already the following year (2008), the RF delivered a powerful warning blow to Russian-Ukrainian relations in the military sphere by denouncing, on 12 February, the agreement on missile attack warning systems and outer space monitoring. In April, due to pressure from the Kremlin, Ukraine and Georgia were denied accession to NATO's Membership Action Plan at the Bucharest Summit. It was there that V. Putin delivered his now infamous tirade about Ukraine to G.W. Bush. "You have to understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state! What is Ukraine? Part of its territories is Eastern Europe, while another part – and a significant one – was gifted by us!" an enraged V. Putin threatened during a closed session of the NATO–Russia Council, adding that in the event of Ukraine's accession to NATO, it would cease to exist as a unified state[8]. In essence, he was openly threatening that Russia could initiate the separation of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.

It was precisely at that time that an exceptionally favourable environment emerged for strengthening the energy component of Russian statehood, reinforcing the regime's armed forces, and intensifying external pressure. Global oil and gas prices rose dramatically, Europe's demand for gas began to increase rapidly, while both the European Union and the United States were mired in numerous social and energy-related industrial problems. On the other hand, the technological backwardness of Russian extractive companies and the deterioration of their infrastructure were equally evident. At that stage, Russia was deliberately pursuing a single objective: to place its relations with consumers and transit states of Russian hydrocarbons on a market-based footing and secure long-term contracts. Consequently, it was decided to integrate the Russian fuel and energy complex into the global system in order to attract foreign investment for modernization while simultaneously using Russia's need for such investment as a means of increasing those countries' dependence on Russia.

The Kremlin knew from the experience of many countries with resource-based economies that fears of losing investments, as well as of price

[8] Путін: ти ж розумієш, Джордж, що Україна – це навіть не держава! // УНІАН. 2008. 7 квітня. URL: https://www.unian.ua/politics/108324-putin-ti-j-rozumiesh-djordj-scho-ukrajina-tse-navit-ne-derjava.html

surges and supply disruptions, often discourage any desire to rock the boat in such states. It was precisely for this reason that V. Putin, in his article outlining the agenda of the future G8 Summit in St. Petersburg, spoke of a "common energy destiny," which implied "shared responsibility, common risks, and mutual benefits"[9]. Thus began the process of entrapping the West in Russia's energy trap (the "energy needle") and, simultaneously, of channeling EU investments into Russia's rearmament and the strengthening of its global ambitions. Moreover, according to V. Putin's calculations, the combination of nuclear weapons and dependence on Russian deposits and pipelines transformed Russia into a nuclear-energy superpower that became as untouchable as possible in the contemporary world.

Already at the beginning of August, the Russian Federation launched and, on its own terms, concluded a swift war against Georgia, as a result of which that Caucasian republic lost Abkhazia and South Ossetia for decades to come. Moscow also initiated a gas war against Kyiv, the settlement of which drew the European Union into the conflict. In December of that year, Ukraine was ultimately denied accession to NATO's Membership Action Plan due to Germany's and France's unwillingness to jeopardise their relations with Russia and the coming to power of B. Obama in the United States, who was afraid to escalate the confrontation with V. Putin (Ukraine's political instability served as the formal pretext for the refusal).

The occupation of Transnistria and the suppression of the attempt to restore the statehood of Ichkeria, as well as the occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, were in fact "swallowed" by the international community. Putin was not bluffing! It was precisely then that the direct phase of large-scale preparations for a hybrid and comprehensive war against Ukraine began – a war that had already been unfolding in the domestic political, energy, trade-economic, humanitarian, and diplomatic spheres, in which the Yanukovych–Medvedchuk cluster constituted merely one element of a multi-step strategy aimed at undermining Ukraine's sovereignty.

Thus, ever since Russian President V. Putin declared Ukraine to be an artificial state[10], Russian disinformation began targeting not only the Ukrainian people or certain fragments of their history, but also the very image of the Ukrainian state and the meaning of its existence on the world map. In May 2009, amendments were introduced to the list of objectives within the National Security Strategy of the RF in order to achieve Russia's strategic goals.

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[9] Ядерно-энергетическая держава // Известия. 2006. 20 марта. URL: http://izvestia.ru/news/312142

[10] *Roth A.* 'It's not rational': Putin's bizarre speech wrecks his once pragmatic image // The Guardian. 2022. February 25. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/25/its-not-rational-putins-bizarre-speech-wrecks-his-once-pragmatic-image

Although, nominally, D. Medvedev became the head of the RF on 7 May 2008 as a result of a primitive political castling maneuver, behind the presidential mask he wore during those fleeting four years there always loomed the clearly discernible figure of Prime Minister V. Putin, who would officially return to the presidential office in 2012. Then came the occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the initiation of hostilities in eastern Ukraine[11], the covert participation of the RF in the wars in the Middle East and its clandestine cooperation with the "Islamic State", followed in 2015 by the open intervention of the Russian Armed Forces in Syria, and so forth.

Did the international community and the Ukrainian political establishment heed these warnings and threats? The answer is obvious – "No!" Equally evident is the military-political short-sightedness of the Ukrainian state leadership throughout the entire thirty-year period from 1990 to 2022 and in the subsequent years. This was manifested in the limitations of its strategic thinking, its inability to objectively comprehend the real threats to Ukraine's state security, and the absence of the capacity to think in statesmanlike categories under the conditions of contemporary challenges. It also revealed a lack of capacity to identify and adopt rational, systemic solutions at the level required of twenty-first-century politicians, both in the immediate term and from a long-term perspective…

After the victory of the Revolution of Dignity, precisely as Kremlin political strategists had once feared, all of Russia's many years of efforts to subjugate Ukraine and transform it into a satellite state with a controlled president and a puppet government collapsed in failure[12]. The fact that Ukraine was on a path away from the Moscow-centred civilisational orbit was something that Russian President V. Putin, like the Russian state and political establishment as a whole, not only refused to acknowledge, but was also incapable of comprehending (due to its own ideological stupor) as a new geopolitical reality. V. Putin perceived this fact as a personal insult and defeat and, at the same time, as a challenge to Russia itself, as a permanent threat to its further existence not only from a neo-imperial perspective, but also in view of the danger of its mega-subjectivity being transformed into a historical retrospective[13].

[11] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Окупація та анексія Криму Російською Федерацією у 2014 р. як акт агресії проти України: перебіг вторгнення і свідчення міжнародного злочину // Гілея. 2017. Вип. 118 (№ 3). С. 110–125.
[12] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Революційні події в Україні: боротьба за право вибору і національну гідність (листопад 2013 р. – лютий 2014 р.) // Гілея. 2018. Вип. 132 (№ 5). С. 100–112.
[13] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Росія проти України (1990–2016 рр.): від політики шантажу і примусу до війни на поглинання та спроби знищення. Київ: МП Леся, 2017. С. 188.

The Russian Federation was unable to reconcile itself not only with the geopolitical failure of its attempt to subjugate Ukraine through "soft" means, but also with the very existence of Ukraine as a state. Consequently, the Kremlin decided to employ in this struggle all overt and covert methods of conducting hybrid warfare, as well as to resort to direct armed interference in Ukraine's internal affairs.

Already in 2010–2013, the Ukrainian authorities had effectively handed the eastern and southern regions over to Russian agents and pro-Russian forces[14]. In the Kremlin, there was a firm conviction that the "revolutionary junta", which had allegedly "seized power by force", would not last in Kyiv and would collapse, if not within a week, then within two weeks at most. From the very beginning of the decisive events of the Revolution of Dignity, the political leadership of the RF had formed a steadfast belief that all it would take was a slight breath – and the Ukrainian state would crumble like a house of cards.

In January 2014, when Moscow began to realize that it was losing Ukraine and that the pro-Russian regime of V. Yanukovych in Kyiv was doomed, Putin's geopolitical strategists turned to a new plan for the partition and destruction of Ukrainian statehood. Within the offices of the Security Council of the RF, a comprehensive, large-scale action plan was developed for the destabilisation of Ukraine and the incorporation into Russia of twelve Ukrainian oblasts together with the city of Kyiv. However, Moscow quickly realized that it lacked in the North, the East, and the South of Ukraine a sufficient number of supporters capable of forming a critical mass of pro-Russian support within the broader social movement[15]. Consequently, Russia once again, as repeatedly throughout its history, relied upon brute force, armed intervention, and the seizure of foreign territory. Once more, now already in the twenty-first century, it revealed its criminal essence and displayed before the entire world its aggressive neo-imperial snarl[16].

A retrospective analysis of Ukraine's military-political situation during those years makes it possible to delineate certain stages of this confrontation and encourages a number of historical and diplomatic

[14] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Росія проти України (1990–2016 рр.): від політики шантажу і примусу до війни на поглинання та спроби знищення. Київ: МП Леся, 2017; *Гай-Нижник П. П.* Українсько-російські міждержавні взаємини 2010–2012 років під час першого етапу президенства В. Януковича // Гілея. 2018. Вип. 135 (№ 8). С. 334–347; *Гай-Нижник П. П.* Українсько-російські міждержавні взаємини 2013–2014 років під час другого етапу президенства В.Януковича // Гілея. 2018. Вип. 136 (№ 9). С. 270–283.

[15] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Руйнація та поглинання: плани керівництва Російської Федерації щодо розколу і зруйнування держави Україна (2014–2015 рр.) // Гілея. 2018. Вип. 134 (№ 7). С. 358–370.

[16] *Hai-Nyzhnyk P.* La Russia di Putin si accontenterà dell'Ucraina o vorrà andare oltre? // Giudicarie. 2022. № 6. Anno 20. Giugno. P. 13.

generalisations in this context, including the periodization of this qualitatively new type of war in terms of both form and methods on the European subcontinent. The Russian Federation had been deliberately and systematically preparing for the destruction of the sovereign state of Ukraine as a geopolitical reality ever since 1991, when the USSR collapsed (documented historically and supported by documentary evidence)[17].

From that time onward, the RF pursued a combined hybrid-asymmetric policy of aggression toward Ukraine. Through carefully planned energy, trade and economic, financial, diplomatic, cultural and historical, and socio-political wars, as well as such "soft" instruments as corruption, blackmail, pressure, and isolation, the RF sought to transform Ukraine into its political satellite and economic and energy neo-colony, and then to partition, absorb, and ultimately destroy it by delivering a fatal armed strike by means of so-called hard power – an open war that was intended to result in the disappearance of the independent Ukrainian state from the map of the world[18].

The beginning of the final stage of this plan was marked by the unleashing of an aggressive war of conquest against Ukraine in February 2014, conducted in a combined hybrid-asymmetric form and characterized by an explicitly hostile and expansionist nature[19].

It should also be noted that Ukraine as a state and its national security were formally, and from the standpoint of international law, protected and guaranteed not only by the Budapest Memorandum, but also by a number of important international legal acts, namely: the Charter of the United Nations; the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and a number of other fundamental OSCE documents; the Agreement Establishing the CIS of 8 December 1991; the Declaration on the Observance of Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity, and the Inviolability of Borders of the CIS Member States of 15 April 1994; the Trilateral Statement on Security Assurances to

[17] *Гай-Нижник П.* Війна за життя // Україна дипломатична. Вип. XXIII. К., 2022. С. 31–52; *Гай-Нижник П.* Російсько-українська війна – Війна за Життя (2014–2022 рр.): періодизація // Українознавство. 2022. № 1. С. 51–76.

[18] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Росія проти України (1990–2016 рр.): від політики шантажу і примусу до війни на поглинання та спроби знищення. Київ: МП Леся, 2017; *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Загострення навколо острова Коса Тузла 2003 р. як складова геостратегічної операції Російської Федерації щодо оволодіння акваторією Азовського моря та окупації-анексії Криму // Південь України: етноісторичний, мовний, культурний та релігійний виміри: збірка наукових праць. Вип. 6. Херсон, 2017. С. 86–93; *Гай-Нижник П. П.* Кримський вузол і питання Чорноморського флоту РФ у російсько-українських воєнно-політичних взаєминах (1991–2013 рр.) // Гілея. 2017. Вип. 117 (№ 2). С. 77–90.

[19] *Гай-Нижник П., Чупрій Л.* Російсько-українська війна: особливості розв'язання військово-політичного конфлікту на Сході і Півдні України за сучасних геополітичних умов // Українознавство. 2016. № 4. С. 103–121.

Ukraine by the Presidents of the United States, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine of 14 January 1994; the framework Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Ukraine and the RF of 1997; other Ukrainian-Russian bilateral treaties and agreements; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the United States–Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership of 19 December 2008; as well as other international documents and even the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Russian Federation, signed in Paris in 1997 by the leaders of NATO member states and the President of the RF B. Yeltsin. This document was aimed at building a "strong, stable, enduring and indivisible peace in the Euro-Atlantic area" and contained obligations and commitments to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and to refrain from the threat or use of force. On 4 December 2009, the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Russia and the United States likewise reaffirmed the position regarding the inviolability of the guarantees enshrined in the Budapest Memorandum. Such guarantees on the part of the RF were repeatedly reaffirmed in official statements by the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including in April 2010.

At the beginning of 2014, the Russian Federation, having launched a treacherous war against Ukraine and violated not only bilateral Ukrainian-Russian agreements and treaties, but also its own legislation and a number of international legal acts, branded itself before all humanity as an aggressor state and a country-conqueror, while its political leadership ultimately revealed itself as a group of international criminals and sponsors of global terrorism.

In February 2014, the Russian Federation launched a war against Ukraine by invading its territory from the south – from the Crimean Peninsula. Thereafter, over the course of twelve long years, the Russian-Ukrainian war continued through various waves of escalation and in different forms and, naturally, comprised several distinct periods, some of which may even be identified as separate military campaigns constituting components of this larger war (much like the German-Polish, German-French, German-Soviet wars, the Battle of Britain, or the Japanese-Chinese and Japanese-American formed part of the broader complex of the Second World War).

Thus, the passage of time and the analysis of Ukraine's military-political situation during those years make it possible to delineate certain stages of this grand confrontation and encourage broader historical generalizations in this context, including the development of a periodization of this qualitatively new type of war in terms of its forms and methods on the European subcontinent since the end of the Second World War and the Cold War.

The beginning of the undeclared war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine was the occupation and subsequent annexation of Crimea (the Crimean and Kerch peninsulas), which the Kremlin prepared meticulously. It took place in February 2014.

Period I. The Occupation and Illegal Annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (20 February – 24 March 2014) – "The Front without Resistance"

The first period lasted from 20 February to 24 March 2014. Geographically, it encompassed the Crimean and Kerch peninsulas. The period ended with the occupation and an attempt to "legalise" the annexation of the Ukrainian Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Three days before the end of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, a convoy of Russian armoured vehicles moved out of Sevastopol. Also, between 20 and 23 February, a separate special forces brigade of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) was sent from Tolyatti to Crimea. At the time, this was justified by the alleged need to protect one of Crimea's strategic facilities. That is how the occupation of Crimea began. To this day, the region remains under Russian control.

The temporary occupation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation began on 20 February 2014. This is also confirmed by the Russian medal "For the Return of Crimea", on which this date is engraved. On the morning of 24 February 2014, Russia began deploying its "spetsnaz" forces to Sevastopol and additional military contingents with armoured vehicles to the peninsula itself. In addition to vessels of the Black Sea Fleet, the RF used large landing ships from its Baltic and Northern Fleets, which had been dispatched to the Black Sea in advance. The first two vessels ("Kaliningrad" and "Minsk") arrived as early as 26 February. On the same day, Russian "spetsnaz" troops, disguised as members of the "Crimean Self-Defence", began blockading Ukrainian military units and naval vessels. On 27 February, more than 100 servicemen of the 45th Separate Special Purpose Regiment of the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV; *Russ*. Vozdushno-desantnye voyska), armed with assault rifles, sniper rifles, machine guns, and grenade launchers, dressed in civilian clothing and equipped with full combat gear, seized the buildings of the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in Simferopol, raising Russian flags over them. During the night of 27–28 February Russian troops began seizing Crimea's airports.

Despite these developments, it was only on 28 February that a meeting of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (NSDCU) was convened in Kyiv. It failed to adopt any decision to resist the aggressors

or to issue an order to eliminate the occupiers[20]. Therefore, even by 2 March, despite being aware of the ultimatums issued by the Russian military leadership, Ukrainian Navy units in Crimea remained inactive at their deployment locations.

On 11 March the occupiers and separatist collaborators seized the Verkhovna Rada of Crimea, and at an "extraordinary" session it adopted the "Declaration of Independence of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol". On 16 March a "referendum" on the peninsula's status as part of Russia was held in Crimea. The following day (17 March) the President of the RF recognised the "independent and sovereign Republic of Crimea". On the same day, V. Putin signed a presidential order entitled "On Signing the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Crimea on Admission to the Russian Federation of the Republic of Crimea and the Formation of New Subjects in the Russian Federation". The occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 constitute an act of military aggression against Ukraine, a historical and legal falsification, and an international crime of the RF.

It was only on 20 March that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Declaration "On the Struggle for the Liberation of Ukraine". However, apart from this declaration, no measures were taken to liberate even part of Crimea. The new Ukrainian military and political leadership – O. Turchynov, Acting President of Ukraine and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; A. Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister; and I. Tenyukh, Acting Minister of Defence – from the very beginning of the Russian invasion ordered units of the AFU that remained loyal to Ukraine not to attack the enemy and not to engage in armed resistance against the aggressor. These officials categorically rejected proposals and plans for a counterattack against the enemy, thereby committing a crime against the people of Ukraine, and their actions show indications of high treason.

Finally, on 24 March 2014 Acting President of Ukraine O. Turchynov signed a decree on the withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from Crimea and Sevastopol. This date de jure marks the end of the first period the Russian-Ukrainian war[21]. Thus, in the context of Ukraine's resistance to Russian

[20] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Окупація та анексія Криму Російською Федерацією у 2014 р. як акт агресії проти України: перебіг вторгнення і свідчення міжнародного злочину // Гілея. 2017. Вип. 118 (№ 3). С. 110–125.

[21] As a result of the seizure of Crimea, the Armed Forces of Ukraine effectively lost nearly 11,000 of the 15,000 personnel serving in units stationed on the peninsula. A total of 4,130 servicemen relocated to mainland Ukraine: 1,422 officers; 1,835 senior enlisted personnel, sergeants, sailors, and soldiers; and 103 cadets of the Naval Academy. In addition, 20 civilian employees of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as 750 family members of servicemen (including 276 children), left Crimea. According to the results of the withdrawal of Ukrainian Navy units from Crimea, by the end of May 2014, the Ukrainian Navy retained 32% of its personnel, 40% of its combat ships and boats, 62% of its support vessels and boats, 62% of its aircraft, and 65% of its automotive, armoured, and specialised equipment relative to authorised strength.

aggression, the first period ("The Occupation and Illegal Annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea") can also be rightly described as the "Front without Resistance".

After the occupation of Crimea, V. Putin did not abandon his goal of destroying Ukraine as a state. I will mention only a few facts. As early as January 2014, a document titled "On the Crisis in Ukraine" had already been drafted within the Security Council of the RF. This was a comprehensive and large-scale action plan to destabilize Ukraine and incorporate twelve Ukrainian oblasts and the city of Kyiv into the RF. Another plan for Russia's interference in Ukraine's internal affairs, the dismemberment of its territory, and the annexation of its southeastern regions to the RF was prepared by V. Putin's Presidential Administration in early February 2014 (no earlier than 4 February and no later than 12 February) in the form of an analytical note.

Furthermore, I will also point out the existence of a top-secret plan for Russia's seizure of Left-Bank Ukraine, developed at the headquarters of the Western Military District of the Russian Armed Forces (St. Petersburg). It was dated 8–9 April 2015 and entitled "Report on the Decision to Employ the 'North' Group of Forces in a Special Operation". In particular, the document identifies the Armed Forces of Ukraine as the adversary, while the area of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) is described as being "within the operational zone of the 'North' Group of Forces". This plan for a full-scale attack on the mainland territory of Ukraine and the occupation of its Left-Bank part was developed by officers subordinate to the Commander of the Western Military District, Colonel-General A. Sidorov, and the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General V. Astapov. In fact, this was already a plan for a full-scale invasion, which is examined in detail in my book "Russia against Ukraine (1990–2016): From the Policy of Blackmail and Coercion to the War of Absorption and Attempts to Destroy", published in 2017.

Firstly, it should be noted that the military and political leadership of Ukraine was neither preparing for nor even considering the possibility of a war with the RF, believing that V. Putin would not dare to take such a step. For this reason, throughout all the years of independence, it disregarded the Kremlin's obvious preparations for war. All of this once again demonstrates the elementary short-sightedness of Ukraine's political establishment and its inability to think strategically and properly analyse geopolitical processes.

Secondly, Moscow closely monitored and influenced the long-term process of the deliberate weakening of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the security services, as well as the corruption of the Ukrainian authorities and the senior leadership of the Ministry of Defence and their financial and business dependence on Russia (and thus on the FSB – Federal Security Service).

Thirdly, the Kremlin relied on a socio-political split within Ukraine and on the indecisiveness of the irresponsible Ukrainian political elite, which was not only afraid to take responsibility but had also become accustomed to constant bargaining even over matters of state interest and national security. All of this soon played a role in the outbreak and development of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014.

Ukraine's security services, the General Staff, and the political leadership knew about the preparations for the Crimean "events". However, no preventive measures were taken. Ukrainian forces in Crimea received no orders from Kyiv, or were instructed to exercise restraint and not to open fire.

Only on 28 February 2014 did O. Turchynov, Acting President of Ukraine and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, convene a meeting of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine in connection with the situation in Crimea. It was only on 20 March that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Declaration "On the Struggle for the Liberation of Ukraine". However, no measures were taken to liberate even part of Crimea, apart from this empty declaration. The new Ukrainian military and political leadership – O. Turchynov, Acting President of Ukraine and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; A. Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister; and I. Tenyukh, Acting Minister of Defence – from the very beginning of the Russian invasion ordered units of the AFU that remained loyal to Ukraine not to attack the enemy and not to engage in armed resistance against the aggressor. These officials categorically rejected proposals and plans for a counterattack against the enemy, thereby committing a crime against the people of Ukraine, and their actions show indications of high treason. Finally, on 24 March 2014, Acting President of Ukraine O. Turchynov signed a decree on the withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from Crimea and Sevastopol.

I would also emphasise another disgraceful fact of Ukrainian history: the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine waited until the Russian military attack on Donbas, and still needed almost two months from the time of the Russian invasion of Crimea and almost a month from the act of its annexation, only to adopt a law on 15 April 2014. It recognised Crimea as "a territory temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation".

From the very beginning of the occupation of Crimea, the peninsula was viewed by the Russians as a potential bridgehead for an offensive into the southeastern territories of Ukraine. However, from both geographical and logistical-tactical perspective, an offensive from the northeastern direction, combined with the destabilisation of the internal political situation throughout Left-Bank Ukraine, was considered more advantageous. Ultimately, the southern direction remained a reserve bridgehead for a full-scale invasion to seize the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Odesa,

Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. When the plan for a direct invasion from the south was postponed for the future, the Russians launched a strategy of large-scale destabilisation in these regions.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that in December 2014 Prime Minister A. Yatsenyuk stated in an interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel* that the country's leadership had believed Russia would neither invade mainland Ukraine nor openly support collaborators, assuming that "the predator would be appeased after the annexation of Crimea"[22]. However, in Moscow, the next stage of the war to absorb Ukraine had already been prepared.

Period II. The Anti-Terrorist Operation (1 March [officially from 13 April] – 24 August 2014) – "The Internal Front"

The second period of this combined hybrid-asymmetric war was connected with the Kremlin's attempt to extend the war to mainland Ukraine, activate its agent networks there, deploy terrorist groups to predominantly Russian-speaking and politically pro-Russian oblasts and cities of Ukraine, finance and initiate a separatist-collaborationist movement. Through coordinated actions and terror, these armed groups were intended to ignite a civil war in Ukraine and trigger a chain reaction leading to its fragmentation into puppet pro-Kremlin pseudo-republics. This period is formally referred to as the "Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)".

The process of destabilizing Ukraine from within began on 1 March 2014 with large-scale pro-Russian demonstrations in Kharkiv (the first seizure of the Regional State Administration building), Dnipro (then Dnipropetrovsk), Donetsk (where the Regional State Administration building was first seized on 3 March), Melitopol, Luhansk (where the Regional State Administration building was first seized on 9 March), Mykolaiv, Odesa (where the Regional Council building was stormed on 3 March) and Kherson. On 5 March, similar events took place simultaneously in Zaporizhzhia and other cities across Eastern Ukraine. Odesa was kept under Ukrainian control through enormous effort, apparently despite the position of certain local authorities and law-enforcement agencies[23]. Those events still await a proper investigation.

[22] *Yatsenyuk A.* Putin 'Needs New Annexations' (Interview Conducted By Matthias Schepp and Christoph Schult)' // Der Spiegel. 2014. December 20. URL: https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/spiegelinterview-with-ukrainian-prime-minister-arseniy-yatsenyuk-a-1009711.html

[23] The confrontation in Odesa on 2 May 2014 between opponents and supporters of federalization escalated into violent clashes, resulting in the deaths of 40 people. Most of those killed were pro-Russian supporters of federalization who had taken refuge in the Trade Unions Building, where a fire subsequently broke out.

In March, after the first personnel changes within the SBU, information emerged about armed networks of agents in Luhansk[24]. Terrorist-separatists and traitor-collaborators resorted to direct acts of violence, including the seizure of administrative buildings. The first combat operations also began, as special SBU units eliminated saboteurs, while the latter targeted Ukrainian officials and activists[25]. On 16 March the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine A. Parubii announced that a large-scale operation by Russian separatists to invade Ukraine, known as the "Russian Spring", had been thwarted; its objective was to seize power in the country's south-east following the Crimean scenario.

In early April 2014, armed pro-Russian units began seizing administrative buildings across Eastern Ukraine[26]. As a result, Russian terrorists and local collaborators proclaimed the creation of the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic" (similar attempts had previously been made in other regional centres of Left-Bank Ukraine). In response, the Ukrainian authorities announced the launch of the ATO.

The network of coordinators of the GRU of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation initiated and directed extremist actions in the southeastern regions of Ukraine. On 12 April 2014 it was established that the groups operating in Sloviansk and Chervonyi Lyman were not separatists but military reconnaissance and sabotage units[27]. On the same day, Russian GRU personnel was identified as having participated in the seizure of government institutions and the blockade of Ukrainian military units in Crimea in March 2014. Earlier, groups of these GRU operatives had

[24] By the end of June 2014, the Main Investigative Directorate of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) was handling 90 criminal proceedings involving 85 individuals (13 of whom were citizens of the Russian Federation), while regional SBU offices were conducting 263 criminal proceedings related to separatism.

[25] *Наливайченко В.* (голова СБУ): «Перемога – це мирне життя» (Інтерв'ю інформаційному агентству «Интерфакс-Украина») (7 липня 2014 р.) // Павло Гай-Нижник. Доктор історичних наук. Особистий сайт. URL: http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/2014(07)07.nalyvaichenko.php

[26] On 12 April district police stations in Sloviansk and Kramatorsk were seized, as was the city council building in Artemivsk. Similar attempts were made in Horlivka and Krasnyi Lyman. Earlier, on 7 April, Russian terrorists had seized weapons from the regional office of the SBU in Luhansk, and on 29 April they reoccupied the Luhansk Regional State Administration building, which had first been seized on 9 March. On 28 April insurgents took control of the district state administration building in Stanytsia Luhanska. The following day, city council buildings in Krasnyi Luch and Pervomaisk were seized. On 30 April a Russian flag was raised over the district police station in Antratsyt. Pro-Russian collaborators also seized city council buildings in Sverdlovsk and Alchevsk, and on the evening of 1 May they took control of the city council building in Stakhanov, among other locations.

[27] Igor Kabanenko // Facebook. 2014. 12 квітня. URL: https://www.facebook.com/kabanenko.ihor/posts/10200773003047790

been transferred from Crimea to Rostov-on-Don in preparation for the seizure of Ukrainian facilities[28]. They wanted to capture as many buildings of local authorities and law-enforcement agencies as possible by 17 April, the date of the meeting in Geneva between representatives of Ukraine, the EU, the United States, and Russia to address the "crisis" in Ukraine. According to Russia's plan, this would allow it to claim that the Ukrainian authorities did not control the situation in the country and that the majority of the population considered them illegitimate.

On 13 April the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, chaired by the Acting President of Ukraine O. Turchynov, adopted a decision to launch the ATO. The situation in Eastern Ukraine rapidly escalated. On 15 April the Ukrainian government officially announced the start of the ATO and deployed the Armed Forces of Ukraine to the areas around Donetsk and Luhansk. On the same day, members of the 45th Separate Special Purpose Regiment of the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) were identified in the cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk in Donetsk region[29]. The principal objective of the saboteurs and Russian special forces operating on Ukrainian territory was to destabilise the situation as much as possible. In intercepted communications Russian servicemen discussed the task of killing several hundred people in order to then send troops into Ukraine. By the end of April, the Acting President announced that the Ukrainian government no longer had full control over Donetsk and Luhansk. O. Turchynov, in particular, stated that the country was on full combat alert and issued a decree reinstating conscription[30].

The true nature, causes, sponsors of the anti-Ukrainian terrorist coup and the covert invasion by a foreign state became clearly apparent after the "referendums" held at gunpoint on 11 May 2014, which the Ukrainian government declared invalid. Following these events, representatives of the *fake* "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic" ("DPR") and "Luhansk People's Republic" ("LPR") announced their "independence" from Ukraine. In addition, the "DPR" and the "LPR" published appeals requesting to be admitted to the RF.

Presidential elections were held on 25 May, as a result of which P. Poroshenko became the President of Ukraine[31]. Meanwhile, Russian

[28] Dmitry Tymchuk // Facebook. 2014. 12 квітня. URL: https://www.facebook.com/dmitry.tymchuk/posts/482118285250165

[29] Російські диверсанти орудують в Україні, зі Слов'янська їм сказали відійти – журналіст // Українська правда. 2014. 16 квітня. URL: https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/04/16/7022597

[30] Meanwhile, on 2 May, anti-government armed groups shot down two Ukrainian military helicopters over the city of Sloviansk.

[31] Among his promises were the following: that the ATO would last hours rather than months (a statement made during a briefing on 28 May), and that Ukrainian soldiers participating in

militants and special forces intensified their operations against the AFU, which were suffering losses not only in personnel but also in military equipment[32]. In mid-July, the RF accused the AFU of shelling Donetsk with artillery. Ukraine stated that the shells used to bombard Ukrainian positions over several days in July and August 2014 had been launched from Russian territory. The Russian Air Force had also shot down a Ukrainian military helicopter on 16 July. The next day, 17 July, a passenger plane of Malaysia Airlines, flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot down over Eastern Ukraine. All 298 passengers and crew members on board lost their lives. The collaborators and Russian militants also failed to seize Ukraine's largest weapons depot, located in salt mines in Artemivsk, Donetsk region. Nevertheless, Ukraine suffered substantial losses in military equipment and weaponry[33].

There were also strategic mistakes. Troops were concentrated on the nearly two-month encirclement and siege of the district centre of Sloviansk, whereas the main forces should have been directed toward Luhansk and Donetsk. The Russian group led by I. Girkin ("Strelkov"), who was holding Sloviansk, was allowed to carry out an operational-strategic withdrawal from Donetsk. As a result, time and opportunities were lost that could have altered the balance of forces in Eastern Ukraine and, quite possibly, prevented the subsequent the subsequent setbacks suffered by our Armed

combat operations would receive pay of UAH 1,000 per day starting from 26 May, among other commitments.

[32] For example, fierce fighting for Donetsk International Airport was ongoing at the end of May, and on 14 June a Ukrainian Il-76 military transport aircraft was shot down near Luhansk. 9 crew members and 40 Ukrainian paratroopers were killed. Three aircraft were en route to Luhansk that day: one landed successfully, the second was shot down by militants, and the third turned back immediately after the attack. The airfields of Kramatorsk, Luhansk, and Donetsk were already under the control of Ukrainian forces, but they were surrounded by militants. Maintaining control over these three airfields was essential in order to prevent Russian military aircraft from landing there. However, difficulties arose with the delivery of ammunition, food, and water, as well as with the evacuation of the wounded. The tragedy resulted from inadequate security measures, lack of experience, haste, and failure to observe flight safety procedures during military operations.

[33] З 21 липня по 5 серпня 2014 року до бойовиків під час збройних зіткнень із українськими військовими потрапила військова техніка та озброєння: Т-64 – 22 одиниці, БМП – 26 од., БТР – 17 од., РСЗВ БМ-21 «Град» – 12 од., САУ 2С9 «Нона» – 4 од., САУ 2С1 «Гвоздика» – 4 од., Д-30 – 5 од., мінометів 82 мм – 10 од., ЗУ-23-2 – 13 од., АТ – 75 одиниць [Довідка про випадки захоплення незаконними збройними формуваннями військової техніки та озброєння з 21.07.14 по 28.07.14 (29 липня 2014 р.) // Павло Гай-Нижник. Доктор історичних наук. Особистий сайт. URL: http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/2014(07)29.vijna.php; Довідка про випадки захоплення незаконними збройними формуваннями військової техніки та озброєння з 28.07.14 по 05.08.14 (6 серпня 2014 р.) // Павло Гай-Нижник. Доктор історичних наук. Особистий сайт. URL: http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/2014(08)06.vijna.php

Forces due to evident miscalculations within the upper ranks of the SBU, the General Staff of the AFU, and the ATO Headquarters.

July–August: The Ukrainian Counteroffensive in Eastern Ukraine. As a result, on 5 July Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, Bakhmut, Druzhkivka and Kostiantynivka were liberated and returned to government control. On 22 July, Ukrainian forces successfully neutralised enemy resistance and, with minimal destruction, restored control over Kreminna, Popasna, Rubizhne and Sievierodonetsk. The following day, control was restored over Novodruzhesk and Pryvillia, while the northern districts of Lysychansk were secured. On 28 July 2014, the AFU, together with National Guard fighters, as part of the ATO in Donetsk Oblast, took control of the settlement of Saurivka and the strategically important Savur-Mohyla height.

By early August 2014, Ukraine had spent almost two months in the active phase of the ATO aimed at the forcible liberation of the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. These areas were controlled by illegal armed formations and collaborator detachments supported by Russia. During this period, nearly 60% of the territory of the two regions was brought under the control of ATO forces. Donetsk and Luhansk were blocked off from the north, west, and south[34]. Ukrainian forces succeeded in liberating western Donbas, the southern and northern parts of Donetsk region, as well as the northern part of Luhansk region. Ukrainian checkpoints came close to Donetsk and Luhansk. The objective was to complete the encirclement along Ukraine's eastern border, thereby surrounding the collaborator-separatist forces and cutting them off from assistance coming from Russia. The militants could receive weapons and reinforcements only from the east, primarily from the territory of the RF.

To implement this strategy, it was of critical strategic importance to prevent any shelling of Russian territory from Ukraine. At the same time, ATO units were not permitted to cross the Ukrainian–Russian border, even accidentally, so as not to provide Russia with a formal pretext for launching full-scale aggression against Ukraine[35]. In this context, it is worth recalling once again that in December 2014 Prime Minister A. Yatsenyuk stated in an interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel* that the country's leadership believed Russia would neither invade mainland Ukraine nor openly support collaborators. "At first, everyone thought that after the annexation of Crimea the predator would be appeased. But it continued,

[34] To conduct the ATO, an operational headquarters and the necessary command structures were established, while sectors of responsibility were created within Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (Sectors A, C, B, and D, and Area M).

[35] Аналіз ведення антитерористичної операції та наслідків вторгнення Російської Федерації в Україну у серпні – вересні 2014 року / Міністерство оборони України. Київ, 2015. С. 1.

supporting the so-called separatists in Eastern Ukraine," A. Yatsenyuk stated[36].

Throughout the ATO, the Russian Federation constantly supported the militants. Initially, it supplied weapons, manpower (trained, equipped, and prepared mercenaries), and deployed reconnaissance and sabotage groups of the GRU. Later, it began shelling units of the AFU with artillery from Russian territory.

On August 5, the leadership of Sector "B" (Lieutenant-General V. Khomchak, ATO Commander Colonel-General V. Muzhenko) issued a combat order to storm the city of Ilovaisk in order to narrow the encirclement of Donetsk from the East[37]. However, on 24 August 2014 regular units of the Armed Forces of the RF invaded Ukrainian territory without a declaration of war. With this covert invasion, the ATO period ("The Internal Front") came to an end. The war entered a qualitatively new phase: it had become a direct armed confrontation with regular units of the Russian army.

Period III. Russia's Invasion of Donbas (24 August 2014 – 19 February 2015) – "Eastern Front: The Donbas Battlefield"

The third period of the war – Russia's invasion of Donbas. It began on 24 August 2014 (when Russian regular army units and special forces were covertly deployed into Ukrainian Donbas from the territory of the RF) and ended on 19 February 2015.

Almost without encountering resistance, on 24 August 2014 Russian military units advanced through Amvrosiivka and Kuteinykove towards Ilovaisk[38]. From that moment, the balance of forces and resources between

[36] *Yatsenyuk A.* Putin 'Needs New Annexations' (Interview Conducted By Matthias Schepp and Christoph Schult)' // Der Spiegel. 2014. December 20. URL: https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/spiegelinterview-with-ukrainian-prime-minister-arseniy-yatsenyuk-a-1009711.html

[37] Бойовий наказ про штурм Іловайська 40-му батальйону територіальної оборони «Кривбас» від командування АТО (сектор Б, генерал-лейтенант В. Хомчак, командуючий АТО генерал-полковник В. Муженко) (5 серпня 2014 р.) // Павло Гай-Нижник. Доктор історичних наук. Особистий сайт. URL: http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/2014(08)05.illovaisk.php

[38] On 25 August 2014, intelligence reports began to reach the ATO headquarters and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine indicating that columns of Russian military equipment had crossed the Ukrainian border. During the night of 25 August, Russia deployed eight battalion tactical groups of the Russian Armed Forces, totalling over 4,000 personnel, into Ukrainian territory. The fact of the invasion by regular units of the Russian Federation was finally confirmed on 26 August following the capture of servicemen from the Russian Airborne Forces. These battalion tactical groups were reinforced by special forces units. In total, the Russian Armed Forces grouping comprised: personnel – over 6,000; tanks – up to 70; armoured fighting vehicles – up to 270; artillery systems – up to 90; MLRS – up to 85 units. – Аналіз ведення антитерористичної операції та наслідків вторгнення Російської Федерації в Україну у серпні – вересні 2014 року / Міністерство оборони України. Київ, 2015. С. 15–16.

the sides changed dramatically – the enemy held the advantage[39]. In addition, Russian servicemen carried no identification documents, while their uniforms and military equipment bore no identifying insignia.

The active phase of hostilities between Ukrainian troops on one side and units of the Russian Armed Forces and the militants they supported on the other lasted from 25 to 26 August 2014. The enemy decided to avoid protracted battles, as this would increase losses that would be difficult to conceal from the public. The international community could also perceive this as an act of aggression against Ukraine and use it as grounds for imposing sanctions. Therefore, the Russian Federation halted the fighting through deceptive diplomatic means.

By the end of August, Ukrainian troops had managed to liberate western Donbas, the south and north of Donetsk Oblast, as well as the northern part of Luhansk Oblast. At that time, Ukrainian Armed Forces checkpoints came close to Donetsk and Luhansk. However, orders were issued to withdraw from the outskirts of these cities and to blockade them. Ultimately, during the night of 24–25 August, the first echelon of the regular Russian army entered Donbas. These were eight battalion tactical groups of the Russian Armed Forces with a total strength of over four thousand personnel.

On 26 August, after a meeting with Ukrainian President P. Poroshenko in Minsk (Belarus), Russian President V. Putin spoke about the need to "stop the bloodshed as soon as possible". However, on the same day, images from an American satellite (as S. Power stated at a UN Security Council meeting[40]) showed Russian combat units located southeast of Donetsk[41].

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[39] In mid-August 2014, around 40,000 personnel were deployed in the anti-terrorist operation, including: the Armed Forces of Ukraine – over 32,000 personnel (5,500 pieces of heavy weaponry and military equipment); the National Guard – up to 3,000 personnel; the State Border Guard Service – up to 3,000 personnel; the Security Service of Ukraine – up to 2,000 personnel. The number of these forces and resources was assessed as sufficient to carry out the assigned tasks. The ratio of ATO forces to militants was approximately 1:1. Volunteer units (detachments) numbered up to 4,000 personnel. They were not subordinate to the ATO headquarters and were not part of the forces and resources, although they coordinated their actions with the regular forces.

[40] *Пауер С.* (Постійний представник США в ООН). Виступ на засіданні Ради безпеки ООН щодо України (28 серпня 2014 р.) // Павло Гай-Нижник. Доктор історичних наук. Особистий сайт. URL: http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/2014(08)28.pauer.php

[41] On the same day, soldiers from the 9th Brigade of the Russian regular army were detained in Luhansk. In response, Russia claimed that these soldiers had 'strayed' into Ukrainian territory 'by mistake'. And this during an armed standoff on a border that is perhaps the most closely monitored in the world. The day after these talks, Russia fired Grad rockets from its territory at Ukrainian positions in Novoazovsk and attacked them with two columns of Russian armoured personnel carriers and tanks.

While continuing to shell Ukrainian troops in the Ilovaisk area, the Russian side proposed that they cease resistance, lay down their weapons, surrender military equipment, and leave the encirclement. These terms were rejected. Instead, the command of Sector "B" reached an agreement with representatives of the Russian Armed Forces for a withdrawal with equipment and weapons[42]. This led to the tragedy near Ilovaisk, where a Ukrainian grouping of almost 1,200 fighters was encircled. On 29 August 2014, the Russian Armed Forces violated the agreements and effectively opened fire on the Ukrainian units as they were withdrawing through the designated corridors. The enemy then surrounded volunteer battalions, units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the AFU, resulting in enormous losses for Ukraine[43]. Meanwhile, the Kremlin continued to brazenly claim to the whole world that there was no Russian army in the eastern territories of Ukraine[44].

At the same time, taking advantage of the defeat of the AFU units near Ilovaisk, Russian troops advanced westward and, in particular, captured the Telmanove District and the Sea of Azov coastline as far as Mariupol. Between 2 and 5 September, the reserve that had been preparing to relieve Ilovaisk conducted raiding operations in the area of the settlements of Komsomolske – Telmanove – Novoazovsk – Starolaspa in

[42] Under the agreement, at dawn on 29 August 2014, following the arrival of two armoured personnel carriers from the Russian Armed Forces (one to Mnohopillia, the other to Agronomichne), two convoys of Ukrainian units were to be escorted along two routes to the Starobeshevo–Novokaterynivka line.

[43] Casualties among personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Guard and the Ministry of Internal Affairs: 366 killed, 429 wounded. 128 were taken prisoner, and 158 are still missing.

[44] During the annual session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Ukrainian delegation presented a report by the volunteer group 'InformNapalm' on the involvement of units of the Russian Federation's regular army in the armed conflict in Donbas. The database compiled by the volunteers contains information on 160 units from 75 military formations of the Russian Federation deployed to Ukraine. A total of 165 incidents were recorded. Analysts identified units from 45 ground forces units of the Russian army. These include motorised rifle, artillery and tank units, air defence forces, reconnaissance units, sniper units and UAV units. Most of the battalion tactical groups for the war against Ukraine were formed on the basis of motorised rifle units from the Russian Federation's Southern Military District, namely: the 136th, 18th, 17th, 19th, 205th, 33rd and 34th motorised rifle brigades; the 291st Artillery Brigade of the 7th Military Base, stationed in occupied Abkhazia. The report emphasised that the battalion tactical groups are predominantly manned by contract soldiers with combat experience gained during the so-called anti-terrorist operations in the North Caucasus (Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia). There are also groups that have arrived from more remote regions of Russia. Experts have identified units from 12 Airborne Forces units in the Donbas. The 77th unit of the Russian GRU's special forces was also identified. In the combat zone, analysts have also recorded servicemen from four naval units and five formations of the Russian National Guard. – Russian military units fighting in Donbas // Inform Napalm. – 2016. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfaxifCx94o

order to stop the enemy's further advance on Mariupol. Active hostilities continued until 5 September inclusive. At that time, negotiations were held at the level of state leadership, which ended with the signing in Minsk of the first protocol on a ceasefire and the establishment of a line of contact between the sides.

On 5 September 2014, Putin's "peace initiatives" and Poroshenko's "peace plan" were officially considered by the Trilateral Contact Group: OSCE Special Representative H. Tagliavini, the second President of Ukraine L. Kuchma, Russian Ambassador to Ukraine M. Zurabov, and "plus two" (Russian puppets and terrorist leaders O. Zakharchenko and I. Plotnytsky). As a result, the contact group signed a protocol, the main points of which were ensuring a bilateral ceasefire and the decentralization of power in Ukraine, in particular through the adoption of the Law "On the Temporary Order of Local Self-Government in Certain Areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts" (the Law on Special Status). On 16 September, P. Poroshenko submitted a draft of this Law to the Verkhovna Rada. On 19 September 2014, participants of the Trilateral Contact Group signed a memorandum on the implementation of the aforementioned protocol of 5 September[45]. However, on 2 November, "elections" for the "heads" of the pseudo-republics were held.

After this, fighting intensified again (in particular for Donetsk Airport). Therefore, the presidents of Ukraine and Russia met again, this time in the Normandy and Trilateral Formats, to discuss another action plan developed by the French and Germans and preliminarily agreed upon with P. Poroshenko and V. Putin by A. Merkel. On 12 February 2015, a Joint Declaration was agreed upon in support of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, signed by the participants of the "Trilateral Contact Group plus two" (the so-called Declaration of Four). The Declaration was signed by President of Russia V. Putin, President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko, President of France F. Hollande, and Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany A. Merkel. In this context, the leaders also approved the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, which was adopted and signed on 12 February 2015 by all signatories of the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014 and the Minsk Memorandum of 19 September 2014. At 00:00 (Kyiv time) on 15 February 2015, a full and immediate ceasefire was to take effect in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine. On 17 February, the UN Security Council welcomed the "Declaration of Four," approved the "Package of

[45] Меморандум об исполнении Протокола по итогам консультаций Трехстронней контактной группы относительно шагов, направленных на имплементацию Мирного плана Президента Украины П. Порошенко и инициатив Президента России В. Путина // ОБСЕ. URL: http://www.osce.org/ru/home/123807?download=true

Measures...," called on all sides to ensure its full implementation, including a complete ceasefire, and decided to "remain seized of the matter"[46].

Fierce fighting resumed on 16 February 2015. On 17 February, Debaltseve, which according to the Minsk Agreements was supposed to remain on the Ukrainian side of the line of contact, was encircled. Given this turn of events, Ukrainian troops began withdrawing from Debaltseve on 18 February under heavy enemy fire; the withdrawal was finally completed on 20 February[47]. President P. Poroshenko, by the way, denied the fact of encirclement the next day and stated that 80% of the Ukrainian personnel, together with their equipment, had been withdrawn from the city as planned[48]. However, the Battle of Debaltseve became one of the Ukrainian tragedies of that war[49].

The Second Minsk Agreements (the so-called Minsk-2) and the defeat in the "Debaltseve Cauldron" on 20 February 2015 marked the end of the Period III of the Russian-Ukrainian war, while the Donbas Battlefield effectively formed the eastern front for the future[50].

However, who and what prevented the successful completion of the Anti-Terrorist Operation in 2014 and early 2015, before Donbas became

[46] Резолюция 2202, принятая Советом безопасности на его 7384-м заседании 17 февраля 2015 года // Организация объединенных наций. Совет Безопасности. 2015. 17 февраля. URL: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/043/74/PDF/N1504374.pdf

[47] 20 February of that year marked the first anniversary of the Day of Remembrance for the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred, established in accordance with the Decree of the President of Ukraine of 11 February 2015 'On honouring the feat of the participants in the Revolution of Dignity and perpetuating the memory of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred'.

[48] Оточення Дебальцевого не було, 80% українських військових вийшли зі зброєю і технікою – Порошенко // Незалежне бюро новин. URL: http://nbnews.com.ua/ua/news/143663

[49] In reality, however, hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers were lost in the 'Debaltseve cauldron' over two days (between 18 January and 18 February, 179 soldiers were killed, 110 were taken prisoner, 81 went missing), during fierce fighting against an enemy (including regular troops of the Russian Armed Forces), who had a 5–7-fold manpower advantage! – Бірюков повідомив про загибель майже 3 тисяч бойовиків в районі Дебальцевого // Українська правда. 2015. 20 лютого. URL: https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/02/20/7059287; Посол США: Під Дебальцевим – російські танки, на кордоні – зброя для бойовиків // Українська правда. 2015. 14 лютого. URL: http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/02/14/7058532; Усі ключові військові успіхи бойовиків в Україні забезпечила російська армія – доповідь Нємцова // УНІАН. 2015. 12 травня. URL: https://www.unian.ua/politics/1076935-usi-klyuchovi-viyskovi-uspihi-boyovikiv-v-ukrajinizabezpechila-rosiyska-armiya-dopovid-nemtsova.html

[50] According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), at least 5,665 people were killed and 13,961 wounded in eastern Ukraine between mid-April 2014 and mid-February 2015. – Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 1 December 2014 to 15 February 2015 // Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. URL: https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/report-human-rights-situation-ukraine-1-december-2014-15-february-2015

saturated with Russian troops? Russian agents within the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and Ukraine's military-political leadership, with its indecisiveness, profiteering, and insatiable desire to make money from the war and from personal financial and economic ties with Russian businesses controlled by V. Putin.

Period IV. Positional Warfare (20 February 2015 – 20 September 2016) – "Eastern Front: The Minsk Trap"

The fourth period, which followed the fierce and exhausting battles in Donbas, was marked by armed tension. However, the confrontation largely turned into positional warfare with almost constant artillery shelling and increased activity by sabotage groups beginning after 20 February 2015. Politically, this period marked the beginning of years of protracted attempts to implement the Minsk Agreements, which were signed under duress from the Kremlin after the entry of Russian troops into the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, several tragic defeats of the Ukrainian army, and the threat of a large-scale offensive by pro-Russian separatist forces supported by the Russian army. These agreements clearly had no legal force, contradicted the Constitution of Ukraine, the norms of international law, and the UN Charter, as they were concluded under pressure. Moreover, these acts bear no legally valid signatures; they were not ratified by the Verkhovna Rada, that is, they were not constitutionally valid. As for the Minsk process: not a single document, line or letter of the Minsk process is worth anything! Nevertheless, both the president and the prime minister of Ukraine recklessly sought to implement the Minsk Agreements, but they were hindered by the nationally conscious part of the political establishment and Ukrainian society.

Throughout this period of positional warfare, armed confrontation continued along the line of contact on the eastern front, with constant mutual artillery shelling and exchanges of fire. At the same time, this stage was politically stigmatised by the Minsk Agreements, which became a trap for Ukraine. According to them, the occupied part of Donbas, which Russia had turned into a "grey zone," was to be incorporated into Ukraine with the status of a separate entity, become a burden on its economy, and turn into a chronic malignant ulcer of its administrative-political system, destroying the Ukrainian state organism with its metastases. The chronological conclusion of this period was marked by another temporary truce concluded on 20 September 2016 on the eastern front and the signing of the Framework Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group on the disengagement of forces and means.

Period V. The "Languid" War (20 September 2016 – 20 May 2019) – "The Eastern Front: The 'Normandy' Trenches"

On 20 September 2016, the fifth period of the Russian-Ukrainian war began. It was marked by sluggish military activity and resulted from

attempts to preserve the ceasefire on the eastern front and to implement and further develop the Framework Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group on the disengagement of forces and assets, signed on that very day[51]. It was an attempt to implement the "peace plans" of the President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko and the deceptive "initiatives" of the President of Russia V. Putin of 5 September 2014, as well as the Memorandum on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Minsk Protocol of 19 September 2014 and the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements of 12 February 2015[52].

Ukraine's response, made in compliance with the demands of the Minsk Protocol and the "Package of Measures…", was embodied in the Law "On Amendments to Article 10 of the Law of Ukraine 'On the Special Order of Local Self-Government in Certain Areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions'" (No. 256-VIII, 17 March 2015) (16 September 2014 / 17 March 2015). This law proposed legalising Putin's militants and pro-Russian collaborators at all levels of government within the terrorist enclaves of the "DPR" and the "LPR" and incorporating them into Ukraine's legal framework. It was precisely for this purpose, among other motives, that attempts were made – including by P. Poroshenko – to amend the Constitution and impose upon Ukraine the so-called decentralization, amnesty, self-government, and related measures.

[51] The negotiations in Minsk involved the participation of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), consisting of representatives of Ukraine (the second President of Ukraine, L. Kuchma), Russia (from the outset until April 2015 – the Russian Ambassador to Ukraine M. Zurabov; from April 2015 — former Russian Ambassador to Syria A. Kulmukhametov; from 26 December 2015 – former Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation B. Gryzlov), and the OSCE (from 8 June 2014 to June 2015 – Ambassador H. Tagliavini; from June 2015 – M. Sajdik), as well as O. Zakharchenko and I. Plotnytskyi (the status of these two individuals was not defined in the documents; they were the leaders of the unrecognised entities "DPR" and "LPR," which Ukraine classified as terrorist organizations, and whose participation in the negotiations was insisted upon by Russia). Thus, negotiations were conducted and agreed documents were signed in the format of the "Trilateral Contact Group plus two." At the same time, the Ukrainian side regarded Russia as a party to the conflict, whereas the Russian side consistently denied its involvement in the armed confrontation and insisted that both the conflict and the agreements concerning its settlement were matters internal to Ukraine itself. Within the framework of the Minsk negotiation process, four working subgroups also operated: on social issues, security, politics, and the economy. The developments of the "Trilateral Contact Group plus two" were periodically discussed by the leaders of Ukraine, Germany, France, and Russia. Their meetings and negotiations concerning the settlement of the armed conflict in Donbas became known as the "Normandy Format" (named after the site of the first such meeting on 6 June 2014 in the town of Bénouville in Normandy, a northern region of France). In September, a working group of the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination on issues relating to the ceasefire and the phased stabilization of the line of contact in Eastern Ukraine was also established, comprising representatives of Ukraine, the OSCE monitoring mission, and Russian military personnel.

[52] Рамочное решение Трехсторонней контактной группы о разведении сил и средств // ОБСЕ. 2016. 21 сентября. URL: https://www.osce.org/ru/cio/266271

This was exactly what V. Putin sought at the time, and A. Merkel and F. Hollande were not opposed to it either…

Ultimately, P. Poroshenko himself did not deny this either. He and his political team very quickly abandoned both the Budapest format[53] and the Geneva format, as well as any other framework within which the United States, Great Britain, and the European Union would have been involved in the negotiation group. Instead, the Ukrainian authorities placed an uncontested stake on a format mediated by France and Germany, both loyal to the Kremlin, and agreed to the so-called Minsk Agreements, in which a powerless OSCE together with pro-Russian collaborator-killers sought to persuade Russia. Astonishingly, one of the authorised representatives of the Ukrainian delegation in Minsk became V. Medvedchuk – an overt Ukrainophobe and V. Putin's compadre.

On 19 October 2016, within the framework of the Normandy Format in Berlin, the need to develop a new "road map" for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements was declared. In time, however, it became evident that this was not a road map but an empty map, drawn up by the "Normandy" geopolitical players as part of an interstate shell game. An entire state – Ukraine – was being wagered. The players played the "Minsk process" card, invoking their "obligations" not to leave the game or change either its participants or the deck. Moreover, all of them cheated, while some were openly bluffing… The Ukrainian people, however, opposed this. During his speeches, P. Poroshenko repeatedly referred to the war in Eastern Ukraine as a "patriotic war," yet from 2014 onward, even during the fiercest battles, he never initiated the introduction of martial law, for which he was criticized both by politicians and by the public[54].

Despite the Minsk Agreements, shelling and clashes along the line of contact continued, particularly in the areas around Avdiivka, on the Svitlodarsk bulge, and in other hotspots. During this period, the disengagement of forces and assets of the opposing sides also took place, particularly near Zolote and Petrivske in October 2016.

From that time onward, the languid war in the East became entrenched for a long period within the "Normandy trenches" – both in the military and in the political sense. This explosive pause was characterised

[53] *Гай-Нижник П.П.* Будапештський меморандум: передумови і наслідки (не)гарантії національної безпеки України // Гілея. 2016. Вип. 114 (№ 11). С. 366–378.

[54] However, after the Russians seized Ukrainian sailors in the Azov Sea on 25 November 2018, P. Poroshenko introduced martial law for a period of thirty days – from 14:00 on 26 November until 14:00 on 26 December 2018. This decision of the President of Ukraine was criticized both by authoritative Western experts and by the Ukrainian public, who not without reason believed that P. Poroshenko may have introduced martial law out of a desire to postpone the forthcoming presidential elections, and that the incident in the Kerch Strait had been deliberately provoked precisely for that purpose.

by mutual accusations and preparations for the onset of a new hot phase of the war[55].

At the same time, it should be noted that on 18 January 2018 the law on the de-occupation of Donbas was adopted, providing for the possibility of ending the anti-terrorist operation through the introduction of martial law or a state of emergency and transferring command from the SBU, which had formally directed the ATO, to the Joint Operational Headquarters of the AFU. The law was signed on 20 February 2018, and already on 22 February the Chief of the General Staff of the AFU announced that the format of the ATO was being transformed into the Joint Forces Operation (JFO), which would be headed by the military command. On 30 April 2018, the President of Ukraine and Supreme Commander-in-Chief P. Poroshenko signed the decree "On Approving the Decision of the National Security and Defence Council 'On the Large-Scale Anti-Terrorist Operation in the Territory of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions'". At the same time, the President signed the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine "On the Commencement of the Joint Forces Operation to Ensure National Security and Defence, Repel and Deter the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation in the Territory of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions". According to the order, the JFO commenced at 14:00 on 30 April 2018[56].

The "languid" war in the "Normandy trenches" dragged on until the presidential elections in Ukraine and formally came to an end with the inauguration of the new head of state on 20 May 2019.

Period VI. The Waiting War (20 May 2019 – 23 February 2022) – "The Eastern Front: The Winding Paths of Pacification"

The sixth period of the Russian-Ukrainian war began on 20 May 2019 – not so much because of the inauguration on that day of the new President of Ukraine, V. Zelenskyy, but rather due to the search by the Ukrainian authorities for new methods and formulas of pacification. These were allegedly found in the revived "Steinmeier Formula." Throughout the course of the war, the Russian Federation did not once fulfil its promises

[55] On 23 March 2017, the decision of the National Security and Defence Council on the State Program for the Development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine until 2020 entered into force. On 6 July 2017, the President approved amendments to the Laws of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of National Security" and "On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy," in which membership in NATO was defined as a priority national interest. On 7 February 2019, the Verkhovna Rada adopted, by 334 votes in the second reading, the draft law on enshrining in the Constitution Ukraine's strategic course toward membership in the European Union and NATO.

[56] In addition, the President signed the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Regulations on the Joint Operational Headquarters of the AFU."

and obligations. Moreover, from an official standpoint, there were no "Minsk Agreements" as such, but only the Minsk Protocol (with its arrangements) and the Package of Measures for their implementation. The Minsk arrangements themselves were political rather than legally binding documents, since they had never been ratified by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine as international legal treaties. Nevertheless, V. Zelenskyy persistently sought to resume negotiations in the Normandy Format and to hold a personal meeting with V. Putin. On 1 October in Minsk, the participants of the Trilateral Contact Group signed the "Steinmeier Formula." On 7 October, F.-W. Steinmeier explained the origins and meaning of the "formula": "The formula contains nothing more than an attempt to transform the large steps [...] which the parties to the conflict were unwilling to take into a series of smaller steps which, despite their essence and consequences, still need to be agreed upon"[57].

On 9 December, a summit was held in Paris with the participation of representatives of Ukraine, France, Germany, and the RF. This meeting took place for the first time after a three-year hiatus. The purpose of the summit was to approve a new sequence for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements and to discuss the "Steinmeier Formula"[58].

As a result of the summit, the final document entitled "Common Agreed Conclusions of the Paris Summit in the Normandy Format of 9 December 2019" was signed. These arrangements envisaged, in

[57] Штайнмаєр прокоментував «формулу Штайнмаєра» // BBC News Україна. 2019. 7 жовтня. URL: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-49962679

[58] The principal provisions of the "Steinmeier Formula" had already been agreed upon during the meeting of the heads of state and government in the Normandy Format in Paris on 2 October 2015. Ukraine at that meeting was represented by the then President of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko, who approved the principal provisions on behalf of Ukraine. Later, on 6 November 2015, a meeting of the foreign ministers (also within the Normandy Format) took place in Berlin at Villa Borsig. Ukraine at that meeting was represented by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, P. Klimkin, who confirmed the principal provisions of the formula. On 1 October 2019, during the meeting in Minsk, the Ukrainian side (represented by L. Kuchma) agreed to the formula in a highly abbreviated form. Following its signing, protests erupted in many cities across Ukraine. On 15 October 2019, the press secretary of L. Kuchma published new Ukrainian requirements regarding the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. It later emerged that Ukrainian representatives had agreed as early as July 2019 to consider the "Steinmeier Formula." This became known from a letter dated 16 July 2019 from the Head of the Office of the President, A. Bohdan, addressed to L. Kuchma, the representative of Ukraine in the Trilateral Contact Group. Attached to the letter was the document entitled "Steps to be Undertaken by the Parties," agreed upon during negotiations in the Normandy Format on 12 July 2019 at the level of diplomatic advisers. The meeting took place with the participation of Deputy Head of the Office of the President V. Prystaiko and Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation V. Surkov. The document stated, in particular, that the parties undertook to prepare legal frameworks concerning the "special status of Donbas" (a special procedure of local self-government), amnesty, and local elections.

particular, the implementation of the "Steinmeier Formula" into Ukrainian legislation in accordance with the version agreed upon by the "Normandy Four" (N4) and the Trilateral Contact Group, as well as the consolidation of a "special procedure of local self-government" in certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts[59].

The promise of the President of Ukraine to achieve a complete victory at the Paris summit during his personal meeting with the President of the RF did not come true. At the same time, in 2019 V. Zelenskyy had the opportunity to reject these agreements and initiate an alternative plan by involving the West; instead, however, he drew Ukraine even deeper into the winding paths of the Minsk process.

Russia, meanwhile, was preparing for a full-scale war and an invasion of the remaining territory of Ukraine. In March 2022, the Russian international human rights organisation "Agora" published a report arguing that the campaign to prepare for the attack on Ukraine began with a series of meetings of the Security Council of the RF in November 2020. This report explains many processes that had previously appeared disconnected and chaotic, but which in reality proved to be components of a larger plan. The immediate trigger was the presidential election held in the United States in November, in which D. Trump – upon whom the Kremlin had clearly counted as an ally – lost to J. Biden. This signified the inevitable renewal of confrontation.

Russia's preparations for confrontation were conducted along several directions: domestic political, foreign political, and military. Coronavirus restrictions and the strengthening of police control were likewise employed by the authorities in preparation for the "special operation." Consequently, a decisive neutralisation of the political sphere began: the authorities systematically identified and neutralised all major, and even potential, organisers of mass street protests (for example, the structures associated with A. Navalny, M. Khodorkovsky, and even the most active wing of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation). The destruction of freedom of information also entered its final stage: the media and the opposition shaped public opinion and would inevitably have created powerful resistance to state propaganda.

Accordingly, the following actions and measures were undertaken: laws on "military censorship" were adopted, introducing administrative liability for discrediting the Russian Armed Forces, for calls to obstruct their use, and for calls to impose sanctions against the RF. As of March 2022, at least 213 administrative and 10 criminal cases were already

[59] Загальні узгоджені висновки Паризького саміту в Нормандському форматі 9 грудня 2019 року. // Президент України Володимир Зеленський. Офіційне інтернет-представництво. 2019. 10 грудня. URL: https://www.president.gov.ua/news/zagalni-uzgodzheni-visnovki-parizkogo-samitu-v-normandskomu-58797

known. By 7 March 2022, no fewer than 150 journalists had left Russia, while entire editorial offices and correspondent bureaus were evacuated. Technical preparations were also carried out for isolating the Runet from the global network through total traffic control and the expulsion of Big Tech companies, a process that had begun in the spring of 2020 following changes in the leadership of Roskomnadzor. Roskomnadzor introduced "military blockings" of media IP addresses affecting 811 different information resources. The blocking also extended to foreign social networks, with Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram being completely blocked. At the same time, the total number of detainees from the first days of anti-war protests in 68 cities across Russia exceeded 15,000 people[60].

In 2021, Russia's military budget increased by 2.9% (compared to 2020), reaching $ 65.9 billion and amounting to 4.1% of the Russian Federation's GDP. As early as late March and early April 2021, Russian troops transferred large quantities of weaponry and military equipment from western and central Russia, as well as from Siberia, to occupied Crimea and to the Pogonovo training centre (17 km south of Voronezh). At that time, 28 battalion tactical groups (BTGs) of the Russian army were deployed along the border with Ukraine, including in the Bryansk and Voronezh oblasts bordering Ukraine (Western Military District). In addition, 50 Russian BTGs, comprising 15,000 soldiers, assembled for exercises in the Southern Military District, which included temporarily occupied Crimea as well as the territory adjacent to the confrontation zone in Donbas. As of 9 April, 85,000 Russian military personnel were stationed either in Crimea or within 40 km of the Ukrainian border.

Being aware of this, on 27 April 2021 V. Zelenskyy declared the need to expand the Normandy Format, explaining that this could involve either its actual enlargement or "a separate, parallel format with other countries, with very serious and powerful players"[61]. The day before, in an interview with *The Financial Times*, he had called for a revision of the 2015 agreements and for the inclusion of Great Britain, Canada, and the United States in the Normandy process[62]. Already on 1 July 2021, in an interview

[60] *Гайнутдинов Д., Чиков П.* Россия: права человека на военном положении. Первый месяц вооруженного конфликта в Украине. Неправительственный доклад // Human rights martial law.pdf. URL: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vCb_QdGscBkLUtYQpNxl5Q7I1XNisbnr/view

[61] Зеленський заявив про необхідність розширити «нормандський» формат і оновити «Мінськ» // Радіо Свобода. 2021. 27 квітня. URL: https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-zelenskyi-normandskyi-format-minsk/31225652.html

[62] Меморандум об исполнении Протокола по итогам консультаций Трехсторонней контактной группы относительно шагов, направленных на имплементацию Мирного плана Президента Украины П. Порошенко и инициатив Президента России В. Путина / ОБСЕ. URL: https://cdn.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/a/1/123807.pdf

with *Interfax-Ukraine*, V. Zelenskyy, while stating that "facts are always more eloquent than any statements," once again expressed his desire "to meet with President Putin as well – if he is genuinely interested in resolving a number of crisis issues that objectively exist in bilateral relations between Ukraine and Russia. In any case, preparations for this difficult match are ongoing"[63]. This was despite the fact that V. Putin had previously spoken condescendingly, claiming that there was no point whatsoever in meeting with V. Zelenskyy, since, according to him, everything was decided in Washington. Blinded by some incomprehensible faith in the peacefulness of the Russian people and of V. Putin himself, who allegedly remained under the influence of propaganda (interesting – whose propaganda?), V. Zelenskyy repeatedly asserted, almost like a mantra: "The Russian people definitely do not want any escalations or bloody expansions. Recall the wave of genuine interest that emerged immediately after my proposal to the President of Russia to meet and find a path to peace. This is not artificial interest; these are real expectations that exist. We understand perfectly well that today Russian society cannot openly raise questions about the war and about the price of the war. But we also understand perfectly well that there is no desire within Russian society to continue aggression against Ukraine. […] Perhaps, if the President of Russia himself were to emerge from under the influence of this propagandistic picture, it would become obvious that we truly do have something to talk about"[64].

Nevertheless, despite such rhetoric on the part of V. Zelenskyy, the Kremlin's reaction was more than unequivocal and demonstrative: in October 2021, the RF refused to participate in the planned summit of the "Normandy Four", and it was therefore decided to limit the negotiations to the level of the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Germany, France, and Russia. Moreover, at that same time, the Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia and former President and Prime Minister of that country, D. Medvedev, published in the newspaper *Kommersant* an article filled with boorishness, insults, and mockery concerning the "senselessness" of contacts between the Russian authorities and the Ukrainian government. The article appeared under the title "The Goat Took on the Wolf – and Only Its Hide Remained" or "Why Contacts with the Current Ukrainian Leadership Are Senseless" (titles translated from Ukrainian and Russian, respectively)[65].

[63] Володимир Зеленський: Я готовий зустрітися з Путіним, якщо його дійсно цікавить вирішення кризових питань в українсько-російських відносинах // Interfax-Україна. 2021. 1 липня. URL: https://interfax.com.ua/news/interview/753034.html
[64] Ibidem.
[65] *Медведев Д.* Почему бессмысленны контакты с нынешним украинским руководством // Коммерсантъ. 2021. 11 октября. URL: https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5028300#id2123318

This piece of writing received an almost immediate "very positive" assessment from the Press Secretary of the President of the RF, S. Peskov. It should also be noted that the text was published precisely on the day the Deputy U.S. Secretary of State V. Nuland began her visit to Moscow and on the eve of the 23rd European Union–Ukraine Summit. Before that, it should be recalled, on 12 July 2021 V. Putin himself had published (in both Russian and Ukrainian) on the official website of the President of Russia an article entitled "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians", which in effect created the historical-ideological and political justification and rationale for the future full-scale war against Ukraine[66]. Thus, V. Putin (including through D. Medvedev) once again declared his desire for a change of power in Ukraine, as well as his demand for direct negotiations with Washington concerning his own geopolitical ambitions.

On 20 November, former adviser to the President of Russia V. Surkov published an article in which he openly asserted that the time had come for Russia to attack Ukraine in order to reduce "social entropy" within the RF and to "export chaos" from Russia onto the territories of the states surrounding it. V. Surkov, who had served as the Kremlin's curator for Ukraine and as one of the principal architects of the war against it, cynically and quite openly pointed to Russia's future intention to seize Ukraine while simultaneously disposing of the toxic segment of the population of its pseudo-empire. The experience of occupation and annexation was likewise invoked. "Imperial technologies remain effective even today, when empires have merely been renamed superpowers. The Crimean consensus is a vivid example of the consolidation of society through the chaotic destabilisation of a neighbouring country," V. Surkov stated, adding that their empire would expand through the spread of such chaos "thanks to the loose and utterly senseless structure of Eurocratic governance"[67].

He reminded Ukraine and the world that "for Russia, constant expansion is not merely one of its ideas, but a genuine existential condition of our historical existence," adding that Russia would obtain its share in the new global gathering of lands (or, more precisely, spaces), thereby reaffirming its status as one of the few true globalisers, as had been the case during the eras of the Third Rome or the Third International. Russia, he asserted, would expand not because this was good, nor because it was bad, but because this is physics. Already at that time, he was also hinting at the "Taiwanese" direction of Beijing's "entropy", which was to become a signal

[66] *Путін В.* Про історичну єдність росіян та українців // Президент России. 2021. 12 июля. URL: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66182

[67] *Сурков В.* Куда девался хаос? Распаковывание стабильности // Актуальные комментарии. 2021. 20 ноября. URL: https://actualcomment.ru/kuda-delsya-khaos-raspakovka-stabilnosti-2111201336.html

for a new repartition of the world and would not interfere with Russia, since their "turbulent flows" would not intersect and would therefore benefit both Moscow and Beijing. The European Union, meanwhile, in the longer term could become either a source of chaos or its absorber[68].

The Ukrainian political establishment, however, like the authorities themselves, for some reason perceived such rhetoric with humour, indifference, and irresponsible short-sightedness… Meanwhile, from 10 to 16 September 2021, the Armed Forces of Russia and Belarus conducted the joint strategic exercises "Zapad-2021" on the territory of Belarus and in the waters of the Baltic Sea, involving approximately 200,000 military personnel, up to 760 units of military equipment, and 15 naval vessels. On 30 October, the influential *The Washington Post* warned in one of its articles about the alarming increase in the number of Russian troops near Ukraine's borders, and on 5 November 2021, the large-scale deployment of Russian forces along the border with Ukraine was officially confirmed by the United States Department of Defense.

There is little point in commenting on V. Putin's ignorance as a "historian", yet this article of his as President of Russia, together with the subsequent statements of D. Medvedev, D. Peskov, V. Surkov, Russian Foreign Minister S. Lavrov, and the Kremlin media, as well as the accomplished fact of the redeployment and concentration of Russian troops around Ukraine's borders and within the Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia, should have provoked not merely concern, but an obvious recognition of the threat of escalation and compelled the military-political leadership in Kyiv to undertake appropriate ongoing preventive actions and measures. Western intelligence services likewise urged Ukraine to take such steps, warning official Kyiv already at that time of the necessity to dig trenches and build defensive fortifications not only in Donbas, but also in the north and south of the country, rather than repairing highways on the eve of a possible invasion by the enemy's army.

At the same time, the military-political coalition against Ukraine also underwent diplomatic formalization when, on 4 November 2021, at a meeting of the Supreme State Council of the Union State of Russia and Belarus, V. Putin and A. Lukashenko approved a joint military doctrine, and on the following day (5 November) signed the Union State decree "On the Main Directions for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State for 2021–2023" (the so-called 28 integration programs).

Meanwhile, Russia increasingly made unacceptable demands of Ukraine while unmistakably rattling its weapons. On 18 November 2021,

[68] Ibidem.

during a meeting of the Board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF, V. Putin publicly issued an ultimatum to NATO member states demanding security guarantees for Russia and obliging Ukraine not to join the Alliance. On 30 November, at the "Russia Calling!" Forum, the President of Russia spoke of the so-called "red lines" for Ukraine, which consisted in demands not to provide Ukraine with modern types of weaponry. Already on 1 December, he officially demanded written guarantees from the West regarding the "non-expansion of NATO eastward," thereby attempting to force the North Atlantic Alliance to renounce de jure support for Ukraine in a future war with Russia. On 15 December 2021, a representative of the President of the RF handed over to a representative of the U.S. Secretary of State a list of demands concerning security guarantees.

In October 2021, the RF refused to participate in the planned summit of the "Normandy Four", and it was therefore decided to limit the negotiations to the level of the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Germany, France, and Russia. At the same time, on 17 January, Russian troops and weaponry began arriving in Belarus for the joint exercises "Allied Resolve," which were scheduled for February 2022, and on 19 January U.S. President J. Biden stated that, in his opinion, Russia would invade Ukraine[69]. In contrast, on 28 January, President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy called on the West not to create "panic" in Ukraine over a potential Russian invasion, since constant warnings about an "inevitable" threat of invasion were harming Ukraine's economy. V. Zelenskyy also added that "we do not see a greater escalation" in comparison with the beginning of 2021, when Russia had been building up its military presence near Ukraine's borders[70]. Despite this, American and British intelligence services repeatedly warned the Ukrainian authorities in February 2022 about Russia's increasingly imminent attack.

Meanwhile, on 15 February 2022, the State Duma of the RF voted in favour of an appeal to President V. Putin requesting recognition of the "LPR" and the "DPR"[71]. In a special address on 19 February, U.S. President

[69] Biden predicts Russia will invade Ukraine' // NBC News. 2022. January 19. URL: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/blinken-ukraine-russia-attack-short-notice-invasion-fears-mount-rcna12691; *Harding L.* et al. Joe Biden thinks Russia will attack Ukraine – but will face a 'stiff price' // The Guardian. 2022. January 19. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/19/russia-could-act-againstukraine-at-any-moment-says-us

[70] Ukraine to the world: keep calm and stop spreading panic // The Financial Times. 2022. January 19. URL: https://www.ft.com/content/97d15970-3c36-439d-aa38-7402f732efbc

[71] On 16 February, nearly 7,000 additional Russian servicemen were deployed to the border with Ukraine. Massive shelling by Russian occupation forces resumed along the entire line of contact in Donbas on 17 February. During the first two days alone, the headquarters of the Joint Forces Operation (JFO) recorded 60 and 66 attacks respectively; on 19 February – 136 attacks (the largest number of frontline shellings in a single day since 2017); on 20 February – 80; on 21 February – 84; and on 22 February – 96, the majority of them carried out with heavy artillery.

J. Biden declared: "I am convinced that Putin has made the decision to invade". On 21 February, Russia officially recognised the quasi-republics of the occupied Donbas, and "Treaties on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance" were signed with them. On 22 February, during a press conference, the President of Russia openly stated that the Minsk arrangements no longer existed, while on the evening of 23 February the leaders of the terrorist organizations "DPR" and "LPR" appealed to V. Putin for military assistance. On 23 February, the administration of U.S. President J. Biden informed President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy that, according to the conclusions of American intelligence, Russia was preparing to launch a full-scale invasion of the neighbouring country within the following 24–48 hours. It was reported that the Russian military operation would be comprehensive and combined in nature: not only an attack from the occupied part of Donbas in the East, where additional Russian units had been deployed on Monday, but also a strike against Kyiv from the northern border with Belarus, cruise-missile strikes, a ground invasion, and cyberattacks. Only then did President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy declare a thirty-day state of emergency throughout the entire territory of Ukraine, with the exception of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, where the state of emergency regime had already been in force since 2014. On 24 February 2022, at 5 a.m., V. Putin officially announced the beginning of a "special operation" in Ukraine, which in reality marked the commencement of a full-scale attack on a sovereign state.

As harsh reality demonstrated, the attempts at pacification between Russia and Ukraine proved to be nothing more than winding paths through the illusions in which the new Ukrainian authorities wandered. Meanwhile, in Donbas and along Ukraine's borders, the war remained suspended like a taut string, awaiting the shattering of illusions about the attainment of peace and its own full-scale eruption.

Period VII. Total War (from 24 February 2022 to...) – The War for Life ("The Battlefield of Five Fronts")

The seventh period of the Russian-Ukrainian war began at 5 a.m. on 24 February 2022, after V. Putin announced the commencement of a "special operation" in Ukraine. Units of the AFU in Left-Bank Ukraine came under extremely intense shelling, while Russian troops crossed the northeastern borders and launched missile and aerial strikes against military command centres, the airfields in Boryspil, Ozerne, Kulbakyne, Chuhuiv, Kramatorsk, and Chornobaivka, as well as military depots and facilities of the AFU throughout the entire territory of the state. Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro, Mykolaiv, Mariupol, Berdiansk, Kramatorsk, Boryspil, Vasylkiv, and many other cities and villages were likewise bombarded. Russia launched a massive missile strike against Ukraine and advanced by land from the north (the

territories of Belarus and Russia), from the south (Crimea), and from the east (occupied Donbas). Ukraine's information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure deteriorated because of cyberattacks and bombardments. On the very first day of the total war, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine unanimously approved the introduction of martial law. Several Ukrainian cities had already been occupied, and the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant had been seized. Late in the evening of the first day of the Russian offensive (24 February), the decree on general mobilisation, signed by President V. Zelenskyy, was made public.

What, then, were the principal reasons why Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022?

The three principal geopolitical reasons for the outbreak of the total war within the framework of the Russian-Ukrainian war had been indicated well in advance and long before its beginning by V. Putin himself: in his 2005 Address to the Federal Assembly of Russia, in his Munich speech of 2007, and in his 2021 article "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians".

All the rest merely constituted derivative and component elements of the propagandistic and disinformation wrapping of the long-term hybrid war. The principal reason for the current total assault by the aggressor, however, also lay in the Kremlin's recent experience. This contemporary historical experience suggested to V. Putin (as he hoped) the following:

1) Ukraine was neither preparing for nor ready for a total war – therefore the blitzkrieg of the "special military operation" (SMO) would succeed;

2) Ukraine's political leadership had still not rid itself of the "Russian syndrome" in its consciousness and of its "peace illusions" in geopolitics – therefore it would agree to new negotiations and to a new "Minsk";

3) The West would adopt a wait-and-see position and would not dare to intervene – therefore it would allow Ukraine to capitulate and would be compelled to propose a compromise settlement on Russia's terms.

A full-scale offensive was inevitable. Russia required time to prepare for it: to concentrate personnel, equipment, and matériel; to deploy logistical and fuel-support resources; to carry out rearmament and transform its cyber forces; to conduct a prolonged and powerful international and domestic disinformation-propaganda campaign; and, ultimately, to choose the moment of "X".

An ally of the Russian Federation in the war against Ukraine is the Republic of Belarus, which provided the aggressor state with its territory, military assets, and infrastructure for the invasion of Ukraine and the conduct of subsequent military operations on its territory. Nevertheless, the blitzkrieg of the Russian forces failed. Heavy and bloody battles unfolded throughout the whole of Ukraine: from Belarus in the north to the Black

Sea coast in the south. They were waged on land, in the sky, at sea, in cities and villages, in the diplomatic arena, in the financial-economic sphere, in the information and cyber domains, and deep in the enemy's rear. The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation conducted an aggressive war in violation of all norms: they failed to observe the rules governing the treatment of prisoners of war, committed acts of genocide against the Ukrainian people, and used looting, filtration camps, deportations, mobile crematoria to conceal crimes, mass torture, rape (including of children), and executions against the civilian population. The Russian army carried out carpet bombings of peaceful cities, destroying some of them, such as Mariupol, almost completely. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian state still neither recognised de jure nor officially declared a state of war with the Russian Federation and its ally, the Republic of Belarus.

As is well known, V. Putin named as the ostensible (publicly declared) reasons for Russia's attack on Ukraine a triad of accusations against official Kyiv and, correspondingly, the objectives of official Moscow: denazification, demilitarisation, and neutralisation (in the sense of Ukraine's international military-political status and the prevention of its accession to NATO). The demand for Ukraine's neutral status, in fact – like all the other demands within their temporal configurations or manipulative contexts and narratives – was ultimately inseparably connected with the so-called Kremlin ideologeme of dismantling the unipolar world and with Russia's newest foreign policy concept aimed at destroying the existing global security system. At the same time, the President of Russia emphasised that he was fully aware of the possible consequences of his actions and was prepared to confront external resistance, yet had no intention of retreating despite Western threats of sanctions and other consequences.

Following the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, accusations concerning the spread of the ideology of neo-Nazism within Ukrainian society began to appear in V. Putin's public rhetoric. In addition to the customary theses regarding neo-Nazism, the "coup d'état" in Kyiv, and NATO's insidious eastward expansion, he also mentioned (and continues to mention) that the logic of the so-called "Anti-Russia" project, allegedly implemented in Ukraine "under the protectorate and control of Western states," consisted in the constant cultivation of the image of both an internal and an external enemy[72].

V. Putin publicly voiced the narrative of the "demilitarisation of Ukraine" for the first time two days before Russia unleashed its full-scale war. Thus, when Russian troops invaded Ukraine on the morning of

[72] *Гай-Нижник П.* Сенсові ідеологеми В. Путіна: наративи ціннісних маніпуляцій та casus belli геополітики і геостратегії РФ. Київ: Саміт-книга, 2025. 440 с.

24 February 2022, V. Putin, in his address announcing the so-called "special military operation," declared that its purpose was "to strive for the demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine."

What V. Putin meant by the narratives of "denazification" and "demilitarisation" became vividly apparent in the conditions Russia imposed upon Ukraine, as recorded in the draft Treaty on the Permanent Neutrality and Security Guarantees of Ukraine of 15 April 2022, which at that time was being discussed during the negotiations in Istanbul[73]. Russia, in particular, demanded that Ukraine grant the Russian language official status. Within 30 (thirty) days after the signing of this draft Treaty, Ukraine would have been required to remove all restrictions concerning the use of the Russian language on its territory. Moscow insisted that the Russian language be used on an equal footing with Ukrainian in government, the courts, education, and public broadcasting[74].

The drafts also contained a demand to prohibit in Ukraine "fascism, Nazism, neo-Nazism, and aggressive nationalism" and, to this end, to repeal six Ukrainian laws (either wholly or in part) concerning controversial aspects of history, in particular the assessment of the activities of Ukrainian nationalists during the Second World War[75]. Among the demands advanced by V. Putin was, specifically, the prohibition on naming memorial sites after fighters for Ukraine's independence.

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[73] *Гай-Нижник П.* «Зазирнути у вічі Путіну»: російський синдром української «дипломатії війни і миру». Пекельна весна 2022-го. Київ: Саміт-книга, 2025. 256 с.

[74] These concerned the following legislative acts of Ukraine (Appendix 2 to the draft Treaty): the Constitution of Ukraine (Articles 10, 11, 12); the Law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language"; the Law "On Education" (Article 7, "Language of Education"); the Law "On the Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine"; the Law "On Civil Service" (Article 2, "Definition of Terms"); the Law "On the Judiciary and the Status of Judges" (Article 12, "Language of Judicial Proceedings and Court Record-Keeping"); the Law "On Television and Radio Broadcasting" (Article 9, "Protection of Interests and National Television and Radio Broadcasting"; Article 10, "Language of Audiovisual (Electronic) Mass Media"); the Law "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Language of Audiovisual (Electronic) Mass Media"; the Law "On Complete General Secondary Education" (Article 5, "Language of Education in Institutions of General Secondary Education"); the Law "On Professional Pre-Higher Education" (Article 46, "Language of the Educational Process"); and the Law "On Culture" (Article 5, "Language in the Sphere of Culture").

[75] In particular, these concerned the following legislative acts of Ukraine: the Law "On Government Cleansing" (Article 1, Part 7; Article 4, Part 2); the Law "On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Prohibition of the Propaganda of Their Symbols"; the Law "On Commemorating the Victory over Nazism in the Second World War of 1939–1945" (Article 7); the Law "On the Rehabilitation of Victims of Repressions of the Communist Totalitarian Regime of 1917–1991"; the Law "On the Legal Status and Honouring the Memory of Fighters for the Independence of Ukraine in the Twentieth Century" (Article 1; Article 2, Part 1); and the Law "On the Status of War Veterans and Guarantees of Their Social Protection" (Article 5, Clauses 2 and 16).

Despite the formally declared possibility of accession to the European Union, Ukraine would not have been permitted to join military alliances such as NATO. At the Kremlin's demand, Ukraine was to agree never to possess, produce, or purchase nuclear weapons; not to allow the delivery of foreign weapons and troops onto its territory; and not to place its military infrastructure, including airfields and seaports, at the disposal of any foreign state. Kyiv was likewise required to refrain from conducting military exercises involving foreign participation and from taking part in any military conflicts.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine, at the Kremlin's demand, were to be reduced to a drastically reduced size of an essentially police character[76]. Under any final agreements or "golden compromise" in this sphere, this would in practice have meant complete disarmament ("demilitarisation," to use Putin's own rhetoric). At the same time, Russia reserved for itself the right of veto over decisions concerning the provision of weapons to Ukraine by the guarantor states in the event of danger, as well as the possibility of blocking the potential use of military force by other states in assistance to Ukraine.

The Kremlin demanded that Ukraine and the international community recognise as part of the Russian Federation the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts, together with the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol.

An analysis of the RF's demands toward Ukraine demonstrates that the causes of the war lay not in the mythical "neo-Nazism" or militarisation, but in Ukraine's refusal to play the role of a puppet satellite and neocolony of Russia.

At the same time, Russia attempted to "frame" its actions directed against the West through the following triad of ideologemes: decolonisation

[76] Russia sought to impose limitations on everything – from the size of the armed forces and the number of tanks to the maximum firing range of Ukrainian missiles. Moscow wanted the strength of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to be reduced to no more than 85,000 servicemen (of whom no more than 15,000 would belong to the National Guard troops, which would not have been permitted to possess heavy weaponry, with the exception of armoured combat vehicles). Moscow also demanded that the Armed Forces of Ukraine possess only 342 tanks, 519 artillery pieces, 1,029 units of armoured vehicles, 102 aircraft (50 combat and 52 auxiliary), 35 helicopters (10 combat and 25 auxiliary), as well as 2 warships (with a displacement of up to 3,200 tons), 10 combat boats, and 10 auxiliary vessels (and boats). The Kremlin further sought to limit the number and operational range of Ukrainian missiles to 96 multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) with a maximum range of 40 kilometers. According to the Russian plans, the number of Ukrainian mortars was to be reduced to 147 units, whereas Ukraine sought to retain up to 1,080 units. The Russian demand regarding anti-tank missile systems was set at 333 units. As for the launchers (combat vehicles) of the air defence missile systems of the Air Force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Moscow insisted on limiting them to 190 units with a maximum range of up to 75 kilometers. In regard to UAVs (reconnaissance drones of the "Eleron" type), 138 units were envisaged.

(a wrapper for accusations of racism and neo-Nazism), depolarisation (a wrapper for the denunciation of the global security system and the reformatting of the global economy), and coercion towards ideological dehumanisation (a wrapper for the denunciation of democratic values as part of an existential war for controlled chaos and for the establishment of authoritarianism as a civilizational worldview of an "alternative democracy").

Meanwhile, from 24 February 2022 onward, the Armed Forces of the RF launched an offensive simultaneously from several directions: the northern axis (Kyiv, Sumy, and Chernihiv oblasts), the eastern axis (Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kharkiv oblasts), and the southern axis (from occupied Crimea toward Kherson–Mykolaiv–Zaporizhzhia–Mariupol). The occupiers advanced in columns of military equipment as if on parade. Yet on all axes the Ukrainian army put up fierce resistance to the invaders.

24 February – 1 April – the Battle of Kyiv. The Russian forces suffered a devastating defeat, and the invading troops were compelled to retreat. The enemy occupation was accompanied by the genocide of the civilian population. As of 22 April 2022, the bodies of 1,084 persons had been discovered in Kyiv Oblast, more than 600 of them in Bucha District alone. During the occupation of the town of Bucha near Kyiv (March–April 2022), Russian troops carried out the mass killing of civilians. As a result, the bodies of 422 murdered civilians were discovered in the town.

In the first days of April 2022, the liberation of Kyiv Oblast began. Within the span of a single week, Kyiv, Sumy, Zhytomyr, and Chernihiv oblasts were completely liberated.

On the night of 13–14 April 2022, the Russian missile cruiser "Moskva", which belonged to the Black Sea Fleet of the RF and served as its flagship, sank. In total, the Ukrainian military destroyed approximately one-third of the warships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, while many others were seriously damaged. In particular, besides the Moskva, the vessels "Saratov", "Vasily Bekh", "Novocherkassk", "Ivanovets", "Tsezar Kunikov", "Sergey Kotov", and others were sunk.

March – 17 May 2022 – the siege of Mariupol and the defence of Azovstal, which ended with the withdrawal of the Ukrainian forces, part of whom fell into Russian captivity, and with enormous losses among the civilian population.

30 June – the occupiers fled Snake Island. The liberation of Snake Island became a prerequisite for the signing of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

6 September – the Kharkiv Offensive Operation of the Defence Forces of Ukraine began. By 2 October, the AFU had liberated from occupation Lyptsi, Izium, Balakliia, Shevchenkove, Kupiansk, Vovchansk, Borova, Kivsharivka, Kupiansk-Vuzlovyi, Lyman, and Sviatohirsk, and in total more than 500 settlements in Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts.

On the night of 21 September, a major prisoner exchange took place, during which 215 Ukrainian fighters, including the defenders of Azovstal, were released from Russian captivity in exchange for the collaborator and V. Putin's close associate V. Medvedchuk, as well as 55 Russian prisoners of war.

From August 2022 onward, battles for Bakhmut and the surrounding areas of the city continued (as of September 2024, the city remained under the control of Russian forces).

On the night of 8 October 2022, an explosion occurred on the Kerch Bridge, because of which the roadway collapsed and railway fuel tankers caught fire.

From 10 October 2022 onward, regular Russian attacks against Ukraine's energy infrastructure began, resulting in rolling blackouts throughout the entire territory of the country.

11 November 2022 – the day of the liberation of the right-bank part of Kherson region. The AFU entered Kherson, abandoned by the Russian forces, which had remained under occupation virtually since the beginning of the full-scale war.

The Slobozhanshchyna and Kherson counteroffensives became important stages that demonstrated the capability of the Defence Forces of Ukraine to conduct effective offensive operations and to liberate occupied territories.

4 May 2023 – the AFU successfully shot down a Russian Kh-47 Kinzhal "hypersonic" missile for the first time.

On 6 June 2023, the Russians destroyed the dam of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant, as a result of which it was completely destroyed and beyond restoration. Representatives of partner countries reacted to the destruction of the Kakhovka HPP. The President of the European Council, Ch. Michel, emphasised that the Russians had committed a war crime: "The destruction of civilian infrastructure clearly qualifies as a war crime – and we will hold Russia and its proxies accountable". At the same time, the British Foreign Secretary J. Cleverly also expressed his position: "The destruction of the Kakhovka dam is an appalling act. A deliberate attack solely against civilian infrastructure is a war crime"[77].

From the beginning of June 2023, a large-scale Ukrainian counteroffensive commenced – an offensive operation of the Defence Forces of Ukraine, the plan of which was to break through the enemy's defences and, within several months, reach the coast of the Sea of Azov, thereby severing Russia's land corridor to occupied Crimea. However, the

[77] 10 років війни в Україні: хронологія, найвизначніші події, трагедії та перемоги // Вікна-новини. 2024. 21 лютого. URL: https://vikna.tv/dlia-tebe/vijna-v-ukrayini/10-rokiv-rosijsko-ukrayinskoyi-vijny-hronologiya-podij/

planned offensive did not succeed and was limited to minor local territorial gains. Despite the failure of the ground offensive operation, Ukraine achieved significant successes in strikes against the territory of occupied Crimea and called Russian naval dominance into question during the course of the Battle for the Black Sea.

12 July – at the NATO summit in Vilnius, world leaders signed the "Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine".

17 July – an explosion occurred on the Kerch Bridge. This was already the second major instance of damage to the bridge. The first explosion on it had taken place on 8 October 2022.

4 August – in the bay of Novorossiysk, the Russians' large landing ship "Olenegorsky Gornyak" was damaged. It became the second largest Russian warship, after the sunken cruiser "Moskva", to sustain serious damage.

24 August – the Armed Forces of Ukraine completely liberated the village of Robotyne, having broken through the first line of defence of the Russian occupation forces.

22 September – the Armed Forces of Ukraine seriously damaged the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet of the RF in Sevastopol.

At the end of October, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, V. Zaluzhnyi, acknowledged that the counteroffensive had failed to achieve its objectives and that, due to a number of subjective and objective reasons, the war was gradually assuming a positional form resembling an exhausting "trench war." Earlier, on 12 October, the head of the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, K. Budanov, expressed the opinion that Ukraine had "fallen behind schedule" in the de-occupation process, without offering further clarification. At the conference "Ukraine. Year 2024", V. Zelenskyy stated that the 2023 counteroffensive had failed because, even before it began, its plan had already been lying on the desk in the Kremlin.

Instead, analysts of the British analytical centre RUSI note that open discussions concerning the general direction and concept of the counteroffensive had begun as early as December 2022, immediately attracting the attention of Russian military planners. The task of uncovering the plans of the Ukrainian command was further simplified for the Russians by the fact that preparations for the counteroffensive had a substantial international dimension. The strike force was to consist of only a few specially prepared brigades, and therefore, by tracking their movements, the Russians inevitably learned the location of the offensive[78].

[78] *Watling J., Danylyuk O., Reynolds N.* Preliminary Lessons from Ukraine's Offensive Operations, 2022–23 // RUSI. 2024. July. URL: https://static.rusi.org/lessons-learned-ukraine-offensive-2022-23.pdf

14 January 2024 – the Armed Forces of Ukraine destroyed a Russian A-50U airborne early warning and control aircraft over the Sea of Azov. Subsequently, another aircraft of the same type was shot down.

From October 2023 until 17 February 2024, heavy fighting for Avdiivka continued. After months of fierce fighting for the city, and in order to avoid encirclement and preserve the lives and health of the servicemen, the Ukrainian forces withdrew from Avdiivka on 17 February 2024 by order of the Commander-in-Chief of the AFU, O. Syrskyi. Among the units involved in the operation was the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade. For Ukraine, Avdiivka had served as a gateway to Donetsk; for the Russian forces, it became a path towards the further occupation of Donetsk Oblast.

In February 2024, after the capture of Avdiivka, the Russians launched an offensive in the area of Robotyne. A new offensive by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation began.

3 March – a massive unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attack was carried out against temporarily occupied Crimea. In Feodosia, one of the largest oil depots on the peninsula was engulfed in flames.

15–16 June – the Global Peace Summit in Switzerland. The final Joint Communiqué following the summit was signed by 90 states and 6 organisations. Its participants recognised the territorial integrity of Ukraine as the foundation of a future peace – yet these were, in essence, all of its "achievements". At Bürgenstock, it proved impossible to send V. Putin even a minimally unified and firm global warning signal. No new agreed models for how peace might be achieved (let alone a Ukrainian victory) emerged. Moreover, in order to preserve the very fact of holding the summit as a global event, Kyiv had in advance been forced to agree to changes in its agenda – in effect, the so-called ten points of V. Zelenskyy's "peace formula" had to be put away in a drawer and were not even discussed. The summit had, in fact, failed even before it began, as only four issues were placed on the agenda, none of which directly concerned the war itself.

Moreover, the final declaration vaguely and ambiguously mentioned that Russia should be involved in the process. Thus, V. Putin was not shown a red card; instead, efforts were made to appease him and invite him to negotiations. This was despite the fact that, immediately before the summit, the Kremlin dictator had unequivocally declared that he was prepared to negotiate only Ukraine's capitulation and, for the time being, the recognition of the annexation of four of its oblasts. Crimea, a priori, was not even mentioned by him. Once again, demands concerning the demilitarization and neutral status of Ukraine were put forward in ultimatum form – which, in reality, meant forcing Ukraine back into Moscow's geopolitical and financial-economic orbit. The absence of U.S. President J. Biden also deprived the event of the significance that had been

anticipated, although he had been in Europe immediately beforehand, and even his brief and merely formal presence would have lent the gathering considerably greater weight. The fact that K. Harris, as Vice President, was not present throughout both days of the summit testified to problems in relations between the administrations of the United States and Ukraine. Moreover, this was demonstrated publicly. It should also be added that, as a consequence of the above-mentioned signals from Washington, various high-ranking politicians limited their participation in the summit to only a few hours. At Bürgenstock, not even a first step was taken towards challenging V. Putin or advancing demands towards Russia. It should be recalled that this was, in fact, already the fifth major diplomatic meeting within the framework of the so-called Ukrainian "peace formula", but the first attempt to organise it at the level of heads of state and government.

In February 2023, 141 states supported a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly which, among other things, called for the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Ukraine. Of the more than 100 states and organisations that participated in the summit, only 84 (80 states and 4 organisations) signed the final communiqué. This time, only 80 states supported a considerably weaker text, which did not even mention such a demand. The wording "Russia's aggression against Ukraine", which had previously been adopted, was excluded from the initial draft of the Bürgenstock Declaration.

6 August – the beginning of the Kursk Operation of the AFU. By the end of August, Ukrainian troops controlled approximately 1,100 km² of Kursk Oblast. Despite defeats on the eastern front, on 6 August 2024 Ukrainian forces broke through the border between Ukraine and the RF, entered the territory of Kursk Oblast, and began advancing there. On 12 August, President V. Zelenskyy and the Commander-in-Chief of the AFU, O. Syrskyi, publicly confirmed for the first time the offensive operation of the AFU in Russia's Kursk Oblast. The Kursk Operation of the AFU pursued five key objectives: to prevent Russia from using Kursk Oblast as a bridgehead for a new offensive; to divert Russian forces from other directions; to create a security zone and prevent shelling of civilian infrastructure; to capture occupying troops; and to raise the morale of the Ukrainian military and the nation as a whole[79]. 15 August – for the first time, a Ukrainian Military Commandant's Office was established on the territory of the RF. The strike in Kursk region did, after all, force Russia to withdraw part of its forces from Donbas; however, Russian troops

[79] Exclusive: Ukraine army chief reveals the strategy behind Kursk incursion // CNN. 2024. September 5. URL: https://edition.cnn.com/2024/09/05/europe/ukraine-army-chief-kursk-incursion-exclusive-intl/index.html

continued their offensive towards Pokrovsk. Moscow adhered to a dual approach: intensifying resistance in Kursk region while simultaneously continuing pressure along the front line in Donbas. Nevertheless, by the end of 2024, as a result of the Russian counteroffensive, the territory controlled by the AFU in Kursk Oblast had been reduced to approximately 460 km².

18 August – an oil depot and diesel fuel storage tanks in the city of Proletarsk, Rostov Oblast, were attacked. The fire continued for several days.

1 October 2024 – the AFU were forced to withdraw from Vuhledar.

28 October – NATO officially confirmed that North Korean troops were fighting on behalf of the RF. The Kremlin had descended to the level of an international pariah.

In the autumn of 2024, bloody defensive battles were simultaneously fought in the Pokrovsk, Kharkiv, Kupiansk, Lyman, Kramatorsk, Toretsk, Kurakhove, Vremivka, Prydniprovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih, Mykolaiv, and Kherson directions…

13 December – during another missile attack, an F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter, for the first time in the history of its operational use, destroyed six enemy cruise missiles in a single combat sortie.

The year 2025 became yet another stage in Russia's exhausting war against Ukraine. Despite intensive offensive actions by enemy forces, primarily in the east of the country, the war assumed the character of positional warfare with only minimal tactical breakthroughs.

1 January – Ukraine became a State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

16 January – the Agreement on a One Hundred-Year Partnership with the United Kingdom was signed.

As of February 2025, Ukraine had carried out more than 100 strikes against oil refineries and oil depots on the territory of Russia. Certain facilities – the Afipsky, Ilsky, Novoshakhtinsky, and Ryazan oil refineries – were attacked several times. Since the beginning of that year alone, more than ten successful attacks against fuel facilities in the RF had already been conducted. In particular, by the end of the winter, Ukraine had twice attacked the oil depot in Engels, Saratov Oblast, which supplies fuel to the military airfield from which strategic aviation aircraft take off. The oil depot burned for several days.

A prolonged battle for Pokrovsk, and accordingly for the entire Pokrovsk agglomeration, took place. Combat operations were concentrated along the following directions: Southern Slobozhanshchyna, Kupiansk, Lyman, Sloviansk, Kostiantynivka, Oleksandrivka, Huliaipole, Orikhiv, and Prydniprovia. Throughout the year, the enemy attempted to push forward along six or seven principal directions that had already become traditional for it. In the north, this was the Sumy direction, which at the beginning of

the year remained closely connected with the Ukrainian offensive operation in Kursk region.

In Kharkiv Oblast, the Russians attempted to expand their bridgehead on the right bank of the Oskil River, occupy Kupiansk, and seize new border territories. Slightly farther south, they sought to continue their advance toward Lyman and to push through Bilohorivka and Siversk. Still farther south, their primary objectives became Pokrovsk, Myrnohrad, and Kostiantynivka. The Russians also conducted an entire propaganda campaign surrounding their alleged approach to the administrative borders of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. And, of course, there remained the Zaporizhzhia direction – from east to west toward Huliaipole and from north to south toward Stepnohirsk.

The most critical sectors were those around Pokrovsk, Vovchansk, Kupiansk, and Kursk Oblast. In 2025, the AFU twice carried out successful counteroffensives in Kursk region. However, in March–April, the territory of Kursk region controlled by the Ukrainians sharply decreased.

Accordingly, the Russians began actively advancing into the territory of Sumy region. Simultaneously, they attempted to cut Ukrainian lines of communication with Ukrainian groupings operating in Russia by seizing the necessary territories on the Ukrainian side of the border. In July, the Russians succeeded in occupying the settlement of Yablunivka and advanced deeper into Ukrainian territory toward Yunakivka. Nevertheless, the Armed Forces of Ukraine ultimately pushed them back from Kindrativka and Andriivka. Sumy region became yet another sector in which the Russians were repelled, and throughout the remainder of 2025, they no longer undertook active operations there.

In 2025, the Russians achieved several propagandistic “victories” which, in reality, ended in complete failure. One such enemy failure was Kupiansk. Ukrainian forces first drove the occupiers out of the surrounding villages and then began clearing Kupiansk itself. All of this occurred toward the end of the year, precisely after Putin’s triumphant declarations. The reputational blow proved so severe that Russian propagandists still refuse to acknowledge their defeat in Kupiansk.

At the same time, in October and November, the enemy significantly expanded the occupied border strip south of Milove. The Russians also failed in their offensive in the Dobropillia area toward the village of Zolotyi Kolodiaz. The enemy attempted to sever what at that moment remained the last serious line of Ukrainian fortifications and to drive a wedge between the largest settlements in Donetsk region still under Ukrainian control and the rest of the country. The Ukrainian forces succeeded in neutralising the threat: they cut through the enemy salient extending toward Zolotyi Kolodiaz in several places and ultimately destroyed the occupying forces.

On the Pokrovsk–Myrnohrad sector, the Russians spent a long time attempting to employ their tactic of advancing along the flanks in order to envelop the entire agglomeration and sever its lines of communication. However, they never fully succeeded in implementing their plans: at the beginning of the year, Ukrainian forces had already broken the momentum of one of the Russian "pincers" on the left flank near the settlements of Pishchane and Kotlyne. After being repelled there, the Russians began another outflanking manoeuvre on the right flank – through Novoekonomichne toward Rodynske. Overall, this direction appeared rather promising for them, since it offered the possibility of advancing both toward the Pokrovsk–Myrnohrad agglomeration and toward Kostiantynivka. Yet here as well the occupiers encountered fierce resistance from the AFU. In practice, it took them almost the entirety of 2025 merely to crawl their way to Rodynske. Unable to close their flanks, the Russians began actively employing FPV-drones, thereby enormously complicating Ukrainian logistics. Eventually, they resorted to a direct assault on the city, steadily increasing their presence from its southern side. Nevertheless, they still failed to implement their classic plan of encircling the city.

At the same time, the situation for the Ukrainian forces there remained extremely difficult. As late as mid-December, a Ukrainian stronghold still remained in Myrnohrad, surrounded on all sides by a grey zone. By the end of the month, however, this stronghold had itself become part of the grey zone. Even so, Ukrainian forces continued their attempts to improve their positions in the city.

The Russians attempted to seize Kostiantynivka, yet they succeeded neither in encircling the city along the flanks nor in forcing their way into it through assault operations. At a certain point, their advance on the promising left flank along the Pokrovsk–Kostiantynivka highway came to a halt. Nor were the Russians able to achieve any substantial progress on the right flank.

The occupiers achieved their greatest successes in the south. Later, they managed to approach the Kleban-Byk Reservoir from the south, although Ukrainian forces maintained their defences there for a long time despite enemy claims regarding some supposed "pocket" for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Ultimately, the occupiers succeeded in extending a salient of the grey zone toward one of the southern districts of the city, but their successes there ended at that point.

On the Siversk–Lyman axis, throughout the spring and half of the summer, the enemy advanced in small increments in Bilohorivka – where fighting had continued since the beginning of the full-scale invasion – and in the surrounding areas. This was a location the Russians had been unable

to capture for several years. Incidentally, it remained the last settlement in Luhansk Oblast still under the control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

After the final occupation of Bilohorivka at the end of July, developments in this area began to unfold more rapidly – unfortunately, not in Ukraine's favour. The enemy began advancing in yet another symbolic sector of Ukrainian defence: Serebrianka and the Serebrianskyi Forest District. Ukrainian forces had withstood Russian assaults there for several years, and the area increasingly came to resemble the landscapes of the First World War. Throughout the autumn, the enemy gradually consumed the Serebrianskyi Forest piece by piece, and in December reports emerged regarding the occupation of Serebrianka.

In December, the Russians also made significant advances in Siversk. The end of November and the beginning of December marked the very period during which they achieved a series of territorial gains in the areas around Yampil and Siversk. In December 2025, the AFU ultimately lost control of this important settlement.

As of December 2025, the worst situation had developed on the Zaporizhzhia axis (Eastern Zaporizhzhia–Huliaipole). Here, the Russians, advancing from the east, had since the beginning of autumn managed in some places to push forward by as much as twenty kilometres. The number one task facing the Ukrainian forces was to halt the enemy's advance in this direction. The situation around Huliaipole remained extremely difficult. Part of this symbolic town had already been seized by the Russians, while another part belonged to the grey zone. The capture of Huliaipole could have provided additional momentum to Russian offensive operations if they had succeeded in turning it into a full-fledged base for the concentration of personnel and military equipment.

Direction: Southern Zaporizhzhia–Stepnohirsk. In July, the Russians succeeded in capturing the settlement of Kamianske and part of the village of Plavni on the shore of the former Kakhovka Reservoir. At that time, despite significant losses, they attempted to advance farther toward Stepnohirsk, but after receiving a counterstrike from the AFU, they were pushed back. Attacks in this direction were carried out systematically throughout the entire year, since Stepnohirsk lies only about twenty kilometres in a straight line from Zaporizhzhia.

One of the principal objectives for the Russians in 2026 remained the Sloviansk–Kramatorsk agglomeration. Another target was Zaporizhzhia.

In 2025, Russia concentrated most intensively on the seizure of territories in Donetsk Oblast, while the Defence Forces of Ukraine continued to hold key positions, inflicting significant losses upon the enemy and carrying out effective long-range strikes.

Overall, the year 2025 proved costly for both sides, but above all for Russia – in terms of lost human and economic resources. The Russian army captured approximately 4,700 km² of Ukrainian territory, which constituted roughly 0.78% of the total area of Ukraine (603,500 km²). This exceeded the figures for 2024, when the enemy had seized more than 4,000 km², yet the pace of advance remained slow – approximately 4–5 km² per day during peak periods.

The Ukrainians lost around 300 settlements, primarily in the Pokrovsk, Sloviansk, and Oleksandrivka directions. At the same time, however, Ukraine liberated less than 100 km², concentrating mainly on defensive operations and localised counteroffensives, such as those near Kupiansk and Lyman. Compared to 2024, when Ukraine likewise liberated only limited territories (primarily in Kharkiv Oblast), the situation remained essentially unchanged – less than 0.02% of the country's territory, or around 20 settlements, mostly in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts, such as Myrove, Torske, and Zarichne. These operations formed part of localised counteroffensive actions, yet they did not alter the overall picture of occupation, in which Russia controlled approximately 20% of the territory of Ukraine.

The losses suffered by the Russian forces in 2025 were colossal. According to estimates, the enemy's total losses amounted to approximately one million personnel casualties, including between 219,000 and 374,900 killed over the entire course of the war, with 2025 standing out as the period of peak losses – up to 100,000 killed in the first half of the year alone.

The key achievements of the Defence Forces in 2025 were deep strikes against Russian infrastructure. Ukraine carried out more than 50 strategic UAV and missile attacks, striking oil refineries, air bases, and logistics centres. For example, in June, strike UAVs in Murmansk and Irkutsk oblasts destroyed up to 10% of Russia's oil-refining capacity. Throughout 2025, the Defence Forces of Ukraine conducted 140 attacks against oil refineries and other facilities of the Russian oil and gas infrastructure. This exceeded the combined results of 2022–2024 (130 strikes). Autumn became the most productive period: more than 50 facilities of the Russian fuel and military-industrial complex were struck during the autumn months alone.

In December, a series of strikes against energy infrastructure, including attacks with Storm Shadow missiles, intensified pressure on the Russian economy. These operations not only inflicted material damage, but also undermined the morale of Russian forces, compelling them to redistribute resources toward rear-area defence. At the same time, Russia altered its missile employment tactics. Whereas in October ballistic and aeroballistic missiles had constituted one-third of the total number used, by

November they already accounted for one-half. In particular, 27 "Kinzhal" missiles were employed – exceeding all previous figures.

In 2025, fibre-optic drones were actively employed; however, thanks to support from China, the Russians possessed an advantage in this sphere. Ground-based unmanned systems also became an important factor. Although they were not as widespread as aerial drones, they were being actively developed. This year was also characterised by the fact that the front line became increasingly blurred. By the turn of 2025–2026, the war had reached a critical point. Without a radical transformation of defence, a technological breakthrough, and decisive support from partners, the situation was approaching further deterioration.

Within each of these periods, there were, of course, separate stages and phases, military operations and battles, the work of the military-industrial complex, diplomatic negotiations and geopolitical combinations, domestic Ukrainian events, and international processes. For Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, this war unquestionably possessed the character of a patriotic and just defensive struggle; indeed, it was truly a war for the right to exist not only of the Ukrainian State, but also of the Ukrainian nation – a war for life, in the deepest and most staggering meaning of that word!

However, it should also be noted that prior to February 2022, when Russia launched a total war against Ukraine that subsequently evolved into a global proxy war, official Moscow still hoped for a multipolar order in which Russia could balance its relations with the two most powerful states – China and the United States. For its part, China believed that the United States was using the alliances and institutions underlying the existing world order precisely to contain the rise of the People's Republic of China. Consequently, after Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, Beijing embarked upon the implementation of such projects as the Global Security Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, all of which challenge the West's right unilaterally to define universal rules and seek to undermine the concept of universal values in such spheres as human rights. At the same time, these initiatives also indicate China's aspiration to construct an alternative world order rather than merely reform the existing one.

Thus, China and Russia possess similar ambitions, which have made V. Putin and Xi Jinping a powerful tandem. Both seek to dethrone the United States from its position as global hegemon, and to this end Beijing and Moscow strive to create alternative financial and technological platforms immune to American pressure. In their view – a view indirectly supported as well by such strengthened actors as India, Iran, Brazil, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and others – the world is transitioning from a

U.S.-led unipolar order toward multipolarity, and geopolitics is now being defined by competition among several centres of power.

Russia's (V. Putin's) geopolitics and grand strategy were fundamentally driven by the destructive intention to dehumanise humanity and increasingly assumed the tactics and instruments of unrestrained, unjustified, and unpunished arbitrariness. The war against Ukraine ultimately destroyed the remnants of any rational or healthy pragmatism in the Kremlin's foreign policy. In July 2024, V. Putin, in one of his speeches, summarized the agenda of Russian grand politics as part of a "painful process" of overthrowing "classical colonialism" and the U.S.-led world order, calling for an end to the "monopoly" of Washington and the West over establishing the rules of global traffic[80]. Since V. Putin perceives this confrontation as part of a broader struggle against the West, he seeks to undermine NATO's position, embodied above all by the United States, wherever possible – including through weakening various aspects of the existing global institutions and, within the framework of his own far-reaching ambitions and intentions, encouraging the strengthening of Chinese, Indian, Brazilian, and other challenges to American hegemony.

Thus, these states believe that multipolarity constitutes the most reliable means of restraining hegemonic power which, if left unchecked, threatens international rules and norms as well as global stability. To a certain extent, such a logic of geopolitical and global economic thinking is not devoid of rationality from the standpoint of both subcontinental interests (Asia, the Global South, Pan-America, the Sahel) and national interests. However, this would hold true only insofar as such ambitions remained within the framework of transforming the contemporary security system on the basis of international law and reforming, for example, the United Nations, rather than pushing the planet toward a new Cold War in the twenty-first century. What makes the situation fundamentally different is the conscious attempt by certain states – Putinist Russia and Ayatollahist Iran in particular – through the instrument of hot war, to plunge the world into an abyss of permanent uncertainty, into a condition of bloody civilizational chaos controlled by them, and into a global existential slaughter no longer merely between autocracy and democracy, but of all against all.

The war that began in 2022, as a component of the Great Russian-Ukrainian War, was at once all-encompassing and devastating in scope and civilisational-existential in character. Its objective on the part of the Russian Federation was the destruction of the Ukrainian state and of the Ukrainian people as a whole; consequently, it may and should justifiably be

[80] *Gabuev A., Stuenkel O.* The Battle for the BRICS // Foreign Affairs. 2024. September 24. URL: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russia/battle-brics

defined as a total war. At the same time, however, it is not a war of national liberation, since Ukraine was not a colony occupied or enslaved by Russia, and therefore there was nothing from which it needed to liberate itself. Rather, the Ukrainian people rose in a just patriotic war for their statehood and for their right to life. Within this war, five principal fronts became clearly distinguishable almost immediately: the Northern, Eastern, and Southern fronts, as well as the diplomatic front and the people's front in the rear. The battlefield of these five fronts became the entirety of Ukraine, whose people rose in self-sacrifice to wage a patriotic war against the Russian invaders – a war for life itself!

Such wars have never been, nor can they ever be, confined solely to the framework of direct confrontation between the immediately belligerent parties. One way or another, to a greater or lesser extent, they inevitably draw other states into their orbit, since in a globalised world all political and economic actors possess their own interests and are interconnected by numerous objective and subjective levers and factors. The world has already become too deeply integrated, and the planet too small, for modern wars to remain problems only of the hostile or competing adversaries directly involved. Consequently, such wars transcend the old framework of economic and territorial confrontation and also acquire a worldview (civilisational) dimension, as do their all-encompassing tragic and bloody consequences.

At the same time, I must also note the change in the geopolitical strategy of the United States following the return of D. Trump to the presidency in 2025 and his proclamation of the so-called Donroe Doctrine. Global security now rests not upon treaties, but upon personal agreements among the leaders of the great powers, who will tie and untie the "knots of security." This renders the world far more volatile: wars may begin or end simply because the conditions of another "deal" have changed. At the same time, the "new" geopolitics and geostrategy of the U.S. administration profoundly affected the mechanisms of global transformation and the abrupt alteration of the system of coordinates and the architecture of global security.

Within this geopolitical puzzle, Ukraine ultimately appeared to the United States as an exhausted factor that had fulfilled its strategic role – the weakening of the Russian Federation as a global actor and as a potential comprehensive threat to the United States. Accordingly, the Biden administration's policy of exhausting Muscovy's capabilities (military, economic, financial, and others) within the Russian-Ukrainian war, while simultaneously preventing a direct clash between Washington and Moscow – including because of fears of a nuclear confrontation – consisted in restraining both sides, Ukraine as well as Russia, from achieving final victory. This strategy acquired its logical continuation and culmination in the tactics of the Trump administration.

Thus, compelling Kyiv into a grotesque “dirty peace” with Moscow has become a strategic objective for Washington, which has succeeded in shifting the financial burden within NATO onto the European member states of the Alliance and in militarising Europe, thereby freeing its own hands to concentrate on the global confrontation with China. At the same time, with regard to the coercion of Ukraine, it should be recalled that before the Second World War international law permitted states to enter into war and, as a result, compel one another to conclude treaties. The Charter of the United Nations, drafted under the leadership of the United States, fundamentally altered this situation. It prohibits both the threat and the use of force, except in cases of self-defence or authorisation by the UN Security Council. The idea was to prevent in the future agreements similar to the infamous Munich Agreement of 1938, when Great Britain, France, and Italy consented to the annexation of the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany. Accordingly, the experts who prepared the first draft of the Vienna Convention formulated what later became Article 52 in simple and categorical terms: all treaties concluded under the threat or use of force in violation of the Charter are not merely voidable, but null and void. Therefore, the time will come when Ukraine will possess every legitimate ground to denounce treaties or agreements imposed upon it under coercion. If international law still survives, then such agreements may be annulled; and if it does not, then all the more so they will not be worth even the paper on which they were printed.

Now that the old order is hurtling headlong into the abyss of the past, what is to prevent D. Trump from joining V. Putin and Xi in order to enter history as one of the creators of a new reality, including through an even further redrawing of the world map?

The modern world has died, yet within its posthumous metaphysical agony a new era must be born – one already emerging from the natural formula of civilisational development and the coming challenges confronting humanity.

Everything is becoming tightly interwoven not only through the need for new technological capabilities accessible only to a limited number of global actors, but also through the necessity of a new redistribution of energy reserves and the expansion (or repartition) of the limited geography of strategic mineral resources and control over them. This also encompasses control over the distribution of humanity’s vital necessities (fresh drinking water, fertile lands, food supplies, and the like); the struggle for minds (wars for scientists); the usurpation of control over scientific innovations and their dissemination; and domination over the informational and cyber spheres (artificial intelligence), the transnational markets of production and labour, and so forth – all among a limited circle

of players within a closed club of exclusive manipulators of public opinion and the planetary security system.

Thus, the great powers must strive toward expansion and toward acquiring not merely superiority, nor even mega-weighted power, but rather a form of "zetta-strength" directed toward domination in the "day after tomorrow," together with a derivative aspiration toward attaining "ronna-power" or "quetta-significance," accompanied by the absolutization of their role on the planet and within the surrounding cosmic space.

Accordingly, the grandmasters will continue narrowing their club of players upon the world chessboard – or the troupe of actors within the global theatre – and are already attempting to transform the very game itself, reducing the cast to only a few balanced "chosen ones" of a planetary geopolitical sect, a pantheon of earthly gods.

Under such conditions, within the foreign-policy dimension of the geostrategic transformation of the space of planetary security, a vast number of states, including Ukraine, are being deliberately driven toward the loss of their subjectivity and forcibly transformed into drifting objects amid the global currents of the world geopolitical ocean.

Speaking allegorically, contemporary international politics has changed its gaming hall and moved from the grand chessboard to a global billiard table. Consequently, the grand intellectuals of politics – masters of complex strategic chess combinations who, in breathless silence disturbed only by the sounds of disappearing pawns, rooks, bishops, or queens and by the rustle of changing moves, played with pieces of differing yet two-coloured geopolitical weight and status – have been replaced by grand masters who, with loud strikes of their cues, shatter clusters of numbered balls or send them scattering: multicoloured, yet standardised spheres selected by them for sinking into a geopolitical pocket.

Yet the principal tragedy of global security has become the tendency not to punish the aggressor, but rather to appease it through the satisfaction of its appetites. Such a tendency is capable not only of perpetuating any proxy or regional war indefinitely, but also of provoking a chain of wars across the planet, ultimately transforming it into the global battlefield of a Third World War.

In effect, this new world war is already being waged across dozens of fronts throughout the planet, destroying the order that was formed after 1945. A profound tectonic geopolitical shift is underway, one that is transforming the very foundations of security. It is not a classical war, yet precisely for that reason it is so dangerous: it is diffuse, multilayered, and therefore almost impossible to control. This means that the approaching multipolarity constitutes a massive geostrategic upheaval and merely

creates the illusion of a new configuration of a modern global security system - one that, in reality, does not exist and itself remains an illusion.

The world has been convulsed and stunned, and in conditions of planetary turbulence it frantically searches for new points of orientation.

Thus, in place of the recently bipolar and unipolar worlds, there flashes forth the whirlwind of multipolarity; and within the chaos of its dehumanised polycentricity there already emerges the specter of a new era – that of impera-polarity (impera-centrism) in an impera-divided world: a world partitioned among those who rule it.

However, not every chaotic period ends with the emergence of a new order. In a number of cases, the old order retains the possibility of surviving and adapting to new realities and transformations without fundamentally destroying its principal foundations. Instead, it may, to a greater or lesser extent, adjust certain rules and principles and thereby preserve its defining or fundamental mental foundations. Nevertheless, even without delivering a destructive internal or external blow to the old order, chaos is still employed by actors in the contemporary world as a principal instrument for establishing a new order and advancing new values.

Accordingly, lesser-weighted players – those squeezed beyond the boundaries of the table of subjectivity or not admitted into the gaming hall at all – will be compelled to enter into new alliances to avoid being transformed into drifting quasi-sovereign objects or geopolitical billiard balls in geopolitical games, and to escape their own weightlessness. Only in this way may they attempt to prevent imbalances not merely of military power, but also of natural-resource, energy-climatic, trade-industrial, scientific-technological, and political-diplomatic forces. For if one is not seated at the table, one may very well find oneself upon the menu of those who are.

Yet these alliances themselves must also prove capable of making a quantum leap in their formation and development in order to attain a worthy world – a dignus-centric or dignus-polar world – and not be crushed and consumed by the future.

And upon this very development will depend the dilemma of the future: the impera-polarity of the world or the dignus-polarity of the world (imperacentric world vs. dignuscentric world). A new world order may emerge not only as the result of a destructive war or the triumph of total chaos, but also as the consequence of a post-conflict compromise or the reconciliation of positions and concessions in the containment of controlled chaos aimed at preventing global ruin.

One of the methods of preparing for chaos is the creation of a situation in which the “victim-state” (or “victim-civilisation”) begins to play upon a “foreign” field according to rules imposed by others. At the same time, resolute resistance to the instigators of “conflict,” whose actions

enable "chaos" to erupt with destructive force, together with the firmness of actors in rejecting the ultimatum of "compromise," may well preserve a renewed and more stable status quo.

Within these tectonic fractures of the present and in the new struggle that has ignited across the globe, the new swords and ploughshares of the future world order are being forged, and the multidimensional matrix of a new era in the history of humanity has already begun to take shape.

Behind the scenes, the Russian-Ukrainian war transcends the framework of a merely bilateral conflict and reveals within itself clear signs of a general crisis of the global security system – a crisis that will lead to a chain of global transformations of planetary significance. Not only will the borders and systems of power in Ukraine and Russia change, but the foundations for a large-scale transformation of the Eurasian space have already been laid. A qualitative and territorial redistribution of trade and raw-material markets will begin; the established rules of political worldview and interstate relations will be altered; the principles of socio-political morality will undergo regeneration; the foundations of the globalist economy and the world security system will be reconsidered; and the world order itself will rest upon transformed rules of the game and begin to acquire a qualitatively new configuration. The world will change fundamentally, and it is the Russian-Ukrainian war – together with its consequences and lessons – that will compel humanity toward these transformations.

Conclusions. The research undertaken in this collective monograph provides grounds for viewing the European Union as a multidimensional political, economic, and security project whose evolution is closely linked to transformations in the European and international order. European integration, initially conceived as a mechanism for overcoming the continent's conflict-ridden past and ensuring lasting peace, has gradually developed into a complex system of institutions, common policies, legal norms, and mechanisms of cooperation. At the same time, contemporary geopolitical developments are driving further transformation of this model and strengthening the security dimension of European integration.

European integration has demonstrated that political and economic interdependence, institutional dialogue, common rules, and mechanisms for resolving disputes can provide a foundation for long-term stability. At the same time, contemporary threats have highlighted the need to complement this model with effective defence capabilities, crisis-response mechanisms, and strategic resilience. In this context, the EU is gradually moving from a predominantly normative and economic model of influence towards a more comprehensive approach that combines political, diplomatic, economic, sanctions-based, humanitarian, and security instruments.

The analysis of the EU's institutional architecture demonstrates that its multi-level nature simultaneously enables the reconciliation of diverse interests among Member States and creates certain constraints on the timely adoption of decisions, particularly in the areas of foreign policy and security. The effectiveness of common policies depends to a significant extent on the political will of Member States, the coherence of their strategic priorities, and the capacity of EU institutions to ensure timely and coordinated responses to crises.

An important finding of the study is that the European Union operates as part of a multi-level collective security system, interacting with the United Nations, NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and other international organizations. The EU does not replace these institutions but complements them through its own political, economic, diplomatic, humanitarian, and civilian crisis-management instruments. The development of the Common Security and Defence Policy demonstrates the gradual expansion of the EU's capacity to respond to crises, although its further effectiveness will depend on closer coordination among Member States and the development of appropriate resources and decision-making mechanisms.

The analysis of the EU's responses to contemporary conflicts demonstrates the diversification of its policy instruments. Sanctions, diplomatic mediation, humanitarian assistance, civil protection, financial support, and other mechanisms are increasingly employed in combination. At the same time, the experience of different crises demonstrates that the effectiveness of such instruments depends on the specific characteristics of each conflict, the level of international coordination, political cohesion, and the EU's capacity to maintain policy consistency over the long term.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has become a central driver of the transformation of the European security environment. It has demonstrated the interdependence between Ukraine's security and that of the European Union and has constituted a major test for European institutions and Member States. The EU's response has encompassed political, diplomatic, financial, humanitarian, economic, and military support for Ukraine, as well as the implementation of a comprehensive set of sanctions against the Russian Federation. This demonstrates a significant expansion of the EU's practical role in responding to large-scale international crises.

At the same time, the Russian-Ukrainian war has become a factor in the internal transformation of the European Union itself. Questions of defence capabilities, strategic resilience, energy and economic security, critical infrastructure protection, and countering hybrid threats have acquired substantially greater importance. The war has demonstrated the

interdependence between the EU's external and internal security and the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing both dimensions.

The economic and energy dimensions of security have acquired particular significance. Dependence on external energy resources has revealed the potential vulnerability of European economies to geopolitical risks, contributing to intensified efforts to diversify energy supplies, develop alternative energy sources, and strengthen strategic resilience. Consequently, energy and economic security are becoming increasingly integrated into the broader European security framework.

The war also has a significant social and humanitarian dimension. The large-scale displacement of Ukrainians to EU Member States has represented an important manifestation of European solidarity while simultaneously creating long-term challenges in the areas of social adaptation, employment, education, and integration. At the same time, the war is affecting public perceptions of security, solidarity, responsibility, and shared values, while its psychological consequences have brought the issue of societal resilience increasingly to the forefront.

The synthesis of the research findings makes it possible to identify several interrelated trends in the transformation of the European Union: the strengthening of the security and defence dimension of integration; the growing importance of strategic resilience; the expansion of the EU's foreign and security policy instruments; deeper interaction with NATO and other international organizations; and the increasing interdependence between the EU's internal stability and the security of its eastern neighbourhood.

The findings of the study are of particular significance for Ukraine, as the Russian-Ukrainian war has demonstrated that Ukraine's security is an integral component of contemporary European security. Ukraine is simultaneously a recipient of European support and an important participant in shaping new security architecture on the continent. Further deepening of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the political, security, defence, and other spheres may contribute to the development of a more resilient European security environment.

Thus, the contemporary European Union is undergoing a profound transformation driven by changes in the international environment and, above all, by the Russian-Ukrainian war. The EU is gradually strengthening its capacity to act in the field of security by combining economic, political, diplomatic, sanctions-based, humanitarian, and defence instruments. The further effectiveness of this process will depend on the European Union's ability to maintain political cohesion, develop its own capabilities, deepen cooperation with international partners, and ensure consistency between fundamental European values and the practical mechanisms for safeguarding them.

4.2. EU Member States' Positions on the Russian-Ukrainian War (*Anna Soloviova*)

This sub-chapter is driven by a series of unresolved questions and the imperative to refine certain assertions from prior scholarship. Although extant research has delineated the general outlines of the European Union's response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it has frequently neglected the nuanced interplay of institutional cohesion, enduring national divergences, the comparative effectiveness of policy instruments, and the conflict's repercussions for the EU's internal priorities. These gaps, alongside lingering ambiguities in previous contentions about the trajectory of EU unity and policy adaptation, necessitate a more probing inquiry framed by the following analytical axes: the degree to which the EU, as a supranational entity, has forged a coherent and unified policy rejoinder to Russia's aggression, including how this cohesion has evolved and where fissures have persisted; the principal disparities in national responses – such as those among Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic states – across sanctions, military aid, diplomatic postures, and reconstruction efforts; the mechanisms the EU has deployed (economic sanctions, macro-financial assistance, military support, diplomatic manoeuvres, and legal-judicial apparatuses), their evolution, and which have proven most pivotal; and the ways in which the conflict has reshaped the EU's domestic agenda, particularly in energy policy, defence integration, and enlargement prospects, along with the enduring institutional sequelae this may portend.

Our analysis is structured around three critical phases:

2014 – Russia's annexation of Crimea constitutes the initial major geopolitical rupture and precipitates the onset of Western (particularly EU) sanctions;

2022 – Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February entrenches a dramatically escalated conflict, eliciting a novel, more cohesive, and pressing European response;

2023–2026 – a phase of heightened European political deliberation, institutional reconfiguration, and progressive coalescence of policy instruments (sanctions, defence, energy diversification, juridical mechanisms) at both the EU level and among its Member States.

These temporal demarcations enable us to trace the development of the EU's institutional stance, the transformations in its policy repertoire, and the internal divergences among Member States across time.

Our approach combines institutional analysis, policy-tracker data, and a comparative case study of Member States to reconstruct both the collective EU response and its internal heterogeneity.

We examine formal documents (European Council conclusions, Commission communications, and sanction packages) to assess the

evolution of EU-level decisions and strategies. For example, the rapid deployment of sanctions in 2022 exemplifies an unparalleled degree of coordination at the EU level. We derive data from EU assistance-tracking mechanisms and sanctions-monitoring repositories to quantify the scale and forms of financial, military, and humanitarian aid. We compare a selection of Member States (e.g., Germany, Poland, Hungary, the Baltic states) to illuminate divergent national approaches. This approach reveals how domestic politics, energy dependencies, and geopolitical alignments shaped each country's response.

We supplement primary data with contemporary scholarly work on the war's economic and energy impacts, while further analysing legal and judicial measures (e.g., proposals for tribunals or asset-seizure instruments) in the light of EU law and international legal standards. By integrating normative (legal), quantitative (economic/financial), and comparative (national case study) perspectives, the chapter offers a multi-dimensional examination of the EU as an institution (and its Member States) in responding to the successive stages of the Russian-Ukrainian war. This methodological design allows us to discern both patterns of collective action and persistent internal fragmentation, offering insights into the EU's evolving strategic posture.

Evolution of the EU's Collective Position (2014–2026): A Chronological Narrative. This section traces the evolution of the European Union's collective position toward Russia from 2014 to 2026, examining how the EU's response developed across distinct political and institutional phases. Proceeding chronologically from the initial response to the illegal annexation of Crimea, through the full-scale invasion in 2022, and toward a broader strategic transformation by the mid-2020s, the analysis highlights the gradual shift from reactive diplomacy and targeted sanctions to systemic financial, security, and legal mechanisms.

By framing this evolution as a chronological narrative, the author seeks to demonstrate not only the changing instruments of EU policy, but also the deepening political consensus and institutional adaptation that have redefined the Union's external action framework in response to prolonged geopolitical confrontation.

1. 2014–2021: Initial Response, Sanctions, and Diplomatic Protocols

The EU's collective policy toward Russia began in earnest in 2014, following the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. Within weeks, the European Council condemned the act, suspended planned high-level summits, and prepared the first restrictive measures[81].

[81] Timeline – EU sanctions against Russia // The Council of the EU and the European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-russia/timeline-sanctions-against-russia/

Sanctions initially focused on individuals (asset freezes and travel bans) and on sectors of the economy – particularly in finance, energy, technology, and defence[82]. Over time, these measures were extended and updated regularly, both to renew expiring restrictions and to widen the list of sanctioned entities[83].

Diplomatic measures also played a key role: the EU suspended its regular bilateral high-level talks with Moscow, froze visa facilitation agreements, and adopted a strong rhetorical stance of non-recognition over Crimea. During this phase, the EU pursued a cautious but consistent policy: maintaining sanctions, coordinating multilateral pressure, and leveraging diplomatic isolation to signal its non-acceptance of territorial aggression.

2. February 2022: Shock, Rapid Consensus, and Escalation

The full-scale invasion launched by Russia in February 2022 marked a turning point. The EU responded swiftly and with a high degree of political unity. Within days, it adopted the first post-invasion sanctions packages, demonstrating a near-unanimous political consensus across Member States[84].

This phase was characterized by both the speed and the depth of the response. The EU froze significant Russian central bank assets, restricted financial transactions, and imposed travel bans on key individuals[85]. The immediacy of the response underscored a shared recognition among European leaders that the stakes had fundamentally changed.

3. 2022–2024: Expanding Sanctions, Financial Aid, and Material Support

In the months and years following the invasion, the EU moved beyond reactive measures to build a more systemic and coordinated response. From 2022 through 2024, the Council adopted multiple large-scale sanctions packages (reportedly more than a dozen) targeting not just individuals, but entire economic sectors and mechanisms of circumvention[86].

Simultaneously, the EU put in place innovative mechanisms to restrict Russian revenues: large swathes of central bank reserves held in EU jurisdictions were immobilised. These frozen assets began to generate

[82] Ibidem.
[83] EU restrictive measures in view of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine | EUR-Lex // EUR-Lex – Access to European Union law – choose your language. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/EN/25_2?utm_
[84] Sanctions adopted following Russia's military aggression against Ukraine // Finance. URL: https://finance.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-world/sanctions-restrictive-measures/sanctions-adopted-following-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine_en
[85] Timeline – Packages of sanctions against Russia since February 2022 // The Council of the EU and the European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-russia/timeline-packages-sanctions-since-february-2022/
[86] Sanctions adopted following Russia's military aggression against Ukraine...

extraordinary revenues, which were later channelled into new EU instruments supporting Ukraine.

On the assistance side, the EU launched significant macro-financial and material support programs. The Ukraine Facility, a dedicated financial instrument, was established to provide predictable grants and loans to Ukraine. By mid-2024, the first payments drawn from immobilised Russian assets were transferred, partly to the European Peace Facility (for military support) and partly to Ukraine's economic reconstruction[87].

This phase marks not only escalation, but also a clear structural shift: the EU was no longer responding reactively but deploying long-term instruments to integrate Ukraine into its financial and security architecture.

4. 2024–2026: From Reactive Solidarity to Strategic Adaptation

Starting in 2024, the EU entered a new stage, as its collective position evolved from emergency solidarity to strategic adaptation.

Energy policy became central. The war accelerated the EU's efforts to reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and to speed up its energy transition. Member States increasingly coordinated through EU-level instruments to secure alternative sources, reinforce energy infrastructure, and reshape the internal energy market. For example, see the EU's broader energy-security measures in 2024[88].

At the same time, defence integration accelerated: the EU scaled up its support for Ukraine through the European Peace Facility and worked to institutionalize permanent security mechanisms. The war catalysed renewed debate about joint procurement, multi-year defence funding, and a more unified European defence posture.

Moreover, legal mechanisms for accountability gained traction. In 2025, the EU, together with other international actors, formalized plans for a special tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression[89]. European institutions began exploring ways to use immobilised Russian assets for reparations and reconstruction, combining punitive and restorative justice in one framework.

Overall, the evolution of the EU's collective position between 2014 and 2026 proceeded from initial sanctions and diplomatic isolation (2014–2021) through rapid emergency response (early 2022), onto planned, systemic support (2022–2024), and ultimately toward a long-term strategic

[87] Commission disburses first regular payment under the Ukraine Facility // European Commission – European Commission // Daily News. 2024. 13 August. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_24_4246

[88] Timeline // European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-solidarity-ukraine/timeline_en

[89] EU sanctions against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine // European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-solidarity-ukraine/eu-sanctions-against-russia-following-invasion-ukraine_en

transformation (2024–2026). This narrative illustrates not just how the EU has reacted to Russian aggression, but how the war has reshaped European policy, institutions, and strategic priorities.

Timeline: Evolution of the EU's Collective Position (2014–2026). Table 4.2.1 summarizes the main phases of the European Union's policy response to Russian aggression between 2014 and 2026. It outlines the evolution of the EU's collective approach across four distinct periods, highlighting the core characteristics of each phase, the principal instruments and decisions adopted, and their broader strategic significance. By structuring the developments comparatively, the table illustrates the gradual shift from initial restrictive measures and diplomatic distancing to systemic expansion and long-term strategic adaptation of EU policies and institutions.

Table 4.2.1. Key Phases of EU Policy Response to Russian Aggression, 2014–2026

Period	Core Characteristics	Main Instruments & Decisions	Strategic Significance
2014–2021 Initial Response After Crimea	Introduction of restrictive measures; diplomatic distancing; cautious but continuous sanctions renewal	• Targeted sanctions on individuals and entities (asset freezes, travel bans) • Sectoral sanctions (finance, energy, defence, dual-use goods) • Suspension of EU–Russia summits and bilateral mechanisms • Non-recognition policy on Crimea	Establishes EU's long-term sanctions architecture and normative stance; builds foundation for later escalation
Feb 2022 Shock Phase	Rapid consensus; immediate escalation of sanctions in response to full-scale invasion	• Swift adoption of post-invasion sanctions packages • Freezing of Russian Central Bank assets • Broad financial restrictions • Closure of EU airspace to Russian aircraft	Demonstrates unprecedented unity and decisiveness; signals geopolitical turning point

2022–2024 Systemic Expansion	Move from emergency response to structured, large-scale support across multiple domains	• Multiple broad sanctions packages targeting revenue streams • Immobilization of Russian state assets • EU macro-financial assistance (e.g., Ukraine Facility) • Military support via European Peace Facility • First use of interest generated from frozen Russian assets for Ukraine	Marks a shift to long-term mechanisms; integrates Ukraine into EU's economic and security architecture
2024–2026 Strategic Adaptation	Transition from reactive solidarity to intentional strategic redesign	• Energy diversification and REPowerEU implementation • Advancing European defence integration and joint procurement • Support for legal accountability mechanisms (tribunal for aggression) • Debates on EU enlargement, governance reform, and multi-year Ukraine support	Consolidates EU's structural transformation; embeds the war's lessons in long-term policy and institutional design

Policy Instruments and Outputs. The principal policy instrument the EU has used to influence Russian state behaviour since 2014 (and with far greater intensity after February 2022) is a layered regime of restrictive measures (sanctions).

These measures are legally adopted within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP): decisions to establish, renew or lift restrictive measures are taken by the Council under Article 29 TEU, while the economic and financial implementing instruments are promulgated under Article 215 TFEU through Council regulations and related acts. This dual legal architecture both enables targeted listings (individuals, entities) and broad economic measures (trade and sectoral

restrictions) and creates the legal basis for enforcement and judicial review[90].

The EU sanctions toolkit deployed against Russia combines personal (targeted) measures (asset freezes, travel bans and sector-specific designations of persons and entities) with sectoral measures (restrictions on trade, investment, access to capital markets, technology transfer and services in specific sectors such as energy, finance, dual-use technologies and defence). In practice, the Union has layered prohibitions (e.g. export controls, bans on provision of certain services, restrictions on access to European capital markets) atop individual listings to degrade the target's capacity to finance and sustain the war effort. Legal and operational limits are notable[91]. EU measures must respect treaty constraints and fundamental rights (which create procedural requirements for listings), and they depend on Member State implementation capacity and third-country cooperation. Recent efforts to criminalise sanctions circumvention and to strengthen enforcement tools reflect the recognition of these limits.

Since 2014, the EU has maintained an evolving chronology of packages, with major intensifications after the 2022 invasion. The Council provides a public timeline and a packaged overview of the successive rounds of measures introduced since February 2022, documenting the shift from early targeted measures to comprehensive packages that include sectoral energy and finance prohibitions as well as expansions of targeted listings. The post-2022 packages combine sectoral sanctions (notably energy, banking, transport, high-tech and dual-use exports) with waves of personal designations (senior officials, oligarchs, service providers and entities facilitating sanctions circumvention). Trackers and legal briefings maintained by the Council and by specialised law firms and think-tanks give the most reliable chronological mapping of each package[92].

Sanctions regimes in the CFSP are temporary by design and are subject to periodic review and renewal by unanimous Council decisions (often in six-month increments for economic regimes). The implementation pathway typically starts with an EU foreign-policy decision (Council decision under Article 29 TEU), followed by implementing regulations (Article 215 TFEU) that set out binding trade and financial measures for all Member States. In recent years the EU has also developed procedural

[90] Restrictive measures (sanctions) – EUR-Lex // EUR-Lex – Access to European Union law. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/restrictive-measures-sanctions.html

[91] Ibidem.

[92] Timeline – Packages of sanctions against Russia since February 2022 // The Council of the EU and the European Council. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-russia/timeline-packages-sanctions-since-february-2022/

mechanisms to respond faster (interagency coordination among the High Representative, the Commission and Member States), and *ad hoc* formats ("EU plus partners" consultations) have been used to align positions with key allies and to anticipate circumvention risks. Legal and political dynamics – including national vetoes on politically sensitive items – shape how packages are amended, extended or made more coercive.

Empirical assessments of the sanctions' effectiveness show mixed results. On the one hand, the cumulative effect of sectoral measures, export controls and price-capping initiatives (G7 price cap on Russian oil, restrictions on refined products, and stepwise limits on gas imports) has substantially reduced Russian revenues from traditional European markets and constrained access to Western finance and technology. On the other hand, Russia has mitigated some effects through trade diversion, rerouting flows via third parties, the use of a "shadow fleet" for maritime shipments, and strengthening ties with non-Western buyers. Independent analyses emphasize that evasion and trade deflection attenuate the full impact of sanctions and that continued adaptation (legal tools, origin certification, and targeted actions against intermediaries) is required to maintain pressure[93].

Beyond direct market effects, sanctions have produced novel policy outputs: coordinated export-control regimes for high-tech goods, financial restrictions that isolate specific banks and institutions from SWIFT-dependent channels, and political initiatives to repurpose immobilised Russian assets for Ukraine's reconstruction (a legally and politically contested development under active debate). These outputs extend the sanctions' reach into long-term strategic considerations (reconstruction finance, industrial policy and supply-chain resilience). They also generate legal and normative debates about the limits of EU competence and the safeguards required when private assets are used for public reconstruction purposes[94].

From an instrument-output perspective, the EU sanctions programme constitutes a multi-dimensional policy mix whose immediate outputs (restricted trade, frozen assets, targeted isolation) have demonstrable effects on Russia's economic options while producing measurable costs and structural adjustments within the EU itself. The balance of impact depends on continued improvements in anti-circumvention enforcement, international coordination to close third-country loopholes, and credible

[93] Sanctions effectiveness: what lessons three years into the war on Ukraine? – Economics Observatory // Economics Observatory. URL: https://www.economicsobservatory.com/sanctions-effectiveness-what-lessons-three-years-into-the-war-on-ukraine

[94] Brussels floats 'emergency' powers to raise €210bn from Russian assets // Financial Times. URL: https://www.ft.com/content/3c23910f-795c-4151-a47c-db4f0137fb40

medium-term strategies (energy diversification, industrial relocation and financial integrity). Future empirical work should systematically quantify the net fiscal impacts on Russia, map circumvention networks (legal and maritime), and evaluate the long-run strategic outputs of sanctions-driven policies for European resilience.

Financial and Budgetary Assistance. The European Union's financial and budgetary assistance to Ukraine since 2022 has evolved into one of the most substantial external support frameworks ever deployed by the Union for a third country. From the perspective of policy design, this assistance combines macro-financial loans, direct budgetary grants, and EU-backed guarantees within a coordinated architecture that intertwines crisis-management tools with long-term strategic planning. The European Commission, acting both as a policy entrepreneur and as an executive coordinator, has mobilised a series of unprecedented financing instruments that reflect the Union's recognition that Ukraine's macroeconomic stability is inseparable from Europe's broader security environment.

A defining feature of the EU's financial response has been the scale and modality of macro-financial assistance (MFA). In 2022, the EU adopted an "extraordinary MFA" framework delivering €18 billion in concessional loans disbursed in monthly tranches, designed to ensure predictability for the Ukrainian budget under conditions of full-scale war[95]. This approach was further reinforced in 2023 through a €19.5 billion MFA package and subsequently institutionalized through the Ukraine Facility (2024–2027) – a €50 billion multi-year mechanism combining loans, grants, and guarantees[96]. These measures represent a departure from pre-2022 MFA logic: instead of risk-based, conditional, limited lending, Ukraine became the first partner country, for which the EU deployed long-horizon, multi-pillar, reconstruction-integrated financial programming. Parallel to MFA, the EU also launched the Energy Support Fund for Ukraine, backed by EU budget guarantees and contributions from Member States to secure emergency equipment, compensate system disruptions, and stabilize Ukraine's energy infrastructure after systematic Russian attacks.

Another important dimension of the EU's financial assistance is the expansion of guarantee-based instruments. Through the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – both of which operate with direct EU guarantee

[95] Macro Financial Assistance+ for Ukraine // European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/eu-borrower-investor-relations/macro-financial-assistance-ukraine_en

[96] The Ukraine Facility // European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-solidarity-ukraine/eu-assistance-ukraine/ukraine-facility_en

coverage – the Union has supported war-related emergency projects as well as structural investments in energy resilience, municipal reconstruction, critical transport corridors, and private-sector survival[97]. This model allows the EU to multiply its financial impact without expanding budgetary expenditures proportionally, reflecting a shift toward "risk-pooling diplomacy" as a mechanism for projecting stability.

Overall, the EU's financial and budgetary assistance demonstrates a convergence of crisis response and strategic state-building. The Union's shift toward long-term, predictable, and integrated financial frameworks signals recognition that the war has transformed Ukraine from a neighbourhood partner into a frontline state whose stability is foundational for European security architecture[98]. In this sense, EU financial instruments are not only reactive crisis tools, but components of a broader geopolitical strategy aimed at ensuring resilience, sovereignty, and Europeanization of Ukraine in the face of sustained Russian aggression.

Military Support and the European Peace Facility. The military dimension of the European Union's response to the Russian-Ukrainian war has undergone a fundamental transformation since 2022, marking the first time in EU history that the Union has financed the provision of lethal equipment to a state under attack. At the core of this shift stands the European Peace Facility (EPF) – an off-budget instrument established in 2021 to enhance the EU's capacity to support partners in security and defence[99]. With the outbreak of full-scale war, the EPF rapidly evolved into the principal framework for coordinating and co-funding European military assistance to Ukraine, while also acting as a political focal point for aligning Member States' contributions.

The EPF's role is twofold. First, it provides financial reimbursement to Member States for weapons, ammunition, and military equipment delivered to Ukraine. This mechanism reduces the political and fiscal burden on individual states, thereby encouraging sustained bilateral transfers. Second, the EPF serves as a platform for strategic prioritisation, enabling the EU to map critical Ukrainian defence needs and structure collective packages such as air defence components, artillery systems, armoured vehicles, and

[97] EIB provides €100 million to strengthen economic resilience and heating infrastructure in Ukraine // European Investment Bank. 2025. 7 November. URL: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eib-provides-eu100-million-strengthen-economic-resilience-and-heating-infrastructure-ukraine-2025-11-07_en

[98] EU financial assistance to Ukraine: macro-financial assistance, Ukraine Facility, and €90 billion framework // Council of the European Union. 2026. 4 February. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/ukraine-solidarity-financial-support/

[99] Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 establishing a European Peace Facility // Council of the European Union. 2021. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021D0509

demining equipment. Between 2022 and early 2025, cumulative EPF allocations for Ukraine exceeded €6 billion, making it the largest single beneficiary of EU military support in the Union's history[100].

The coordination between EU-level instruments and bilateral channels is further supported by the EU Military Assistance Mission in Support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), launched in late 2022. EUMAM trains tens of thousands of Ukrainian service members in combined arms manoeuvre, mine clearance, medical support, logistics, and specialised capabilities[101]. While the mission does not deliver weaponry itself, it complements EPF-funded equipment transfers by ensuring that donated systems can be operated effectively and integrated into Ukrainian defence structures.

Overall, the EU's military support architecture illustrates a hybrid model: the Union provides the financial and organisational backbone, while Member States deliver the operational substance. This arrangement aligns with both the EU's legal constraints and its strategic ambitions. The EPF has become a powerful political instrument, symbolising the Union's departure from a purely civilian international identity, while remaining anchored in consensus-based decision-making. At the same time, the predominance of bilateral deliveries underscores persistent divergences in national threat perceptions, defence capabilities, and political will among Member States.

Despite these structural limitations, the combined effect of EPF coordination and national contributions has significantly strengthened Ukraine's defence potential. It has also advanced a broader strategic objective: positioning the EU as a credible security actor in its neighbourhood. The evolution of the EPF – alongside debates on long-term ammunition production, joint procurement, and replenishment of Member States' stocks – suggests that the wartime transformation of the EU's defence posture is likely to have enduring consequences for the Union's role in European and global security architectures.

Diplomacy, Justice and International Institutions. The EU's policy mix since 2022 has combined diplomatic activism, support for international criminal justice, and careful positioning on peace negotiations – an integrated approach that seeks accountability, deterrence and a legally grounded pathway toward a just and durable settlement. The most politically charged legal/diplomatic initiative has been the international effort to create a dedicated mechanism to prosecute the crime of aggression

[100] European Peace Facility // Council of the European Union. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-peace-facility/

[101] Ukraine: Council extends the mandate of the EU Military Assistance Mission for two years // Council of the European Union. 2024. 8 November. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/11/08/ukraine-council-extends-the-mandate-of-the-eu-military-assistance-mission-for-two-years/

against Ukraine. Beginning with Ukraine's proposal and the creation of an informal "Core Group" of states, expert workstreams produced draft texts and multilateral endorsements that culminated in decisive steps during 2024–2025: the European Commission and EEAS publicly described progress toward a Special Tribunal and legal foundations were laid through Core Group deliberations; in June 2025 Ukraine and the Council of Europe signed an Agreement establishing a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine. These developments reflect coordinated European backing for a bespoke forum to address the lacuna in effective criminal accountability for aggression[102].

The EU's support for a special tribunal is complementary to ongoing ICC activity rather than a substitute. The International Criminal Court issued high-profile arrest warrants in March 2023 (notably against President Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova for the unlawful deportation and transfer of children), signalling the ICC's active role in investigating alleged core international crimes in the Ukraine situation. The proposed Special Tribunal differs in jurisdictional scope (it is designed to address the crime of aggression specifically) and in its legal basis and practical design – established through an agreement framework (Council of Europe/Ukraine) and designed to draw on evidence from national and international investigations while operating with a tailored statute and prosecutorial mandate. EU institutions have therefore pursued a two-track accountability approach: backing the ICC's work on war crimes and crimes against humanity while mobilising political, legal and financial support for a specialised tribunal to close the gap on aggression[103].

In operational terms, the EU and Member States have mobilised diplomatic, technical and financial resources to support justice mechanisms: legal drafting, evidence preservation, funding modalities and the creation of claims/compensation architecture have been key preparatory strands. At the same time, significant challenges remain. The ICC's jurisdictional reach depends on States Parties' cooperation and faces enforcement limits (arrest and transfer rely on State cooperation); the special-tribunal construct faces questions of universal legitimacy (it depends on broad cross-regional backing to avoid perceptions of victor's justice), financing and the complex interplay

[102] A major step towards holding Russia accountable for its war of aggression against Ukraine // Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/council-europe/major-step-towards-holding-russia-accountable-its-war-aggression-against-ukraine_en

[103] Ситуація в Україні: судді МКС видають ордери на арешт Володимира Володимировича Путіна та Марії Олексіївни Львової-Бєлової. Press Release. 17 March 2023 // The International Criminal Court (ICC). URL: https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and?lang=Ukrainian

with existing international courts and national jurisdictions. European diplomacy has therefore stressed careful legal design (to respect international law and complementarity principles), broad participation, and institutional linkages (e.g., evidence-sharing arrangements) to maximise the tribunal's legitimacy and effectiveness[104].

The combined diplomatic–judicial strategy pursued by the EU and its partners illustrates a broader normative posture: the EU seeks to operationalise the rule of law as a foundational pillar of post-conflict settlement, embedding accountability and reparations into a future political settlement. For scholars and practitioners, three empirical questions are consequential: (1) whether a hybrid/special tribunal can secure broad international participation and practical enforcement; (2) how evidence pipelines (national investigators, Eurojust, mutual legal assistance) will be structured to sustain prosecutions; and (3) how the pursuit of justice and the diplomatic quest for peace will be sequenced to avoid premature bargains that risk impunity[105]. Addressing these requires continuing comparative legal analysis, monitoring of tribunal implementation, and evaluation of diplomatic outcomes against criteria of legality, legitimacy and stability.

Background Policies: Energy, Critical Infrastructure, Cybersecurity and Food Security. The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered a profound reconfiguration of the EU's background policy frameworks – those cross-sectoral domains that traditionally remained outside the core security agenda but became central to European resilience after 2022. Energy security, protection of critical infrastructure, cybersecurity, and food security emerged as interconnected pillars of the EU's crisis governance, directly shaping the Union's strategic posture and long-term policy outputs. While none of these policy areas were originally designed for wartime contingency, the war accelerated structural reforms, exposed systemic vulnerabilities, and catalysed political debates on Europe's strategic autonomy[106].

Energy policy underwent the most dramatic transformation. The EU's pre-war dependency on Russian fossil fuels (particularly natural gas and oil) became an acute strategic liability. In response, the Union adopted

[104] Secretary General welcomes major step towards creating a Special Tribunal for Ukraine // Council of Europe. URL: https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/secretary-general-welcomes-major-step-towards-creating-a-special-tribunal-for-ukraine

[105] A major step towards holding Russia accountable for its war of aggression against Ukraine // Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/council-europe/major-step-towards-holding-russia-accountable-its-war-aggression-against-ukraine_en

[106] *Youngs R.* Energy security and European strategic autonomy after Ukraine // Carnegie Europe. 2023. URL: https://carnegieeurope.eu/2023/03/07/energy-security-and-european-strategic-autonomy-after-ukraine-pub-89227

a dual-track approach: rapid diversification away from Russian energy imports and structural acceleration of the green transition under the REPowerEU framework[107]. Emergency measures included fast-tracked LNG infrastructure, enhanced gas storage obligations, coordinated demand-reduction plans, and joint gas-purchasing mechanisms intended to limit price volatility and increase bargaining power vis-à-vis alternative suppliers[108]. The war effectively reframed energy policy as a security imperative rather than a purely economic or environmental concern. Politically, it stimulated a far broader debate on strategic autonomy, emphasising the necessity of reducing dependence not only on Russian hydrocarbons but also on external suppliers of critical minerals, renewable-technology components, and nuclear fuel. These debates influenced 2023–2025 policy initiatives on clean-tech industrial capacity, critical raw materials strategies, and European energy-system integration.

Intra-European Divergences and State-by-State Portraits: Classifying EU Member States' Positions. A useful way to conceptualize intra-European differences regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war is to classify EU Member States according to their stance on hard sanctions against Russia and the scope of support for Ukraine. Drawing on voting behaviour in the Council of the EU, public statements by political elites, levels of military and financial assistance, and patterns of obstruction or facilitation, three ideal-type categories can be identified:

Hawkish states: countries advocating maximalist sanctions, long-term military assistance to Ukraine, and strategic defeat of Russia (e.g., Poland, the Baltic states, Czechia). The Guardian reports that Eastern European members, including the Baltic states and Poland, have pledged increased military support for Ukraine, illustrating a more hawkish stance[109].

Pragmatic states: actors combining support for Ukraine with concerns about escalation risks, economic costs, and domestic constraints, often favouring incrementalism and compromise (e.g., Germany, France, Italy). According to Reuters, several southern EU states such as Italy and Spain showed reluctance to back an EU military aid plan for Ukraine, highlighting economic and domestic constraints[110].

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[107] REPowerEU Plan // European Commission. 2022. 18 May. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A230%3AFIN

[108] REPowerEU // European Commission URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu_en

[109] Ukraine war briefing: European allies rush to showcase extra support for Kyiv // The Guardian. 2025. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/25/ukraine-war-briefing-european-allies-rush-to-showcase-extra-support-for-kyiv

[110] Italy, Spain not ready to back EU plan to boost Ukraine military aid // Reuters. 2025. 17 March. URL: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italy-spain-not-ready-back-eu-plan-boost-ukraine-military-aid-2025-03-17/

Obstructive states: governments that systematically delay, dilute, or veto EU-level decisions on sanctions, military aid, or enlargement, often instrumentalizing the war for domestic political purposes (most prominently Hungary). AP News notes that Hungary has repeatedly broken ranks with the EU's joint Ukraine statements, reflecting obstructive tendencies within the bloc[111].

While these categories are analytically useful, they are not static: several states, most notably Germany, have moved across them over time.

Poland: The Most Consistent Proponent of Hardline Support. Poland represents the clearest example of a hawkish EU Member State. Since 2014, and especially after February 2022, Warsaw has framed the Russian-Ukrainian war as an existential security threat rooted in historical experience with Russian and Soviet domination. This perception has translated into one of the highest levels of military support for Ukraine relative to GDP, including early transfers of tanks, artillery, and ammunition, as well as sustained political advocacy for Ukraine's EU and NATO integration. Poland has provided military, material, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine equivalent to nearly 5% of its GDP, including tanks, infantry vehicles and combat aircraft, making it one of the most significant contributors relative to economic output[112].

Poland has also emerged as a key logistical hub for Western military assistance and a vocal proponent of tightening sanctions, often criticizing more cautious Western European partners. Across different governments, including after the 2023 change of power, support for Ukraine has remained a rare area of cross-party consensus, reflecting a deeply entrenched strategic culture shaped by geography, historical memory, and threat perception. Poland has also collaborated with other NATO members, such as Norway and Germany, on joint military aid packages designed to help Ukraine replenish ammunition and procure essential defensive equipment[113].

Poland has actively lobbied for Ukraine's integration into Western security structures, with leaders from Poland, Romania, and Lithuania publicly reaffirming support for Ukraine's future NATO membership, illustrating Warsaw's hawkish stance[114].

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[111] The EU shrugs off Hungary's opposition to Ukraine support at a summit. What's Orbán's next move? // AP News. 2025. 20 March. URL: https://apnews.com/article/4428d8e43049d4ac53c392905eea9378

[112] Poland allocates aid to Ukraine equivalent to nearly 5% of its GDP // Ukrinform. 2024. 11 November. URL: https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3925480-poland-allocates-aid-to-ukraine-equivalent-to-nearly-5-of-its-gdp.html

[113] Poland, Norway, Germany jointly support Ukraine // Gov.pl – Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2025. 3 December. URL: https://www.gov.pl/web/diplomacy/poland-norway-germany-jointly-support-ukraine

[114] NATO east flank backs Ukraine membership, Poland, Romania and Lithuania say // Reuters. 2025. 2 June. URL: https://www.reuters.com/world/nato-east-flank-backs-ukraine-membership-poland-romania-lithuania-say-2025-06-02/

Analytical research notes that since 2022, Poland significantly intensified its foreign policy activities in support of Ukraine, including political advocacy within international organisations and intergovernmental initiatives such as EU and NATO forums[115].

Poland's response to the war illustrates a consistent and strategically grounded commitment to Ukraine that goes well beyond ad hoc crisis management. Its policy reflects not only immediate security concerns, but a deeper historical experience and geopolitical outlook that firmly position Warsaw among the most resolute supporters of Ukraine within the European Union and NATO.

Germany: From Strategic Restraint to Conditional Leadership. Germany illustrates a gradual but profound evolution in policy. For decades, Berlin's approach to Russia was shaped by Ostpolitik[116], economic interdependence, and a post-Cold War Bundeswehr doctrine emphasizing restraint and crisis management rather than high-intensity warfare. The Nord Stream projects symbolized this logic, intertwining energy security with political engagement.

The 2022 invasion forced a recalibration encapsulated in the Zeitenwende discourse. Germany increased defence spending, became one of Ukraine's largest financial and military supporters, and approved deliveries of advanced weapons systems, including Leopard tanks[117]. Yet this shift has been uneven and contested domestically. Berlin's policy remains characterized by incrementalism, sensitivity to escalation risks, and ongoing economic trade-offs, particularly in energy-intensive sectors.

Germany thus occupies a pragmatic middle position: more assertive than before, but still cautious compared to Eastern flank states.

France: Strategic Diplomacy and European Autonomy. France's position reflects its long-standing aspiration to shape European strategic autonomy. Paris has provided substantial military assistance to Ukraine while simultaneously emphasizing the need for diplomatic channels and a future European security architecture that includes, but constrains, Russia[118].

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[115] *Zhelikhovskyi S., Tykhonenko I.* Foreign policy initiatives of the Republic of Poland in support of Ukraine in Russian-Ukrainian war // Acta de Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. 2023. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26693/ahpsxxi2023.si.061

[116] *Marco Siddi*. German Foreign Policy towards Russia in the Aftermath of the Ukraine. Crisis: A New Ostpolitik? // Europe-Asia Studies. 2016. P. 665-677. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1173879

[117] *Scholz O.* Policy statement by Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz to the German Bundestag (Zeitenwende speech). 2022. 27 February. URL: https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/policy-statement-by-olaf-scholz-2008378

[118] Macron says new security architecture should give guarantees for Russia // Reuters. 2022. 3 December. URL: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/macron-says-new-security-architecture-should-give-guarantees-russia-2022-12-03/

French leaders have framed the war not only as a matter of solidarity with Ukraine, but also as a test case for Europe's capacity to act independently of the United States. Paris has provided substantial military assistance to Ukraine[119] while simultaneously emphasizing the need to preserve diplomatic channels and envision a future European security architecture. This context has produced a balanced approach: support for sanctions and military aid combined with rhetorical openness to negotiation and strategic ambiguity. France's policy is less driven by immediate threat perception and more by global strategic positioning, consistent with its Gaullist tradition.

Hungary: Obstruction, Veto Politics, and Domestic Instrumentalisation. Hungary stands out as the EU's most consistently obstructive Member State. Since 2022, Budapest has repeatedly delayed or threatened to veto sanctions packages and financial assistance to Ukraine, most prominently blocking a €90 billion EU loan in late 2025 that required unanimous approval from all Member States[120]. In 2024–2025, Hungary's blocking tactics became particularly visible in negotiations over multi-year funding frameworks and security assistance, forcing last-minute compromises and side-payments.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has framed opposition to Ukraine aid as a defence of national sovereignty, economic stability, and "peace", while maintaining close energy ties with Russia. At a March 2025 EU summit; Hungarian Prime Minister V. Orbán opted out of joint conclusions on support for Ukraine, compelling the remainder of EU leaders to adopt the statement without Budapest[121]. The war has thus become an instrument of domestic legitimation and EU bargaining, rather than a foreign policy issue alone.

Political and Historical Determinants of Divergence. These state-by-state variations are rooted in several interlocking factors:

– Geographical proximity to Russia and Ukraine, which heightens threat perception in Central and Eastern Europe.

– Energy dependencies, particularly on Russian gas and nuclear cooperation, shaping economic risk calculations.

– Domestic political configurations, including the strength of populist or illiberal parties and coalition constraints.

[119] Ukraine Support Tracker // Kiel Institute for the World Economy. 2024. URL: https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/

[120] Hungary blocks €90 bn EU loan to Ukraine days before war anniversary // Financial Times. 2026. URL: https://www.ft.com/content/9bb03b35-2bf5-44fb-b02e-0dbbc3b87b7f

[121] EU leaders' summit ends with Orbán vetoing conclusions on Ukraine // Euronews. 2025. URL: https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/03/06/boosting-support-for-ukraine-and-how-to-rearm-europe-on-agenda-as-leaders-gather-in-brusse

– Migration and refugee politics, influencing public opinion and elite discourse.

– Historical memory, especially experiences of Soviet domination or neutrality traditions.

Together, these determinants explain why EU unity has been resilient but fragile: consensus has been achieved, but often at high transactional and political cost.

This analysis underscores that the EU's response to the Russian-Ukrainian war is not monolithic, but the outcome of continuous negotiation among heterogeneous strategic cultures, interests, and identities.

EU Coordination with External Actors: NATO, the United States, the G7, and International Financial Institutions. The European Union's response to the Russian-Ukrainian war has been deeply embedded in a broader architecture of coordination with key international actors. While the EU has developed significant autonomous instruments since 2014, its effectiveness has largely depended on dense inter-institutional alignment with NATO, the United States, the G7, and international financial institutions (IFIs). This coordination has not been frictionless; rather, it has evolved through a combination of synergy, functional overlap, and occasional tension.

Sanctions in Tandem with the G7. Sanctions policy represents the clearest example of EU coordination with like-minded partners, particularly the G7. Since 2022, EU restrictive measures have been closely synchronized with those adopted by the G7, including the oil price cap mechanism and financial restrictions on Russian banks, aimed at maximizing economic impact while minimizing loopholes[122]. Joint decisions on oil price caps, financial restrictions on Russian banks, export controls on dual-use technologies, and listings of individuals and entities illustrate a high degree of policy convergence[123].

At the same time, coordination has revealed structural asymmetries. The EU's reliance on unanimity in the Council has slowed decision-making compared to the United States, while differing exposure to Russian energy and trade has produced internal bargaining. G7 finance ministers formally pledged intensified coordinated economic pressure on Russia, tying sanctions and support frameworks to broader strategic goals shared by EU Member States[124]. Therefore, the G7 format has functioned as a strategic

[122] Russia's war against Ukraine: EU sanctions // Council of the European Union. 2024. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-russia/

[123] EU will not lower Russian oil price cap without G7 backing – sources from EU // Ukrainska Pravda. 2025. 16 June. URL: https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2025/06/16/7517364/

[124] G7 finance ministers vow tougher coordinated measures against Russia // Anadolu Agency. 2025. URL: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/g7-finance-ministers-vow-tougher-coordinated-measures-against-russia/3706072

coordination hub, allowing the EU to embed its sanctions regime within a broader coalition, thereby enhancing credibility, enforcement capacity, and global signalling.

Military Coordination through NATO. In the military domain, coordination between the EU and NATO has intensified significantly, with the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM Ukraine) cooperating closely with NATO's structures, enhancing training for Ukrainian forces[125]. NATO has remained the primary framework for collective defence, deterrence, and operational planning, particularly on the Alliance's eastern flank. EU Member States have channelled the bulk of lethal military assistance to Ukraine through bilateral arrangements coordinated informally within NATO structures and the U.S.-led Ramstein format. NATO and the EU have publicly reaffirmed their joint commitment to supporting Ukraine's defence, as seen during formal meetings of NATO's North Atlantic Council and the EU's Political and Security Committee[126].

According to the EU-NATO progress report, regular exchanges and staff-to-staff cooperation sustain complementarity across military support frameworks and ensure ongoing strategic alignment[127].

The EU's role has been more complementary than substitutive: funding arms deliveries via the European Peace Facility, supporting joint procurement, and providing training missions such as EUMAM Ukraine[128]. This division of labour reflects a pragmatic recognition of NATO's military primacy, while allowing the EU to contribute where it has comparative advantages. However, tensions persist regarding long-term capability development and the balance between NATO dependence and European defence integration.

Financing and Reconstruction: EBRD and the World Bank. Financial support for Ukraine has relied heavily on cooperation with international financial institutions, notably the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank Group[129].

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[125] EU military and defence support to Ukraine // European External Action Service. 2025. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/455458_fr

[126] NATO and the European Union unite for Ukraine at a NAC – PSC meeting // NATO. 2025. 28 May. URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_235693.htm

[127] EU-NATO 10th progress report reaffirms cooperation amid instability and security challenges // Council of the European Union. 2025. 10 June. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/06/10/eu-nato-10th-progress-report-reaffirms-commitment-to-advancing-cooperation-amid-instability-and-security-challenges/

[128] European Peace Facility // Council of the European Union. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-peace-facility/

[129] EBRD's response to the war on Ukraine // European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 2023. URL: https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/war-on-ukraine.html

These institutions have played a central role in stabilizing Ukraine's macroeconomic environment, supporting critical infrastructure, and preparing frameworks for post-war reconstruction. The EBRD has become one of Ukraine's largest institutional investors during the war, committing significant funding for both immediate economic support and longer-term reconstruction, with total deployed finance reaching €7.6 billion by mid-2025[130].

The EU has increasingly aligned its macro-financial assistance and the Ukraine Facility with IFI programs, ensuring conditionality, transparency, and burden-sharing. This coordination has helped mitigate risks of fragmentation and donor competition, while anchoring EU assistance within globally recognized governance standards. At the same time, debates continue over debt sustainability[131], the use of frozen Russian assets, and the balance between grants and loans.

Overall, EU coordination with NATO, the United States, the G7, and IFIs has produced substantial synergistic effects, particularly in sanctions enforcement, military assistance, and financial stabilization. Yet this multi-actor environment has also exposed structural contradictions: differing strategic cultures, legal constraints, and domestic political pressures shape how far coordination can go.

The EU has emerged not as a standalone strategic actor, but as a central node in a networked response to the war – one that amplifies its influence through partnerships, while simultaneously revealing the limits of consensus-based governance in a prolonged high-intensity conflict.

Consequences for EU Internal Politics and Long-Term Transformation. The Russian-Ukrainian war has acted as a structural shock to the European Union, accelerating internal transformations that had previously unfolded incrementally. Beyond its immediate foreign and security policy implications, the conflict has reshaped core domains of EU internal politics, including defence integration, energy and industrial policy, and the dynamics of political contestation within Member States. These changes suggest that war is not merely a temporary crisis, but a catalyst for longer-term institutional and political reconfiguration.

One of the most consequential effects of the war has been the acceleration of European defence integration. Long-standing debates about the EU's role as a security actor gained unprecedented urgency after 2022, leading to concrete institutional and budgetary innovations. Under the

[130] EBRD support for wartime Ukraine hits €7.6 billion as Bank commits new funding at Recovery Conference // European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 2025. URL: https://www.ebrd.com/home/news-and-events/news/2025/ebrd-support-for-wartime-ukraine-hits-7-6-billion-as-bank-commits-new-funding-at-recovery-conference.html

[131] *Becker T., et al.* A blueprint for the reconstruction of Ukraine // CEPR Press. 2002. URL: https://cepr.org/publications/books-and-reports/blueprint-reconstruction-ukraine

auspices of the Council of the European Union, Member States endorsed a significant expansion of common defence instruments, including the reinforcement of the European Defence Fund (EDF), the use of the European Peace Facility (EPF) to finance military assistance to Ukraine, and initiatives aimed at joint procurement and interoperability[132]. The reinforcement of the European Defence Fund reflects the EU's effort to reduce industrial fragmentation and strengthen joint research and development in defence technologies.

Defence spending across the EU has increased markedly, with many Member States committing to or exceeding the NATO benchmark of 2% of GDP[133]. While defence remains a national competence, the war has pushed the EU toward a more coordinated defence-industrial policy, reducing fragmentation and addressing capability gaps exposed by prolonged high-intensity warfare. At the same time, this acceleration has raised questions about democratic oversight, the balance between EU and NATO roles, and the sustainability of defence-driven integration once the immediate security emergency subsides.

Energy policy represents another domain of profound transformation. The abrupt reduction of dependence on Russian fossil fuels forced the EU to implement emergency diversification measures, including LNG imports, accelerated deployment of renewables, and demand-reduction mechanisms[134]. These short-term responses have increasingly merged with a broader rethinking of European industrial policy.

EU energy ministers agreed in late 2025 on a proposal to gradually eliminate Russian gas imports by 2028, extending a strategic commitment to phase out fossil fuel dependency that emerged in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine[135].

Taken together, the internal consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war suggest a dual trajectory for the EU: deeper integration in security, energy, and industrial policy on the one hand, and heightened political contestation and fragmentation risks on the other. Whether the EU's long-term transformation consolidates into a more resilient and cohesive political order will depend on its capacity to institutionalize crisis-driven reforms while managing the distributive and political costs they generate.

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[132] European Defence Fund // European Commission. 2022. URL: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf_en

[133] Defence expenditure of NATO countries (2014–2024) // North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). 2024. URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49198.htm

[134] REPowerEU Plan // European Commission. 2022. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en

[135] EU agrees to gradually end Russian gas imports by January 1, 2028 // Reuters. 2025. 20 October. URL: https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/eu-agrees-gradually-end-russian-gas-imports-by-january-1-2028-2025-10-20/

Evaluating EU policy effectiveness faces significant causal challenges. Recent empirical studies have developed structural models to assess the dynamic causal effects of EU sanctions on energy dependence, showing measurable reductions in EU reliance on Russian crude and gas over time[136]. Establishing direct cause-and-effect relationships between EU measures and developments on the battlefield or within the Russian economy is inherently difficult due to overlapping policy actions by other actors (notably the United States and G7 partners), Russia's adaptive responses, and exogenous global factors.

Several Ukrainian academic investigations combine statistical and expert evaluations to quantify the impact of financial sanctions on Russia's economy and to identify measurement challenges in longitudinal data[137].

Moreover, temporal lags complicate assessment. Sanctions and industrial restrictions often produce delayed effects, while political and military outcomes may only become visible over extended time horizons. Short-term evaluations therefore risk underestimating long-term structural impacts or overstating temporary adaptations. While crisis-driven integration has deepened coordination in energy and industrial policy, it has simultaneously generated distributive tensions among Member States.

These limitations suggest that effectiveness should be understood not as an immediate or linear outcome, but as a process-oriented and comparative assessment, combining quantitative indicators with qualitative judgment. Such an approach allows for a more realistic appraisal of the EU's role as a strategic, economic, and normative actor in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Political Trajectories and Policy Recommendations for 2026–2030. Looking beyond the immediate horizon of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the period 2026–2030 is likely to be decisive for the European Union's strategic posture, internal cohesion, and role in global security governance.

Considering this, several policy priorities and recommendations emerge. First, the EU should strengthen coordination mechanisms, both internally and with key partners. This includes streamlining decision-making on sanctions and military assistance, improving coherence between EU institutions and Member States, and reinforcing links with NATO and G7 frameworks to avoid duplication and strategic gaps[138].

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[136] *Chen D., Yu X., Pardo-Piñashca E.* Dynamic effects of EU economic sanctions on the EU–Russian energy market: Evidence on crude oil and natural gas // Energy Policy. 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2025.114996

[137] *Орел О., Яцківська А. Власенко О.* Економічні санкції ЄС проти Росії та ефективність їх застосування // Society and Security. 2023. № 1 (1). С. 166–174. URL: https://doi.org/10.26642/sas-2023-1(1)-166-174

[138] Joint declaration on EU–NATO cooperation (10 January 2023) // North Atlantic Treaty Organization. 2023. URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_210549.htm

Second, targeted engagement with internally vulnerable Member States is essential. This requires not only conditionality mechanisms, but also proactive political dialogue, economic support, and counter-disinformation strategies aimed at reducing the domestic political incentives for obstruction or veto-based bargaining.

Third, energy resilience remains a cornerstone of strategic autonomy. Continued diversification of supply, investment in infrastructure and renewables, and coordinated industrial policy are critical to insulating EU foreign policy from external coercion. The REPowerEU Plan reframed energy security as a geopolitical priority, linking diversification and renewables to strategic autonomy[139]. Energy security should be treated as an integral component of defence and foreign policy rather than a purely economic issue.

Finally, the EU must invest in the legal and institutional architecture of accountability and reparations. This includes advancing work on the use of frozen Russian assets, supporting international mechanisms for war crimes accountability, and embedding reconstruction efforts within a rules-based framework. Accountability efforts are supported through international mechanisms, including investigations by the International Criminal Court[140]. Such measures reinforce the normative foundations of EU external action and signal long-term commitment to justice and post-war recovery.

Overall, these recommendations underscore that the EU's strategic choices in the second half of the 2020s will shape not only the outcome of the Russian-Ukrainian war, but also the future contours of European security and the resilience of the international order.

Conclusions. This sub-section has examined the evolution and internal dynamics of the European Union's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war from 2014 through 2026, highlighting both the scope of EU engagement and the structural constraints shaping it. Overall, the EU's response can be characterized as broadly consistent in strategic intent, yet uneven in implementation and political cohesion. From the initial post-2014 sanctions regime to the unprecedented measures adopted after the full-scale invasion of 2022, the Union has progressively framed the war as a core challenge to European security rather than a peripheral regional conflict.

At the same time, significant internal cleavages have persisted. Divergences between "hawkish", pragmatic, and obstructive Member States (driven by geography, energy dependence, domestic politics, and historical experience) have periodically constrained the speed and scope of collective

[139] REPowerEU Plan // European Commission. 2022. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en

[140] Situation in Ukraine // International Criminal Court. 2023. URL: https://www.icc-cpi.int/situations/ukraine

action. Scholars argue that post-invasion foreign policy in the EU reflects Member States' role changes and differing preferences over sanctions and military assistance[141]. These fractures did not prevent the adoption of major policy packages, but they did shape their form, often resulting in lowest-common-denominator compromises and complex opt-outs. The requirement of unanimity in key foreign and security policy areas remains a central structural vulnerability.

In terms of policy instruments, several tools have demonstrated relatively high effectiveness. Coordinated sanctions with G7 partners, while imperfect, significantly altered Russia's economic operating environment and constrained access to technology and finance. Military assistance, increasingly channelled through EU-level mechanisms such as the European Peace Facility, marked a qualitative shift in the Union's security role. Humanitarian aid, macro-financial support, and reconstruction commitments reinforced the EU's normative identity and long-term stake in Ukraine's resilience. By contrast, energy policy initially exposed EU vulnerabilities but ultimately became a domain of accelerated adaptation and strategic learning.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the Russian-Ukrainian war has acted as a stress test and catalyst for European security policy. It revealed the limits of consensus-based decision-making under pressure but also demonstrated the EU's capacity for institutional innovation when confronted with systemic threats. For the future of European security policy, the implications are clear: greater emphasis on defence integration, strategic resilience, and coordination with transatlantic partners will be essential, alongside sustained efforts to manage internal divisions. The durability of the EU's geopolitical role will depend less on rhetorical unity than on its ability to translate shared threat perceptions into credible, timely, and sustainable action.

4.3. European Union Humanitarian Assistance to Ukraine (*Iryna Tykhonenko*)

Currently, Ukraine is going through a period of struggle for its independence, sovereignty and restoration of territorial integrity, but is consistently moving towards achieving the goal of European integration. For its part, the European Union has always provided support and assistance to our state, with the humanitarian component being particularly important. After the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in

[141] *Karjalainen T., Siddi M.* From role change to policy change: EU member states and change in EU foreign policy after Russia's invasion of Ukraine // Journal of European Integration. 2025. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2025.2574424

2014, the European Union's humanitarian assistance gradually transformed from a crisis response tool into a comprehensive mechanism of strategic support for Ukraine. Initially, the EU's activities were focused mainly on overcoming the consequences of the humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine and supporting internally displaced persons, however, after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022, the European Union's humanitarian policy towards Ukraine reached an unprecedented scale and became one of the central elements of the EU's foreign and security policy. After all, currently the humanitarian sphere of interaction between Ukraine and the EU is not only a means of overcoming crisis phenomena and supporting the population in wartime, but also a foundation for further cooperation for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine and its future integration into the European community.

The issue of humanitarian diplomacy and humanitarian aid in interstate cooperation is gaining increasing importance in modern scientific discourse. Ukraine's participation since 2014 as a recipient of humanitarian aid from the international community, primarily the European Union, has been noted in a number of works by Ukrainian scholars.

Y. Turchyn, O. Ivasechko, O. Tsebenko[142] and U. Ilnytska[143] consider the principles and mechanisms developed by the EU for providing humanitarian aid, their normative and legal basis, appealing to the Ukrainian case. T. Hemrasymchuk[144] stressed the practical component of providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine from the European Community in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war using a large body of factual material.

Italian scholar F. Rosso[145] focuses on examining the mechanisms for humanitarian assistance to Ukraine that were launched by the EU in 2022.

Chinese scholar Mingjun Ying[146] examines the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) mechanism in the case

[142] *Турчин Я.Б., Івасечко О.Я., Цебенко О.О.* Принципи гуманітарної допомоги Європейського Союзу: імплементація та виклики // Регіональні студії. 2024. № 36. С. 106-111; *Івасечко О.Я., Цебенко О.О., Хівренко Д.Ю.* Провідна роль ЄС у наданні допомоги Україні в умовах повномасштабної агресії Росії // Регіональні студії. 2023. № 34. С. 135-139.

[143] *Ільницька У.В.* Гуманітарні стратегії зовнішньої політики Європейського Союзу: актуалізація у контексті безпекових викликів та загроз // Науковий журнал «ПОЛІТИКУС». 2024. № 4. С. 161-167.

[144] *Герасимчук Т.* Гуманітарний вимір солідарності Європейського Союзу з Україною в повномасштабній російсько-українській війні // Український історичний журнал. 2023. № 6. С. 5-28.

[145] *Rosso F.* The war in Ukraine and the European Union: A watershed moment for humanitarian assistance and protection policies // Osservatorio attività internazionali. 2022. URL: https://www.osorin.it/uploads/model_4/.files/111_item_2.pdf?v=1657024894

[146] *Ying M.* Humanitarian Practices of Regional Organizations in the Russia-Ukraine War: Taking the European Union as an Example // Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences. 2024. Vol. 28. P. 115-125.

of the Russian-Ukrainian war, addressing its positive and negative aspects primarily in the context of certain formulations, such as "neglecting the needs of Russians", which in some places embodies China's official policy.

Given the dynamics of the development of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the active involvement of the EU in providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, the urgency of considering the current state of humanitarian cooperation between Ukraine and the EU should be noted, highlighting the relevant prospects for such interaction.

Humanitarian diplomacy is the activity of states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other actors in international relations, aimed at protecting human life, rights and dignity of the population by providing humanitarian assistance, coordinating actions in crisis situations and promoting humanitarian principles in international politics. In modern international relations, humanitarian diplomacy combines elements of foreign policy, international humanitarian law, crisis management and "soft power". It is especially active during wars, natural disasters, epidemics, humanitarian crises and mass population movements.

The humanitarian policy and diplomacy of the European Union encompass a complex of foreign policy, humanitarian and coordination measures of the European Community aimed at protecting civilians, responding to humanitarian crises, supporting human rights and promoting humanitarian principles in international relations. Therefore, it is a complex mechanism that has an appropriate regulatory framework and implementation tools.

The legal basis for the European Union's humanitarian aid is the provisions of Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Council Regulation No. 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid, and the 2007 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

On 4 March 2022, the Council of the European Union, for the first time in the history of the EU, activated the mechanism of the Temporary Protection Directive in order to reduce the burden on the national asylum systems of the Member States and ensure a unified legal status for citizens of Ukraine who were forced to leave the country as a result of the war. Within the framework of this mechanism, Ukrainian refugees received guaranteed rights to legal residence in the EU, access to the labor market and housing, the opportunity to receive education for their children, as well as the right to receive medical and social assistance.

The European Union's humanitarian policy is implemented through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), which functions as a system for coordinating international assistance in cases of crisis situations, military conflicts, emergencies and natural disasters. The Mechanism includes EU Member States, as well as ten partner countries, including

Ukraine, which officially joined it on 20 April 2023. The UCPM is considered one of the world's largest integrated systems of international support aimed at rapid response and consolidation of resources to assist affected countries. According to Ukrainian researcher U. Ilnytska, Ukraine's participation in this mechanism opens up opportunities for the use of EU instruments in the field of developing the national security, defense and civil protection system, and also contributes to the state's involvement in regional recovery programs, expert assessments of crisis management and the settlement of military-political conflicts[147].

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been delivering emergency assistance to Ukraine from across Europe since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In the largest and longest-running operation in the Mechanism's history, over 88,000 tonnes of life-saving equipment, food and medicine have been sent to Ukraine[148].

Several key institutions play a decisive role in the formation and implementation of the European Union's humanitarian policy. First of all, these are the EU Member States, which are among the world's largest donors of humanitarian aid and, accordingly, have a significant influence on the development of priorities and mechanisms for its provision. The European Commission also plays an important role, determining the main areas of humanitarian activity and coordinating financial support instruments. The European Parliament carries out control and oversight functions in this area, which ensures parliamentary monitoring of the European Commission's activities in implementing humanitarian programs. The operational management of humanitarian missions and civil protection measures is entrusted to the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), an autonomous structure responsible for coordinating EU humanitarian aid.

The institutionalisation of this system began in the 1990s with the creation of the Humanitarian Office ECHO as a specialised service of the European Commission, responsible for organising humanitarian support. In 2004, it was transformed into a Directorate-General, which was given the authority of the central coordinating body for humanitarian aid and civil protection both within the European Union and beyond[149].

The European Union has improved the functioning of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and created the rescEU system to strengthen the

[147] *Ільницька У.В.* Гуманітарні стратегії зовнішньої політики Європейського Союзу: актуалізація у контексті безпекових викликів та загроз… С. 164.
[148] *Івасечко О.Я., Цебенко О.О., Хівренко Д.Ю.* Провідна роль ЄС у наданні допомоги Україні в умовах повномасштабної агресії Росії… С. 138.
[149] *Турчин Я.Б., Івасечко О.Я., Цебенко О.О.* Принципи гуманітарної допомоги Європейського Союзу: імплементація та виклики… С. 109-110.

protection of the population from emergencies and respond to new security risks. Russia's military actions against Ukraine have created a number of risks in Ukraine that the rescEU mechanism helps to address. Within the framework of this mechanism, the EU has ensured the use of medical evacuation services, as well as the mobilization of resources from the rescEU strategic reserves, which include energy equipment, temporary housing, medical supplies and resources for responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats. The relevant reserves are located in various Member States of the European Union and are used for rapid response to crisis situations.

The European Union's humanitarian support to Ukraine is implemented through a set of measures aimed at meeting the basic needs of the war-affected population. The main areas of such assistance are financial support to cover the population's primary expenses, measures to protect civilians, access to medical services, including psychological and psychosocial assistance, as well as temporary and winter housing, food, drinking water, basic necessities, and support for the educational process in emergency situations.

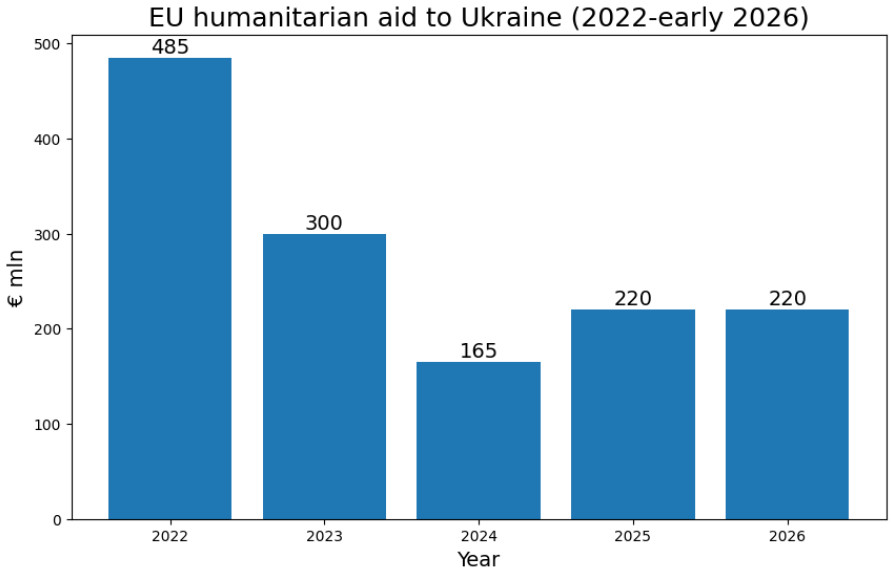
In response to Ukraine's massive emergency equipment needs, the European Union has also mobilised resources from the rescEU strategic reserve. Under this mechanism, Ukraine has been provided with power generators, medical equipment, temporary accommodation modules, water treatment plants following the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station, as well as specialised equipment to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats. Support also includes assistance for Ukrainians who have been granted refugee status in EU Member States and humanitarian demining.

The European Commission estimates that 10.8 million people need humanitarian assistance in 2026, while 3.3 million people are believed to be internally displaced. Therefore, the EU is steadily increasing its humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. EU assistance for 2022–2025 (since 24 February 2022): over €1.4 billion European Commission's humanitarian aid funding; €4.3 billion from the EU and its Member States' humanitarian aid funding.

EU assistance for 2014–2021: €1.7 billion EU emergency and early recovery assistance; €350 million EU Member States' humanitarian aid; €194 million European Commission's humanitarian aid. As of February 2026, more than 157,000 tons of aid have been delivered[150].

[150] European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. Ukraine. European Commission. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. 2026. URL: https://surl.li/iktpwn

Table 4.3.1. Funds allocated by the European Commission for humanitarian assistance to Ukraine (2022–early 2026)[151]



The indicated amounts of assistance are allocated to a number of areas and projects supporting both Ukrainians in Ukraine and those who have left for EU countries, as outlined below.

EU humanitarian aid to Ukraine 2014–2021. Deepening of cooperation took place in 2014 with the signing and gradual entry into force of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU. Since then, Ukraine has received humanitarian assistance in the form of financial support for the most vulnerable segments of the population, as well as in kind through the Civil Protection Mechanism. During 2014–2021, emergency assistance worth €1.7 billion was provided; humanitarian assistance from EU Member States – €350 million; humanitarian assistance from the European Commission – €194 million[152].

In particular, in 2014–2015, EU humanitarian aid was primarily aimed at overcoming the consequences of hostilities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In 2014, the European Commission allocated more than

[151] European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-solidarity-ukraine/eu-assistance-ukraine/eu-humanitarian-support-ukraine_en

[152] *Герасимчук Т.* Гуманітарний вимір солідарності Європейського Союзу з Україною в повномасштабній російсько-українській війні // Український історичний журнал. 2023. № 6. С. 17-18.

€32 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine. The funds were directed to providing the population with food, medicines, hygiene products, temporary housing and psychological support. At the same time, the EU financed the activities of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN World Food Program[153].

In 2015, the scale of the humanitarian crisis in the east of Ukraine increased significantly. According to the UN, the number of internally displaced persons exceeded 1.5 million people. In response, the European Commission increased funding for humanitarian programs. EU humanitarian assistance to Ukraine (2014–2018) amounted to €118.4 million under DG ECHO programs[154]. A significant part of the resources was directed to ensuring water supply and the functioning of critical infrastructure in the frontline areas of Donbas.

In 2016–2018, the EU humanitarian policy towards Ukraine became more structured. DG ECHO allocated tens of millions of euros annually to support the population of eastern Ukraine in the above-mentioned areas, but also taking into account mine safety issues. During this period, the EU started funding humanitarian demining programmes in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council and the HALO Trust.

The EU has stepped up its support for civilians along the contact line, particularly in 2018. EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid Christos Stylianides stated that the conflict in eastern Ukraine remains one of the most under-recognized humanitarian crises in the world[155]. In 2021, the European Commission allocated an additional €25 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine[156].

The rapid development of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022 significantly reformatted and intensified the activities of the EU, already taking into account the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Generators, medical equipment, firefighting equipment, mobile hospitals, ambulances, transformers and water purification systems began to arrive in Ukraine through the rescEU system and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

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[153] DG ECHO Annual Report 2014 // European Commission. URL: https://surl.lu/xctyiw

[154] Evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian assistance in Ukraine 2014-2018. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations // European Commision. URL: https://surl.li/dgbewm

[155] *Stylianides C.* Ukraine crisis needs a political solution to reinforce EU aid efforts // The Guardian. 2015. URL: https://surl.lt/vwqgdm

[156] Ukraine: EU allocates €25.4 million in humanitarian aid // European Commission. 2021. 31 May. URL: https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/latest-news/ukraine-eu-allocates-e25-4-million-in-humanitarian-aid/

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated in 2022 that "Ukraine is part of our European family", and supporting Ukraine is "our moral duty"[157]. European Council President Charles Michel emphasized that supporting Ukraine is "an investment in the security of Europe"[158].

In the sphere of humanitarian assistance, competence is shared between the European Union and its Member States, while the EU primarily performs a coordinating and supportive function with regard to contributions of in-kind assistance. Within the framework of humanitarian programmes supporting civilians affected by the war in Ukraine, the European Union allocated more than €1.3 billion, of which approximately €1.2 billion had been disbursed by the end of 2025. At the same time, EU Member States collectively provided nearly €3 billion in additional humanitarian assistance to Ukraine[159].

Assistance to Ukrainians residing in EU Member States and internally displaced persons within the territory of Ukraine since 2022. Up to $18 billion from the EU budget to support Ukrainian refugees who have fled to EU Member States since February 2022. At the end of March 2026, the EU countries hosting the highest number of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine were Germany (1,274,955 people; 29.4% of the EU total), Poland (961,405; 22.2%) and Czechia (379,820; 8.8%). The number of people under temporary protection relative to the EU population was 9.6 per 1,000 people at the end of March 2026. Among the EU countries, the highest ratios were observed in Czechia (34.8 per 1,000 people), ahead of Poland (26.3) and Slovakia (26.2). Poland played a particularly important role in the humanitarian response. It became the main logistical center for delivering aid to Ukraine. According to Eurostat, in 2025 – early 2026, about 970,000 Ukrainian citizens were under temporary protection in Poland. In total, as of 28 February 2026, more than 4.40 million Ukrainian citizens, to whom Directive 2001/55/EC applied, received temporary protection in the EU countries[160].

At the same time, in a number of EU countries in 2025–2026, discussions intensified on the scale of support for Ukrainian refugees and financing of humanitarian programs for Ukraine. In particular, the Irish government announced the gradual winding down of the Accommodation

[157] Statement by President von der Leyen with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy at the occasion of the President's visit to Kyiv. Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood // European Commission. 2022. 8 April. URL: https://surl.li/hxmodl

[158] Charles Michel: EU enlargement investment in stability and security // Georgian Public Broadcast. 2023. 10 November. URL: https://surl.li/xxjowi

[159] Current and future EU support to Ukraine. BRIEFING Requested by the BUDG Committee // European Parliament. 2026. URL: https://surl.li/egnxea

[160] Temporary protection for persons fleeing Ukraine – monthly statistics // Eurostat. 2026. 4 May. URL: https://surl.li/vkyupl

Recognition Payment program and the reduction of compensation for the placement of Ukrainians from €600 to €400 per month[161]. In some Central European countries, political forces have increasingly advocated for a review of the volume of social support for Ukrainian refugees. At the same time, even supporters of limiting social programs generally recognized the need to continue humanitarian assistance to the civilian population of Ukraine.

Support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure. In 2022–2023, a separate area of EU humanitarian policy was support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure after massive Russian attacks. The European Commission stated that in 2023 alone, the EU had supplied Ukraine with over 5,000 generators. Germany, France and Denmark played a particularly active role in supporting Ukraine's energy sector. Since 2022, the UCPM has coordinated the delivery of millions of energy-related items to Ukraine, including 10,339 power generators, 7,201 transformers, 6 autotransformers, thousands of electrical components, and millions of energy-efficient LED units. Overall, the energy assistance channelled via the UCPM is estimated to provide electricity for over 9 million people in Ukraine[162].

On 23 November 2022, the European Parliament and Eurocities (a network of over 200 of Europe's largest cities) launched the "Generators of Hope" campaign to send electricity generators and transformers to Ukraine. On 26 January 2023, the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, J. Lenarčič, and the Prime Minister of Poland, M. Morawiecki, opened a new rescEU energy hub in Poland, which has become a logistics center for delivering emergency energy assistance to our country. Another EU initiative for humanitarian support to Ukraine in the energy sector, supported by the European Innovation Fund and one of the world's largest energy companies, the Italian Enel SpA, was the provision of 5,700 solar panels to Ukraine, which will provide electricity to schools, hospitals, and fire departments[163].

Humanitarian assistance to the population in emergency situations, as well as water supply. In the context of Russia's war crimes and ecocide on the territory of Ukraine, it is worth focusing on the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station in June 2023. After this event, the humanitarian situation in Kherson, Mykolaiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions deteriorated significantly. The European Union promptly activated the Civil

[161] Ireland gradually phases out housing payments for Ukrainian refugees // UNN. 2026. 26 March. URL: https://surl.li/kvuzkv

[162] EU announces €153 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine and Moldova // Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. 2026. URL: https://surl.li/hbusbw

[163] *Герасимчук Т.* Гуманітарний вимір солідарності Європейського Союзу з Україною в повномасштабній російсько-українській війні… С. 19.

Protection Mechanism and sent mobile water purification systems, drinking water tanks, pumps and sanitary equipment.

To assist Ukraine in overcoming the consequences of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station explosion, 16 European countries joined the response. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Poland, Finland, France, the Czech Republic and Sweden, using the EU Central Emergency Response Mechanism, provided residents of the affected areas with water tanks, water pumps, boats, rescue equipment, generators and other necessary assistance. The EU has mobilized an additional €500,000 to support these humanitarian operations. The European Commission has also decided to supply Ukraine with three mobile water treatment plants[164].

In addition, following the breach of the Nova Kakhovka dam, the EU has provided Ukraine with 500 power generators from its rescEU stockpile located in Poland. The total cost of the equipment is €16 million. The generators are intended to restore critical infrastructure, primarily water pumping and sewage stations in the affected areas of southern Ukraine[165].

In the context of water supply, support for Mykolaiv, which has been without quality drinking water for a long time, is of particular importance. Denmark played an important role in supporting the Mykolaiv region. The Danish government and municipalities financed the modernization of water infrastructure, the repair of pumping stations, and the purchase of water purification equipment. Some of the projects were implemented jointly with the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF.

After the destruction of the Dnieper water supply system to Mykolaiv, Denmark financed the installation of reverse osmosis systems and pumping equipment from the company Grundfos to provide the population with drinking water. The project was implemented with the participation of the Danish Red Cross and local utilities.

On 12 September 2025, during the official visit of Denmark's Minister of Foreign Affairs to Kyiv, the Danish government initiated the Ukraine Transition Programme (UTP), a large-scale national assistance initiative amounting to €375 million for the period 2025–2028. The programme integrates Denmark's activities in the areas of reconstruction, democratic transformation, and institutional reform into a comprehensive framework based on three principal priorities: enhancing societal

[164] Ukraine: EU mobilises emergency stockpiles and provides funding to support crisis response to Nova Kakhovka dam breach // European Commision. 2023. URL: https://surl.li/yipgqb

[165] ЄС надсилає 500 електрогенераторів із запасів rescEU у відповідь на прорив греблі в Новій Каховці // Представництво ЄС в Україні. 2023. URL: https://eu4ukraine.eu/500-power-generators-from-resceu-ua/

resilience, supporting energy security and the green transition, and facilitating reforms aimed at Ukraine's integration into the European Union. A distinctive feature of the programme is its pronounced regional orientation, as approximately 60% of the allocated funding is designated for projects in Mykolaiv Oblast, while the remaining 40% is intended for implementation in other regions of Ukraine[166].

In addition to emergency assistance, Denmark is involved in the long-term modernization of Ukraine's water sector. Within the framework of the strategic partnership between Ukraine and Denmark, programs are being implemented to modernize water supply systems, treat wastewater, and reduce water losses. The Danish Environmental Agency cooperates with Ukrainian institutions in the field of harmonization of water legislation with EU standards and modernization of municipal infrastructure.

Denmark is financing the reconstruction of water pipelines, modernization of treatment plants and emergency restoration of water supply systems. In 2025, Denmark allocated more than €26 million for the restoration of energy, transport and water infrastructure in the Mykolaiv region. Part of the funds is directed to the modernization of water supply in Domanivka and other communities in the region.

Another important area is the modernization of water treatment systems. Denmark supports the creation of modern treatment facilities in Mykolaiv, in particular with the use of membrane water treatment technologies. A €3.6 million grant from Impact Fund Denmark is funding the reconstruction of the 8.8-km underground Pervomaisk main water supply pipeline, with completion scheduled for late 2026. Up to 40 million Danish kroner (approx. €5.36 million) is allocated through Danida Sustainable Infrastructure Finance (DSIF) to rebuild the water supply system in the Korabelnyi district of Mykolaiv, aimed at reducing water losses[167].

In addition, Denmark supports the reconstruction of water supply systems in Bucha and other deoccupied cities. In 2025, with the support of Denmark and the Grundfos Foundation, almost 26 million Danish kroner was allocated to restore water supply in the Bucha district, where pumping stations and wells were damaged as a result of hostilities.

Humanitarian demining has become a significant area of EU humanitarian aid. According to the European Commission, the EU Member States and European Free Trade Association partners have mobilized around €380 million for humanitarian demining in Ukraine, of which €80 million was directly financed from the EU budget. The funding was used to

[166] Regional Cooperation and Recovery // Embassy of Ukraine in the Kingdom of Denmark. URL: https://surli.cc/zhanwj

[167] Pervomaisk in southern Ukraine strengthens reliable water supply with support from EU and Nefco // European Union. 2026. 11 May. URL: https://surl.li/bnkkzb

purchase specialized equipment, robotic demining systems, train sappers and clear agricultural areas. The largest demining programs were implemented in Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Kyiv regions. In Kharkiv region, humanitarian demining was critically important for the restoration of agricultural production and the return of the population to the deoccupied territories[168].

The spheres of education and medicine have become no less important areas of humanitarian support. The EU provided $4.8 billion in humanitarian aid, emergency assistance, budget support and crisis response, as well as $122 million to rebuild Ukrainian schools. Over 154,000 tonnes of in-kind assistance, including medical supplies, mobile hospitals, shelters, school buses, ambulances, and close to 8,900 power generators, with an estimated value of over $1 billion, have been provided via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism by 35 participating countries, coordinated by the EU. The EU has coordinated 4,000 medical evacuations of Ukrainian patients to provide them with specialised healthcare in hospitals across Europe[169].

The EU and its Member States have funded the construction of shelters, the reconstruction of schools and the digitalization of the educational process. The EU has funded digital learning centers and provided 1.5 million textbooks to students. Such projects were implemented particularly actively in Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Odesa regions. Some of the projects were implemented through UNICEF and UNDP.

"School Repairs in Ukraine" project is funded by the European Union through DG ECHO and implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The European Commission and the Government of Ukraine have signed a €100 million support package for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of schooling facilities damaged in Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. Support will reach Ukraine through the EU's humanitarian partners and partly as budget support to the Government of Ukraine. The European Commission has allocated around €14 million from an ongoing contract with the Polish development bank Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego to purchase school buses and bring Ukrainian children safely to school[170].

In November 2022, the European Commission, in cooperation with Olena Zelenska, initiated the solidarity campaign "School Buses for Ukraine". The initiative encouraged governmental institutions, private

[168] EU humanitarian support to Ukraine // European Commision. URL: https://surl.li/yyjajy
[169] EU Assistance to Ukraine // European Union. 2025. URL: https://surl.li/nvsgjm
[170] EU and Ukraine sign €100 million for the rehabilitation of war-damaged schools // European Commission. 2022. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7708

companies, municipalities, and other organizations across the EU and partner countries to contribute buses needed to ensure the safe transportation of Ukrainian children to educational institutions. During her visit to Kyiv on 4 November, 2023, Ursula von der Leyen, together with Olena Zelenska, participated in the official transfer ceremony of buses provided within the framework of the "School Buses for Ukraine" campaign. As part of the initiative, Ukrainian communities received more than 370 school buses. Of this number, 100 buses valued at around €14 million were procured directly by the European Commission, while an additional 271 buses were donated by authorities, municipalities, regional administrations, and transport organizations from 11 EU Member States through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism[171].

The European Union has also been actively supporting the Ukrainian healthcare system. Through rescEU and humanitarian programmes, ventilators, X-ray equipment, mobile hospitals and medicines have been supplied to Ukraine. The European Union has additionally organized a system for the medical evacuation of Ukrainian patients requiring urgent or specialized treatment, ensuring their transfer to healthcare institutions throughout Europe. To support these efforts, in September 2022 the EU established a medical evacuation hub in Rzeszów, which serves as a key coordination center for patient transfers. The EU Medevac Hub provides initial medical assistance and logistical support for patients arriving from Ukraine before they are transported to hospitals in other European states for further treatment. Since the launch of the initiative, over 5,000 Ukrainian patients have been evacuated and admitted for care in 22 European countries[172].

Transition to long-term recovery in Ukraine. In January 2025, the European Commission announced a new humanitarian aid package of €148 million, of which €140 million was allocated directly to Ukraine. In January 2026, a further €153 million in emergency humanitarian aid was announced for Ukraine and Moldova, of which €145 million was allocated to support the Ukrainian population. Food security, water supply, health, psychosocial support and housing rehabilitation remained the main priorities[173].

At the same time, EU humanitarian aid is increasingly integrated with the tasks of post-war reconstruction in Ukraine. European programs are gradually moving from an emergency response model to long-term

[171] School buses for Ukraine. Europen Commision. URL: https://surl.li/esceoy
[172] Ukraine. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations // European Commission. URL: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/europe/ukraine_en
[173] EU announces €153 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine and Moldova // EU NEIGHBOURSEAST. 2026. 3 Fabruary. URL: https://surl.li/exsnzl

resilience and reconstruction projects. This is manifested in support for municipal infrastructure, modernization of the energy system, digitalization of public services, and development of local communities.

The European Investment Bank launched the Ukraine Early Recovery Programme following the outbreak of the armed conflict in 2014, with initial assistance directed primarily toward eastern regions of Ukraine. After the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, both the scale and scope of financial support expanded significantly. The programme enables Ukrainian municipalities and local communities to obtain funding for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of vital social infrastructure, including educational institutions, healthcare facilities, housing, heating networks, and water supply systems.

In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and Ukrainian governmental institutions, the European Union and the European Investment Bank have also supported several recovery programmes aimed at restoring critical social infrastructure. These initiatives are intended to address urgent humanitarian and social needs, as well as to provide adequate living conditions for internally displaced persons and the communities hosting them[174].

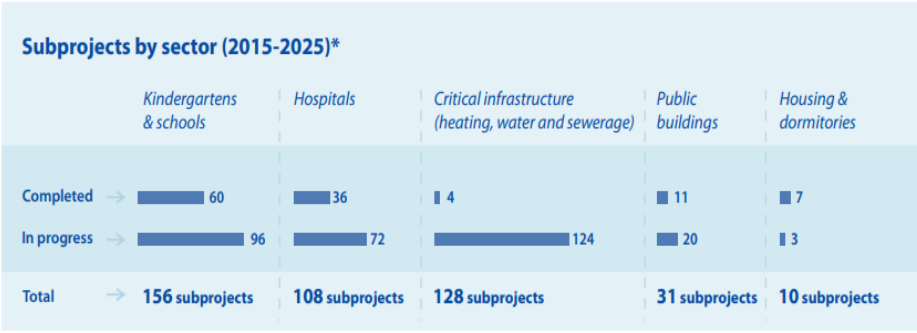
The European Investment Bank (EIB) has been operating in Ukraine since 2007 and significantly expanded its financial engagement following the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Since that time, the Bank has allocated more than €4 billion to support Ukraine's resilience, recovery, and modernization efforts. Through the EU for Ukraine Initiative, as well as its central role in implementing a specialized financing mechanism within the Ukraine Facility, the EIB continues to intensify and accelerate its activities in Ukraine. These efforts are carried out in accordance with the mandate defined by EU leaders and in close coordination with the European Commission, the European Parliament, EU Member States, and other international partners.

By April 2026, the European Investment Bank had allocated approximately €740 million under recovery programmes aimed at supporting Ukraine's reconstruction efforts. These financial resources have been directed toward the restoration of key public services and critical infrastructure in communities throughout the country, including schools, preschool institutions, hospitals, residential housing, heating networks, and water supply systems. The implementation of EIB-supported initiatives has additionally been reinforced through €15 million in grant assistance provided by the European Union. Overall coordination and supervision of the programmes are carried out by the Ministry for Communities and

[174] United for Ukrain's recovery // European Investment Bank. URL: https://surl.lu/hatdan

Territories Development of Ukraine in partnership with the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, whereas local governments and municipal authorities are responsible for administering individual recovery projects at the community level. In particular, in April 2026, with the support of the EU and partners, a rebuilt primary school was opened in the town of Holtomel (Kyiv region)[175].

Table 4.3.2. Ukraine Early Recovery Programme – subprojects by sector (2015-2026)[176]



In 2024, a special instrument was created – the Ukraine Facility, designed for 2024-2027, with a total budget of up to €50 billion. Although this instrument provides not only humanitarian but also macro-financial support and financing for reconstruction, a significant part of the resources is directed to the restoration of critical infrastructure, support for social services and ensuring the livelihoods of the population. In 2024, Ukraine received €4.2 billion in August 2024 and €4.1 billion in December 2024. In 2025, a third payment of €3.5 billion was disbursed in April, followed by a fourth payment of €3.05 billion in August, a fifth payment of €1.8 billion in November, and a sixth payment of €2.3 billion in December. This represents nearly 70% of the Plan's overall available funding for 2024–2027[177].

In 2025–2026, the European Union continued to be a key donor of humanitarian support to Ukraine. At the same time, discussions have intensified in a number of Member States regarding the financial burden

[175] Ukrainian primary school in Hostomel reopens with EU support. Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine. 2026. April 27. URL: https://surl.lu/dnohjd
[176] United for Ukrain's recovery // European Investment Bank. URL: https://www.eib.org/files/documents/united-for-ukraines-recovery-brochure.pdf
[177] Ukraine Facility // European Commission. URL: https://surl.li/wbzbxz

associated with supporting Ukrainian refugees. Despite this, the leading EU institutional bodies have consistently stated their continued support for Ukraine as a strategic priority in the European Union's activities, which was embodied in the statement adopted by the European Council on 19 March 2026 (25 European Union leaders, excluding Hungary and Slovakia). "As we enter the fifth year of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the European Council reaffirms its continued firm and unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The European Union will continue to provide, in coordination with like-minded partners and allies, comprehensive political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people," the statement noted[178].

Conclusions. Based on the above facts, it can be argued that the European Union's humanitarian assistance to Ukraine in the period 2014–early 2026 has become one of the largest-scale and most comprehensive examples of international support in modern European history. The EU has not only provided a rapid response to the humanitarian crisis, but also formed a multi-level support system covering financial, institutional, social and infrastructural aspects. Important achievements have been the effective functioning of civil protection mechanisms, coordination between Member States, support for millions of Ukrainian refugees and the integration of humanitarian assistance with the reconstruction processes of Ukraine.

The prospects for humanitarian cooperation between Ukraine and the EU are directly related to Ukraine's further European integration, the implementation of the Ukraine Facility, and the participation of European states in post-war reconstruction. In the future, humanitarian aid will increasingly evolve into a mechanism for long-term development, restoration of human capital, and ensuring the social stability of the Ukrainian state. That is why the humanitarian dimension of the EU's policy towards Ukraine should be considered not only as a form of crisis response, but also as a strategic instrument for shaping a new architecture of European security and solidarity.

4.4. EU Military Assistance to Ukraine (*Oleksandr Shevchuk*)

The relevance of the topic is determined by fundamental changes in the European security architecture caused by Russian aggression against Ukraine. In the period from 2014 to 2026, the European Union underwent

[178] EU will continue to fully support Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression // Interfax-Ukraine. 2026. 19 March. URL: https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/1152947.html

an unprecedented transformation: from a policy of "strategic restraint" and the provision of predominantly humanitarian assistance to fulfilling the role of a key security actor financing the supply of lethal weapons. The introduction of such mechanisms as the European Peace Facility (EPF) and the Ukraine Assistance Fund (UAF) became a reaction to institutional challenges and the need to transform the economic potential of the European Union into tangible defense capabilities. The study of this evolution is essential for understanding the contemporary mechanisms of military-political integration of Ukraine into the European space.

The transition to long-term strategies, such as the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) and the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) programs, as well as the utilization of revenues from frozen Russian assets, mark a change in the financial and industrial architecture. Special significance is attached to the analysis of the localization of production by leading defense conglomerates (Rheinmetall, Quantum Systems) on the territory of Ukraine and joint developments in the field of high technologies (artificial intelligence, autonomous systems). This testifies to the transformation of Ukraine from a recipient of assistance into a full partner within the European defense-industrial base. Scientific comprehension of these processes is necessary for developing strategies for the further strengthening of national security and accelerating the integration of Ukraine into the defense structures of the European Union in the context of a protracted war.

The purpose and objectives of the work are to analyse the changes in the policy of the European Union regarding the military and financial support of Ukraine for the period from 2014 to 2026; to identify the patterns of transformation of the European Union from a "soft power" into a strategic security actor through the prism of institutionalization of military assistance and integration of defense-industrial complexes of the Member States of the European Union as an important factor in shaping the new role of the European Union in the global security architecture.

Historiography of the problem. Currently, there are numerous scientific works that shed light on the issue of military assistance of the European Union to Ukraine. All the mentioned works by the dates of writing can be divided into two stages: before and during the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war. At the *first stage* (2014–2021), the scientific literature is dominated by the interpretation of the European Union as focused on financial, humanitarian, institutional, and only partially military support of Ukraine[179]. Individual authors emphasize the success of reforms

[179] Military assistance from abroad: who and how helped Ukraine in 2014–2018 // Slovo i Dilo: analytical portal. 2018. May 14. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2018/05/14/infografika/bezpeka/vijskova-dopomoha-kordonu-xto-chym-dopomahav-ukrayini-2014-2018-rokax

in Ukraine, focusing on the financial support of the European Union and the growth of export volumes[180]. They focus attention on the institutional aspect, where the Association Agreement is perceived as a key landmark for the internal transformation of the political and legal system of Ukraine. At the *second stage* (2022–2026), Ukrainian scientists in works of a general nature[181] record the transition of the European Union from a policy of "non-provocation of Putin" (until 2022) to active support of Ukraine. The full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation destroyed previous attempts at dialogue, forcing the European Union to act as a geopolitical player. The role of the European Union in providing assistance to Ukraine, the use of the "European Peace Facility" for financing weapon supplies, which became a new step in the security policy of the Union, is highlighted.

In numerous periodical articles[182], the military support of the European Union through the "European Peace Facility" and the Military Assistance Mission of the European Union (EUMAM), which aims to train the Ukrainian military, is also considered.

Moreover, the stage of 2024–2025 in the scientific discourse is described by researchers as a transition to a long-term strategy. Here, it is worth highlighting the article by V. Mazurok and T. Sydoruk "The Policy of the Collective West Regarding Military Assistance to Ukraine"[183], which characterizes the stages of transformation of military assistance for Ukraine: from symbolic non-lethal assistance to the supply of modern armaments and professional training of personnel. In the conclusions, it is noted that military support for Ukraine has become not only a measure of response to crisis challenges, but also a significant element in building a new Euro-Atlantic security architecture, where Ukraine plays an active role in the transformation of the regional security system.

At the level of scientific and practical conferences, the key areas of military assistance of the European Union to Ukraine during 2023–2025

[180] *Balchos A.* Ukraine–EU: seven years of progress // Information agency "ArmiaInform". 2021. September 16. URL: https://armyinform.com.ua/2021/09/16/ukrayina-yes-sim-rokiv-progresu

[181] *Vidnyanskyi S., Martynov A.* The policy of the European Union regarding the war of Russia against Ukraine. The attitude of European society and famous intellectuals to the war // Russian-Ukrainian war and the international community: monograph. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2023. P. 38–84.

[182] *Ivasechko O.Ya., Tsebenko O.O., Khivrenko D.Yu.* The leading role of the EU in providing assistance to Ukraine in the conditions of the full-scale aggression of Russia // Regional studies. 2023. Vol. 34. P. 135–139. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6170/2023.34.23

[183] *Mazurok V., Sydoruk T.* Policy of Collective West On Military Assistance to Ukraine // Actual Problems of International Relations: collection of scientific works. 2025. Vol. 1, Issue 164. P. 60–68. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17721/apmv.2025.164.1.60-68

are highlighted by L. Vovchuk[184]. She also authored a study on Ukrainian-Danish military cooperation during the period of the Russian-Ukrainian war[185], in which special attention is paid to the transformation of assistance: from the direct supply of equipment to the introduction of an innovative "Danish model" of financing the Ukrainian defense-industrial complex. The author notes a high degree of Denmark's involvement in international coalitions (aviation, artillery, drones), which is confirmed by figures and a list of transferred weapons. A separate category of articles highlights the topic of military assistance to Ukraine provided by such countries as Lithuania[186], Poland[187], Canada[188], and Norway[189].

Thus, at the current stage, the historiography of the problem is focused on the analysis of scientific discourse and testifies to a radical evolution of the role of the European Union: from a provider of "soft power" and a financial donor to a strategic geopolitical player. If in the years 2014–2021 the support was limited to institutional reforms, then after 2022 the focus shifted to lethal assistance through the EPF and the EUMAM mission. Scientists record the transition to long-term strategies, in particular the "Danish model" of investment in the Ukrainian defense-industrial complex. Military assistance transformed from a crisis response

[184] *Vovchuk L.A.* Military Assistance of the EU to Ukraine during 2023–2025 // Materials of scientific and practical conferences of the Black Sea National University named after Petro Mohyla. Series: Economics, International Relations: Olvia Forum – 2025: strategies of the countries of the Black Sea region in the geopolitical space: XXII international scientific conference, June 16–22, 2025, Mykolaiv: conference materials. Mykolaiv: Publishing House of the Black Sea National University named after Petro Mohyla, 2025. P. 39–41.

[185] *Vovchuk L.A.* Ukrainian-Danish Military Cooperation during the Period of the Great Russian-Ukrainian War // Mohyla Readings – 2025: experience and trends in the development of society in Ukraine: global, national and regional aspects. International Relations: XXVIII All-Ukrainian scientific-practical conference, November 10–14, 2025, Mykolaiv: abstracts. Mykolaiv: Publishing House of the Black Sea National University named after Petro Mohyla, 2025. P. 14–17.

[186] *Turianytsya I.A.* Analysis of the key aspects of the international policy of Lithuania regarding the support of Ukraine against the full-scale invasion of Russia in 2022 // Regional Studies. 2023. № 32. P. 146–151. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6170/2023.32.23

[187] *Gubytskyi L.V., Melnyk G.M.* Military Assistance of the Republic of Poland to Ukraine in the Conditions of the Full-Scale Invasion of the Russian Federation // International Relations: Theoretical and Practical Aspects. 2024. Issue 14. P. 123–137. DOI: https://doi.org/10.31866/2616-745X.14.2024.319361

[188] *Sukhobokova O.O.* Canadian Government Military Assistance to Ukraine in the Face of a Full-Scale Russian-Ukrainian War (February 2022 – March 2025) // Problems of World History. 2025. № 2. P. 104–118. DOI: https://doi.org/10.46869/2707-6776-2025-30-6

[189] *Rudko S.* Military Assistance of Norway to Ukraine in 2022–2024: Scale, Mechanisms, and Significance // Acta de historia & politica: saeculum XXI. 2025. № 10. P. 87–98. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26693/ahpsxxi2025.10.087

into the foundation of a new Euro-Atlantic security system, where Ukraine is a key subject.

Initial Stage (2014–2021): "Soft Power" and Non-Lethal Support. Until 2022, military support for Ukraine from the European Union was limited and mostly non-lethal. The main steps included training programs, humanitarian assistance, and the supply of protective equipment, but a real breakthrough occurred only after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in 2022.

The occupation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the subsequent invasion of Donbas caused a new wave of commitments of Western governments, among which the United States, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Union[190] stand out. The reaction of Europe was remembered more as an expression of deep concern regarding the situation in Donbas. But now specific lists of non-lethal assistance from the countries of the European Union have already become known. From France, 1,000 bulletproof vests were sent. Great Britain during 2014–2015 transferred to Ukraine 1,000 bulletproof vests, 2,000 helmets, 1,000 sets of uniforms, 200 GPS navigators, 220 secure laptops, 500 sleeping bags and 90 automotive first aid kits worth almost $2 million, as well as 75,000 tonnes of diesel fuel[191].

In 2014–2021, the European Union provided the largest financial support to Ukraine in the form of grants and loans for financial and humanitarian support. The volume of support of the European Union increased sharply in 2014 after the occupation of Crimea by Russia. In particular, the European Union announced a new large package of financial assistance in the amount of up to €11 billion for Ukraine, which consisted of €1.6 billion in the form of macro-financial assistance loans, €1.4 billion in grants, up to €8 billion in the form of loans from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank and, possibly, another €3.5 billion through the "Neighborhood Investment Fund"[192]. Since then, the total assistance was additionally increased to €17 billion, in particular in the form of loans and including other macro-financial assistance programs[193]. Regarding international technical

[190] *Mills C.* Military assistance to Ukraine 2014–2021. 2022. 04 March. URL: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07135/SN07135.pdf

[191] Military assistance from abroad: who and how helped Ukraine in 2014–2018 // Slovo i Dilo: analytical portal. 2018. 14 May. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2018/05/14/infografika/bezpeka/vijskova-dopomoha-kordonu-xto-chym-dopomahav-ukrayini-2014-2018-rokax

[192] European Commission's support to Ukraine. // European Commission. 2014. 05 March. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_14_219

[193] How the EU has been supporting Ukraine // European Parliament. 2022. 02 February. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20220127STO22047/how-the-eu-is-supporting-ukraine; The European Union and Ukraine // European Commission

assistance, according to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, its volume in 2019 amounted to almost $ 6 billion[194]. Poland joined very quickly, as it understood that it could become the next subject of Russian aggression. In 2014–2015, assistance from Poland amounted to about $ 6.5 million. First of all, these were field rations, mattresses, blankets. Later – necessary spare parts for Soviet-style equipment. Lithuania, like Poland, also began to actively support Ukraine in the autumn of 2014 with medicines and medical equipment. But small Lithuania did not stop there and in 2016 became the first and only one in Europe to start supplying lethal weapons. It was Lithuania that free of charge provided Ukraine with 60 KPVT heavy machine guns and 86 DShKM heavy machine guns, as well as 150 tonnes of ammunition. And already at the end of 2017, Washington approved a decision on the supply of defensive weapons to Ukraine[195].

On 21 January 2022, the Government of Canada proposed to provide the Government of Ukraine with a loan in the amount of €87 million (here and further all assistance is indicated in euros), and on February 14 – another loan obligation in the amount of €362 million[196]. In addition, on January 26, Canada allocated €246 million for urgent support to Ukraine, for military training and capacity building (within the framework of "Operation UNIFIER"), as well as €36 million for development and humanitarian aid[197]. Finally, on February 14, Canada announced the donation to the Armed Forces of Ukraine of lethal weapons and equipment worth €5 million[198]. If these obligations are counted, Canada would take

URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2022-01/20220124-Ukraine_factograph.pdf

[194] Information on international technical assistance provided to Ukraine based on the results of the monitoring of projects conducted by the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine in the first half of 2019. URL: https://me.gov.ua/view/843a0842-ce68-43cf-aad9-7cb36520467f

[195] Military assistance from abroad: who and how helped Ukraine in 2014–2018 // Slovo i Dilo: analytical portal. 2018. May 14. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2018/05/14/infografika/bezpeka/vijskova-dopomoha-kordonu-xto-chym-dopomahav-ukrayini-2014-2018-rokax

[196] Canada pledges additional support for Ukraine // Department of Finance Canada. 2022. 14 February. URL: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2022/02/canada-pledges-additional-support-for-ukraine.html

[197] Canada extends and expands military and other support for the security of Ukraine // National Defence 2022. 26 January. URL: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2022/01/canada-extends-and-expands-military-and-other-support-for-the-security-of-ukraine.html

[198] Canada commits lethal weapons and ammunition in support of Ukraine // National Defence 2022. 14 February. URL: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2022/02/canada-commits-lethal-weapons-and-ammunition-in-support-of-ukraine.html

3rd place among the countries providing the largest bilateral support (instead of 9th) after the invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine. On 18 February, the Government of the Netherlands transferred military equipment, in particular 3000 combat helmets, 2000 ballistic vests, 30 metal detectors, 2 robots for mine detection, 2 radar systems of ground surveillance and 5 radar systems for determining the location of weapons, 100 sniper rifles, as well as 30 ammunition sets[199].

However, it was in 2018 that the support of the European Union became systematic, because it was then that a synchronization of efforts took place between EUAM, the European Commission, and financial assistance programs (such as PRAVO Police). Previous initiatives included various forms of cooperation through the European Defense Agency (EDA), bilateral agreements between Member States, and support from the budget of the European Union for individual strategic projects. But their scale was insufficient to ensure a significant military capability of the Ukrainian army.

After the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in Donbas, the European Union focused on sanctions and financial stabilization of Ukraine. The military aspect was limited to the Advisory Mission (EUAM), which dealt with the reform of the civilian security sector (police, customs), but not the army, and to NATO trust funds. Individual member countries of the European Union made contributions there, but not through the structures of the Union; bilateral assistance was provided by the United States, Great Britain, and Canada, which supplied lethal weapons, while key players of the European Union (Germany, France) until the last moment blocked such supplies, fearing to violate the Minsk agreements.

The main tool for implementing the policy of the European Union in the security sphere in Ukraine became the European Union Advisory Mission Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), created in 2014[200]. The purpose of this mission is to assist relevant state bodies of Ukraine in achieving a sustainable reform of the civilian security sector by providing strategic advice and practical support for reform measures in accordance with European Union standards and international principles of good governance and human rights compliance. The mandate of the European Union Advisory Mission in Ukraine is implemented through three areas of activity: *(1) strategic consultations* regarding the reform of the civilian security sector, in particular, for the development of strategic documents and legislation; *(2) operational support* for the implementation of reforms

[199] The Netherlands intends to supply military goods to Ukraine // Government of the Netherlands. 2022. 19 February. URL: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/563517673/the-netherlands-intends-to-supply-military-goods-to-ukraine

[200] European External Action Service // EU Advisory Mission Ukraine (EUAM). URL: https://www.euam-ukraine.eu

through capacity building, training, and practical support to the civilian security sector; *(3) cooperation and coordination* focused on supporting Ukrainian partners in developing harmonized and effective coordination mechanisms both at the national and international levels[201].

The non-lethal support of the EU in 2014–2021 covered a wide range of measures aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of the state. The EUAM has the task of advising the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the National Police on the development of new security procedures and the introduction of new rules in the system of investigations and law enforcement agencies of Ukraine. The goal is to create an effective police force that will ensure the rule of law and respect human and civil rights[202]. This approach corresponded to the strategic vision of the EU, according to which the effectiveness of state institutions is a key element in ensuring security. An important component of cooperation was material and technical assistance of a non-lethal nature. The EU provided Ukraine with means of communication, transport, medical equipment, personal protective equipment, as well as demining equipment. This assistance contributed to increasing the operational capabilities of Ukrainian security structures without direct involvement in the escalation of the war. In parallel, personnel training programs were implemented, which included training for law enforcement and border guard officers, as well as the introduction of crisis management and strategic planning standards[203]. This contributed to the gradual integration of Ukraine into the European security space. Financial and technical assistance also played an important role in supporting reforms. The EU provided resources through the instruments of the European Neighborhood Policy and institutional building programs that ensured expert support for reforms.

An important legal basis for cooperation was the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, signed in 2014, which consolidated the strategic nature of relations between the parties[204]. The European Union supported sanctions against Russia for its aggression in Donbas and the occupation of the AR of Crimea. In general, from 2014 to March 2021, Ukraine joined 2,323 declarations of the European Union.

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[201] About Us – EUAM Ukraine // EUAM Ukraine. URL: https://www.euam-ukraine.eu/our-mission/about-us/

[202] How the EU Helps Ukraine Reform Police and Justice // EUAM Ukraine. URL: https://www.euam-ukraine.eu/news/opinion/how-the-eu-helps-ukraine-reform-police-and-justice/

[203] European External Action Service // EU Advisory Mission Ukraine (EUAM). URL: https://www.euam-ukraine.eu

[204] Угода про асоціацію між Європейським Союзом та Україною // Офіційний вебсайт Урядового порталу. URL: https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/yevropejska-integraciya/ugoda-pro-asociacyu

The total amount of macroeconomic assistance received by Ukraine in 2014–2020 stood at €4.41 billion[205]. At the same time, EU policy during this period deliberately excluded the possibility of providing lethal military assistance. This was explained by the desire to avoid escalation of the conflict, as well as by institutional limitations of the EU. The absence of instruments such as the EPF, which were created later, also constrained the development of the military component of cooperation[206]. In general, in 2014–2021, the EU provided Ukraine with significant volumes of financial, technical, and expert assistance, which contributed to the strengthening of state institutions and increasing the country's resilience to external threats. At the same time, the impact of this support on direct military capability remained limited.

Thus, for the period from 2014 to 2021, support for Ukraine by the European Union was characterized by strategic restraint and orientation predominantly toward non-lethal means. The main emphasis of EU policy was placed on humanitarian issues, financial stabilization, and the supply of personal protective equipment. Such an approach was caused not only by the desire to avoid escalation of the conflict with the Russian Federation, but also by institutional limitations of the EU itself, which at that time did not provide for the financing of supplies of lethal weapons.

In parallel, a deep reform-oriented transformation of the security sector was taking place in Ukraine. An important role in this process was played by the EUAM mission, which contributed to reforming the civil security system and the gradual integration of Ukraine into the European security space. Since 2018, this assistance acquired a systemic character due to the alignment of financial support with advisory activities. Although the general approach of Brussels remained cautious, several partner countries, such as Lithuania, Poland, Great Britain, and Canada, acted more decisively. It was they who became the initiators of the transfer of the first batches of lethal weapons and essential equipment even before the beginning of the full-scale war. However, even under conditions of significant funding that exceeded €17 billion, the impact of EU support on increasing the combat capability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine was limited. The absence of specialized mechanisms, such as the EPF, at that time did not allow for the effective conversion of economic assistance into a powerful military resource.

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[205] *Balchos A.* Ukraine–EU: seven years of progress // Information Agency «ArmiaInform». 2021. 16 September. URL: https://armyinform.com.ua/2021/09/16/ukrayina-yes-sim-rokiv-progresu

[206] European peace facility – 2021 annual budget for assistance measures // Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. URL: https://fpi.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-03/European%20peace%20facility%20-%202021%20Annual%20budget%20for%20assistance%20measures.pdf

The Great Breakthrough (2022–2023): Creation of the European Peace Facility (EPF). It was precisely the experience of institutional capacity building that allowed the EU to quickly move toward the creation of the EPF in 2021. Although it was initially also planned as an instrument of non-lethal support (medicine, demining), it became the legal framework for the unprecedented provision of military assistance after 24 February 2022. This stage became a historical precedent, as the European Union for the first time in its history began to finance the supply of lethal weapons to a country in a state of war. Although the facility was created in March 2021, its true purpose was revealed after 24 February 2022.

The EPF is not financed from the main EU budget (since EU treaties prohibit the use of budget funds for military purposes). It is funded through direct contributions from Member States in proportion to their GNP. The facility operates as a reimbursement system. EU countries transfer weapons to Ukraine from their warehouses, and the EPF partially reimburses them for the cost of this assistance. The EPF consists of two components: the first component finances common costs of missions and operations within the Common Security and Defence Policy; the second component finances Union actions for third states, regional or international organizations aimed at strengthening military and defense capacity and supporting military aspects of peace support operations. The EPF operates under the direction and guidance of the Facility Committee, which consists of representatives of each EU member state under the chairmanship of a representative of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Following the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, and in view of the mass war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Russian Federation, the Council decided to finance the supply of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine from the EPF. Seven tranches of financial assistance, agreed upon to date, total €4.6 billion. Financial assistance from the EPF includes, among other things, reimbursement of the expenditures of individual Member States for the supply of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine[207].

During 2022–2023, the budget of the facility was repeatedly revised due to the high intensity of hostilities:

As early as 27 February 2022, the EU allocated the first €500 million (€450 million for lethal weapons and €50 million for non-lethal assistance)[208]. At the end of 2022, the EU Council increased the volume of the facility for 2023

[207] The European Peace Facility and support for Ukraine // Home. Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. 2021. 22 March. URL: https://cutt.ly/Hyb6R6yu

[208] *Bilquin B.* Russia's war on Ukraine: The EU's financing of military assistance to Ukraine // Research Service of the European Parliament. 2022. 20 May. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/hr/document/EPRS_ATA(2022)729436

by €2 billion. Subsequently, in June 2023, a further increase in funding by another €3.5 billion took place[209]. Within the framework of the EPF, military assistance of up to €7.979 billion was announced for Kyiv until 2027 – such information was presented by the EU Council on its website on 14 March 2023. The High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, J. Borrell, stated with confidence that "The European Peace Facility has become an integral part of EU support aimed at promoting peace and security throughout the world. Today's decision increases the financial ceiling of the European Peace Facility to over €7.9 billion"[210].

The EPF also became the financial foundation for the creation of the *EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine)*. It conducts training for the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine at the basic and specialized levels in medical assistance, demining, logistics, communications, maintenance, and repair. Its goal is the training of Ukrainian military personnel on the territory of EU countries (in particular, in Poland and Germany). The result was that by the end of 2023, the mission had successfully completed the training of over 30,000 Ukrainian service members in accordance with NATO standards. The training program included mastering complex equipment, such as Leopard 2 tanks and air defense systems. This was reported by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell[211]. This period radically changed the identity of the European Union: the EU shifted from the role of a "soft power" to an active player in the security sphere. A long-standing taboo on the supply of heavy weapons (tanks, artillery, and later – aircraft) was lifted. Despite individual blockages (in particular, by Hungary), the EPF demonstrated Brussels' capability to coordinate military support at the level of the entire continent.

By the end of 2023, total military assistance to Ukraine from the EU was estimated at over €27 billion[212], which was dozens of times higher than the figures of the previous decade.

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[209] *Khimich A.* European Peace Facility on the warpath // Uacrisis.org. 2024. 27 March. URL: https://uacrisis.org/uk/european-peace-facility-on-the-warpath

[210] *Kolomiets A.* The EU has increased the peace facility from which it finances weapons for Ukraine // Dw.com. URL: https://www.dw.com/uk/es-zbilsiv-fond-miru-z-akogo-finansue-zbrou-dla-ukraini/a-64983239

[211] The EU reported how many Ukrainian military personnel will be trained by the end of March // UNIAN Information Agency Website. 2023. March 08. URL: https://www.unian.ua/war/navchannya-viyskovih-za-kordonom-skilki-ukrajinskih-viyskovih-pidgotuyut-u-yes-do-kincya-bereznya-12172116.html

[212] *Dmytriv M.* Battle for Ukraine. Day six hundred and twenty-eighth. World: assistance, sanctions, events // Official website «Ukrinform». 2026. April 15. URL: https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3786464-bitva-za-ukrainu-den-sistsot-dvadcat-vosmij.html

Thus, the period of 2022–2023 became a time of fundamental transformation of the EU from a purely economic union into an active geopolitical player. The creation and deployment of the EPF lifted the long-standing taboo on financing lethal weapons. "The EU Council adopted a decision to increase the financial ceiling of the EPF to €7.979 billion in current prices until 2027, which will allow for the coverage of additional financial needs," states the EU Council declaration published on 14 March 2023[213]. This "great breakthrough" allowed not only for the reimbursement to Member States of the cost of transferred equipment, but also for the launch of the large-scale training mission EUMAM, which ensured the training of tens of thousands of Ukrainian military personnel in accordance with NATO standards.

Thus, the period of 2022–2023 was marked as a critical stage in the formation of the security policy of the European Union, as it was during this time that the systemic use of the EPF for financing military assistance to Ukraine was initiated. For the first time in history, the EU allowed Member States to be reimbursed for expenditures on the supply of lethal weapons to a country involved in a full-scale military conflict. This decision reflected a cardinal departure from the traditional strategy of the European Union, which previously had been limited primarily to the provision of humanitarian and non-lethal assistance. In this context, the EPF proved to be a key mechanism for the institutionalization of military support for Ukraine, and also contributed to strengthening the role of the European Union as an important security actor on the European continent.

The transformation of the EPF during this period symbolized a qualitative breakthrough in the formation of the security identity of the European Union. The establishment of this instrument allowed Brussels to move beyond its traditional image as an economic union and transform into a significant geopolitical player. The renunciation of the long-standing taboo on financing lethal weapons, as well as the launch of the large-scale training mission EUMAM, underscored the EU's capability to quickly adapt its institutional mechanisms to new challenges associated with the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The reimbursement scheme through the EPF contributed not only to an increase in the volume of transfer of modern military equipment to Ukraine by Member States, but also became the basis for a long-term strategy to deter aggression.

Thus, the radical shifts of this period consolidated the EU's status as a guarantor of security on the continent. Military assistance and

[213] *Yuskiv K.* The EU has increased the peace facility for weapon supplies to Ukraine // Korrespondent.net. 2023. March 14. URL: https://ua.korrespondent.net/world/4571169-yes-zbilshyv-fond-na-postachannia-zbroi-ukraini

professional training of personnel became an organic component of the common foreign policy of the EU, aimed at protecting democratic values and norms of international law.

It should be emphasized that the evolution of the approaches of the European Union to supporting Ukraine, from advisory initiatives to the direct provision of strategic defense capabilities, played a crucial role in countering Russian aggression. Moreover, this transformation became one of the defining factors that created the foundation for the further integration of Ukraine into the European security space.

The Transition to a Long-Term Strategy of Support for Ukraine (2024–2025). Throughout 2024–2025, the policy of the European Union regarding military support for Ukraine underwent a qualitative transformation – from short-term crisis decisions to an institutionalized long-term strategy. This transition was driven by the realization of the protracted nature of the war and the need to ensure the resilience of Ukraine's defense capacity. The main element of this transformation was the reform of mechanisms for financing military assistance. Within the framework of the EPF, the creation of a specialized instrument was initiated – the UAF, with an estimated annual budget of approximately €5 billion from 2024 to 2027[214]. The idea is to use the funds to reimburse countries for the joint procurement of military assistance, such as ammunition, drones, and air defense missiles for provision to Ukraine.

An important direction also became the industrialization of defense support through the scaling up of production capacities. In this context, a defining role is played by the ASAP program, aimed at scaling up the production of artillery ammunition within the EU. Its strategic goal is to achieve a production level of over 1 million shells per year, which makes it possible not only to meet the needs of Ukraine but also to strengthen the defense-industrial autonomy of the European Union. Thus, the EU is gradually transitioning from the role of a donor to the role of a producer of security resources.

A separate vector of development is the formation of the so-called "fighter jet coalition" (currently, the coalition includes 14 participants, including Belgium, Great Britain, Canada, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, France, the Czech Republic, and Sweden, and is led by Denmark, the Netherlands, and the USA). The possibility of participation by Finland and Greece is also being considered[215]. The coalition involves

[214] The EU ambassadors approved EUR 5 billion in military assistance for Ukraine within the framework of the Peace Facility // Website of the Interfax-Ukraine News Agency. 2024. March 13. URL: https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/973318.html#:~:text

[215] The Air Force Coalition currently numbers 14 participants // Official website «Ukrinform». 2025. January 23. URL: https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3951797-koalicia-povitranih-sil-narazi-nalicue-14-ucasnikiv.html

preparation for the transfer of modern F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine and the integration of high-precision long-range weapons. A leading role in this process is played by the Netherlands and Denmark. Joe Biden, Mette Frederiksen, and Dick Schoof in a joint statement recalled that Denmark and the Netherlands, with the support of the United States, committed to transferring American-made F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine. "The transfer process for these F-16s is now underway, and Ukraine will be flying operational F-16s this summer. We are unable to provide additional details at this time due to operational security concerns," the statement reads[216]. Denmark and the Netherlands began the transfer of the first aircraft in 2024. The dispatch to Ukraine of the last of the 24 F-16 combat aircraft, which had previously been decommissioned from the Royal Netherlands Air Force, was announced on Sunday, 25 May 2025, by the Minister of Defence of the Netherlands, Ruben Brekelmans, on the air of the WNL op Zondag television program. "The Netherlands will send its last F-16 fighter jet to Ukraine on Monday," he stated[217].

Meanwhile, France, for its part, has become one of the key suppliers of SCALP and Storm Shadow missiles. According to the Minister of the Armed Forces of France, Sébastien Lecornu, the Franco-British SCALP/Storm Shadow missiles, which were transferred to Ukraine, have demonstrated their effectiveness in modern high-intensity warfare and in decisive situations[218]. Additionally, "capability coalitions" were established, covering air defense, artillery, unmanned systems, and information technology. This significantly expanded Ukraine's capabilities to strike strategic targets deep within the enemy's defense. Such an approach increases the efficiency of resource utilization, deepens the specialization of the participants, and reduces the risks of duplication of efforts.

In 2025, European military assistance to Ukraine increased by 67 percent compared to the average figure for the years 2022–2024. At the same time, in 2025, a total of 62 percent of all European military assistance came from the countries of Western Europe, where Germany and Great Britain provided the largest contributions. Northern Europe became the second largest donor group — its share increased from 18 percent in 2022 to 36 percent in 2023 and remained high thereafter[219].

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[216] Fighter jet coalition states F-16s will arrive in Ukraine this summer // European Pravda. 2024. July 10. URL: https://cutt.ly/Cyb6NjRJ

[217] *Saakov V.* The Netherlands are sending to Ukraine the last of the promised F-16s // Dw.com. 2025. May 25. URL: https://cutt.ly/Pyb60yha

[218] *Bovsunovska K.* France announced the resumption of the production of SCALP cruise missiles after a 15-year hiatus // Website of the UNIAN News Agency. 2025. July 10. URL: https://cutt.ly/Lyb60Zqi

[219] *Saakov V.* Europe became the main donor of Ukraine — research // Dw.com. 2026. February 11. URL: https://cutt.ly/ryb69w2H

Consequently, the European Union significantly changed the format of providing military assistance to Ukraine in the years 2024–2025, moving toward a long-term strategy based on institutional strengthening and industrial development. Thanks to the creation of the UAF with an annual budget of €5 billion and the implementation of the ASAP program, the European Union has transformed from a reactive donor into a leading producer of security resources. These measures not only provide the Armed Forces of Ukraine with more than a million pieces of ammunition annually, but also contribute to strengthening the defense capability of the European Union itself. The main achievements were the formation of the "fighter jet coalition" and the transfer of F-16 aircraft to Ukraine, as well as deliveries of SCALP/Storm Shadow missiles and the development of "capability coalitions" in the fields of air defense, information technology, and drones, which significantly increased the country's ability to achieve strategic goals. The 67 percent increase in the volume of assistance in 2025 and the leading role of the countries of Western and Northern Europe confirm that the support of the European Union has become a systemic foundation for the long-term resilience of Ukraine in the conditions of a protracted war.

The Current Stage of European Union Support for Ukraine: Financial Scale and Defense-Industrial Integration (2026). In 2026, the policy of the European Union regarding support for Ukraine acquired a new quality, which is characterized by the simultaneous expansion of financial instruments, the deepening of defense-industrial integration, and the transition to technologically oriented cooperation. This stage reflects the desire of the European Union not only to support Ukraine in the war, but also to integrate it into a common security and industrial space.

The key innovation was the emergence of a new financial architecture. On 11 February 2026, the European Parliament approved a package of proposals aimed at supporting Ukraine with a European Union loan in the amount of €90 billion for the years 2026–2027[220]. Out of the total amount, €30 billion will be directed to macro-financial assistance and state budget support through the *Ukraine Facility* mechanism. Another €60 billion is provided for strengthening the defense capability of Ukraine and purchasing military equipment, which will ensure timely access to critically important defense products, primarily from Ukrainian and European companies, as well as countries of the European Economic Area and the European Free Trade Association. In the absence of certain types of weapons for urgent delivery, targeted exceptions will be applied for

[220] Parliament approves €90 billion Ukraine support loan package // European Parliament. 2026. 11 Feb. URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20260206IPR33903/parliament-approves-EU90-billion-ukraine-support-loan-package

procurement from other countries[221]. An important role in this process is played by the *Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration* (ERA) mechanism, which was initiated by the G7 countries in 2024 and provides for the use of profits from frozen Russian assets to finance weapons procurement. Such an approach is an innovative example of combining sanctions policy with military support instruments, which increases economic pressure on Russia and simultaneously creates additional resources for Ukraine.

On 30 March, the European Commission approved a work program for €1.5 billion within the framework of the EDIP. This instrument provides, in particular, for the integration of the defense industry of Ukraine into the defense-industrial complex of the European Union. The European Commission reports that more than €700 million within the EDIP will be directed towards scaling up the production of key elements of the European Union defense industry. This concerns, in particular, anti-drone systems, missiles, and ammunition – critically important areas for strengthening the defense capability of Europe and Ukraine. Out of this amount, €260 million is provided within the framework of the *Ukraine Support Instrument* (USI). The funds will be spent on the restoration and modernization of the Ukraine Defence Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB). The funding will be directed to joint projects with European partners, which make it possible to increase production capacities in production capacities both in Ukraine and in the European Union countries[222].

The next important element is the deepening of defense-industrial integration. Leading European companies, in particular *Rheinmetall*, have started the process of localizing production on the territory of Ukraine. The German defense concern *Rheinmetall*, jointly with the European company *Destinus*, will increase the production of guided missiles, a part of which is planned to be supplied to Ukraine. At the same time, the drone manufacturer *Quantum Systems* announced the start of production of 10,000 multi-purpose drones for Kyiv. *Rheinmetall* and the company *Destinus*, which is based in the Netherlands, agreed on the establishment of a joint venture, the purpose of which will be the expansion of production of guided missiles and missile systems for Europe, in particular for the needs of Ukraine, the German concern reported. The creation of the company is

[221] The European Parliament approved a 90 billion euro loan to Ukraine for 2026–2027 // European integration portal. URL: https://eu-ua.kmu.gov.ua/news/yevroparlament-shvalyv-90-mlrd-yevro-kredytu-ukrayini-na-2026-2027-roky/

[222] *Hevko A.* Ukraine is being integrated into the EU defense industry: a €1.5 billion program has been approved // FAKTY ICTV. 2026. 30 Mar. URL: https://fakty.com.ua/ua/svit/yevropa/20260330-ukrayinu-integruyut-v-oboronnu-promyslovist-yes-zatverdzheno-programu-na-e15-mlrd/

planned for the second half of 2026[223]. Such localization not only ensures promptness of supply, but also contributes to the development of the national defense-industrial complex of Ukraine.

Special attention is paid to the technological component of cooperation. Within the framework of joint European Union – Ukraine programs, funding for innovative developments is being intensified, particularly in the field of AI and autonomous systems. This refers to the creation of intelligent solutions for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), as well as maritime autonomous platforms, which play an increasingly important role in modern warfare. According to the Minister of Defense of Ukraine M. Fedorov, "the priority is flexible funding, which will allow for the prompt allocation of resources in accordance with the War Plan – in particular, for the production of drones, counter-drone measures, and the development of deep strike"[224].

According to the European Commission, cooperation with the Ukrainian defense industry is deepening and is aimed at its integration into the European industrial base. In particular, within the STRATUS project, provision is made for the development of an artificial intelligence-based cybersecurity system for drone swarms, which involved a Ukrainian subcontractor. The investments will support the goals defined in the EU Defence Readiness Roadmap until 2030 and will provide the necessary funding for four main flagship defense initiatives of the European Union: the European Counter-Drone Initiative, the Eastern Flank, the European Air Shield, and the European Space Shield. In total, €675 million is directed towards 32 defense capability development projects, and another €322 million – towards 25 research projects. The signing of grant agreements is expected by the end of 2026[225]. The integration of Ukraine into European research and grant programs contributes to the acceleration of technological development and increasing the competitiveness of the defense sector.

At the current stage, the European Union demonstrates a transition to a comprehensive model of support for Ukraine, which synchronously

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[223] *Havryshchak R.* European companies are scaling up weapons production for Ukraine // Polska Agencja Prasowa SA. 2026. 14 Apr. URL: https://www.pap.pl/ua/ukrainian/news/evropeyski-kompanii-naroshchuyut-virobnictvo-ozbroennya-dlya-ukraini

[224] *Fedorov:* Ukraine is expanding cooperation with the European Union in the field of the defense-industrial complex and launching joint projects // Official website "Ukrinform". 2026. March 30. URL: https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/4107705-fedorov-ukraina-rozsirue-spivpracu-z-evrosouzom-u-sferi-opk-ta-zapuskae-spilni-proekti.html

[225] *Lysa A.* The EU allocated €1.07 billion for defense projects with the participation of Ukraine // Korespondent.net. 2026. 15 Apr. URL: https://ua.korrespondent.net/world/4871155-yes-vydilyt-107-mlrd-na-oboronni-proiekty-z-uchastui-ukrainy

encompasses financial scale, industrial integration, and technological cooperation.

In 2026, European Union assistance to Ukraine evolved from emergency measures to a strategic defense-industrial partnership. The main elements of this transformation were the creation of a financial platform with a volume of €90 billion, the involvement of profits from frozen assets of the Russian Federation, and the implementation of the EDIP, which lays the foundation for long-term economic and defense resilience. The localization of production capacities of international corporations, such as *Rheinmetall*, as well as joint developments in the fields of AI and autonomous systems, is gradually integrating Ukraine into a single technological space of Europe. In their entirety, these factors testify to the progress of Ukraine towards the European security and defense-industrial space.

The conducted research indicates that in the period of 2014–2026, the military assistance provided by the European Union to Ukraine underwent a significant transformation. This evolution can be traced from limited non-lethal support to the formation of an integrated strategic partnership, which includes financial, military, industrial, and technological aspects. Such a transition reflects not only a change in the European Union's approaches to security policy, but also a general reorientation of the Union towards a more active role in the geopolitical sphere.

At the initial stage (the years 2014–2021), the European Union demonstrated caution in its policy toward Ukraine, focusing primarily on institutional support. The main efforts were directed at reforming the civil security sector, providing financial assistance, and strengthening the state institutions of Ukraine. At the same time, restrictions on financing military supplies and the desire of the European Union to avoid further escalation of the military conflict limited the impact of this support on the actual defense capability of the Ukrainian state.

Decisive changes took place after the start of the full-scale war of the Russian Federation in 2022. The creation of the EPF became a turning point, which for the first time allowed the European Union to finance the supply of lethal weapons. During the years 2022–2023, the Union not only significantly increased the volume of military assistance to Ukraine, but also introduced effective mechanisms for coordination between Member States.

The launch of a joint training mission for the Ukrainian military and the lifting of political restrictions on the supply of heavy weapons became a signal of the formation of a new security identity of the European Union.

The period of 2024–2025 was marked by a transition from emergency deliveries from warehouses to strategic production planning. The implementation of the ASAP and EDIP programs demonstrated the desire of the European Union not only to support the Armed Forces of

Ukraine "here and now", but also to scale up the European defense-industrial complex. The formation of "capability coalitions" (aviation, artillery, IT) allowed for the structuring of assistance according to a functional principle, increasing its efficiency and ensuring a technological advantage on the battlefield. Since then, new financial instruments have been created, the production capacities of the European defense industry have been significantly expanded, and multilateral formats of cooperation, in particular capability coalitions, have been introduced. These measures contributed to a more effective use of resources and the strengthening of the defense potential of both Ukraine and the European Union.

As of 2026, cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union has acquired a systemic and comprehensive nature. It encompasses large-scale financial programs; the integration of the defense-industrial complex, the localization of production by leading concerns (such as *Rheinmetall* and *Quantum Systems*), and joint developments in the field of AI and autonomous systems testify to the actual integration of the Ukrainian defense-industrial complex into the structure of the European Union even prior to formal accession to the European Union. The new financial architecture and the use of revenues from frozen assets of the Russian Federation (the ERA mechanism) create a stable model of defense financing that minimizes political risks. The localization of the production of defense technologies and the development of innovative sectors, such as AI and autonomous systems, continue to expand.

Thus, the military assistance of the European Union has become a significant factor in increasing the defense capability of Ukraine and, at the same time, a catalyst for the transformation of the European Union itself as a security actor. This assistance not only played an important role in countering the Russian Federation, but also contributed to the formation of a new security architecture in Europe. In the long term, further integration of Ukraine into the European security and defense system will be of decisive importance for stability in the region and the strengthening of the pan-European system of collective security.

In conclusion, European Union assistance over the period of 2014–2026 evolved from symbolic support to the foundation of a new Euro-Atlantic security system. Ukraine currently acts not merely as a protective buffer, but as an active subject whose military and technological experience is becoming an integral part of the common defense strategy of the European Union.

Based on current trends and recent decisions in Brussels (in particular, regarding the allocation of €90 billion for the years 2026–2027), the following practical recommendations can be outlined.

The development priorities of the defense sector of Ukraine in the context of European integration are of strategic importance both for the state itself and for pan-European security. The primary goal is to transform the defense industry of Ukraine into a transparent and stable space that can become attractive for European investors, as well as ensure competitiveness on the global market. The list of key tasks for Ukraine includes the following strategic areas:

1. *Legal and regulatory harmonization*. The involvement of Ukraine in the European defense market requires bringing national legislation in the field of defense procurement into full compliance with the directives of the European Union. This will open access for Ukrainian private companies to the programs of the European Defence Fund (EDF), contributing to the elimination of bureaucratic obstacles. Such an approach will allow Ukrainian startups to receive European Union grants on equal terms, creating the basis for a technological breakthrough.

2. *Protection of intellectual property rights*. For successful cooperation with global defense corporations, such as *Rheinmetall*, *Leonardo*, or KNDS, it is critically necessary to implement effective mechanisms for the protection of intellectual property rights. This provides for the creation of legal guarantees regarding the fair distribution of rights to innovative developments initiated within the framework of joint production, as well as the protection of commercial confidentiality of international partners.

3. *Development of a national certification system*. The creation of a network of certification centers for weapons and military equipment based on STANAG standards will significantly simplify the process of quality confirmation for products of Ukrainian manufacturers. This will allow the acceleration of the export of the latest technologies in the field of unmanned systems and electronic warfare (EW) to European Union countries.

On the part of the European Union, the priority tasks are to consolidate Ukraine within the architecture of pan-European security through stable strategic decisions:

1. *Strategic budgeting within the framework of the Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union (MFF 2028–2034)*. Financial support to Ukraine must transition from emergency tranches to regular budget funding. The integration of the "Ukraine Fund" into the MFF (*Multiannual Financial Framework*) as a permanent element will ensure the predictability and stability of funding for defense programs and reduce dependence on political changes in Member States.

2. *Expanding Ukraine's participation in PESCO structured cooperation*. Granting the country the status of an associated member with inclusion in technical working groups will contribute to the integration of

the combat experience of Ukrainian specialists into the development of new military standards for Europe, which will potentially increase the efficiency of newly created defense technologies.

3. *Financial guarantees to stimulate defense production*. The European Union should consider the possibility of introducing mechanisms for providing state guarantees for commercial banks of Member States. This will help reduce the credit risks of financing new industrial projects on the territory of Ukraine, contributing to the transformation of the country into an important production centre of the European Union defense industry. The implementation of these measures will change the role of Ukraine from a recipient of humanitarian aid to a subject of technological and political processes of the European defense market. Such a development of events will not only strengthen state sovereignty through scientific and technological leadership, but will also create fundamental prerequisites for its membership.

In conclusion, the implementation of these recommendations will allow Ukraine to go beyond the role of a "recipient of aid" and become a subject of the European defense market. This will strengthen the sovereignty of the state through technological leadership and create irreversible conditions for full membership in the European Union.

4.5. EU Sanctions against the Russian Federation as an Instrument for Addressing the Russian-Ukrainian War (*Liudmyla Vovchuk*)

Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine has underscored the need to identify effective international legal, political, and economic mechanisms to deter the aggressor and facilitate the achievement of a just and lasting peace. One of the European Union's principal responses has been its sanctions policy, aimed at restricting Russia's financial, technological, energy, and military-industrial capabilities while increasing the international isolation of the aggressor state. Sanctions not only raise the economic cost of continuing the war for the Kremlin but also constitute an important component of the EU's comprehensive strategy, combining political, diplomatic, military, and humanitarian dimensions of support for Ukraine. At the same time, the protracted nature of the war, the adaptation of the Russian economy to sanctions, attempts to circumvent restrictive measures through third countries, and the need to preserve the unity of the EU Member States necessitate a scholarly assessment of the effectiveness of sanctions as an instrument for the settlement of the Russia–Ukraine war and the identification of prospects for their further improvement.

The issue of the European Union's sanctions policy toward the Russian Federation following the onset of Russian aggression against

Ukraine in 2014, and particularly after the full-scale invasion in 2022, has received considerable attention in both Ukrainian and international academic literature. Existing studies examine the legal foundations of sanctions, the mechanisms of their implementation, their impact on the Russian economy, European security, and the EU's foreign policy, as well as the effectiveness of sanctions as an instrument for compelling the aggressor state to cease its war. At the same time, most contemporary studies emphasize that sanctions should not be regarded as a self-sufficient means of ending the war, but rather as an integral component of the EU's comprehensive policy, combining diplomatic pressure, military assistance to Ukraine, and the international isolation of Russia.

Among Ukrainian scholars, particular attention should be paid to the collective monograph Economic Sanctions in the Contemporary World Economy by O. Shnyrkov, A. Filipenko, R. Zablotska, and others[226], as well as the scholarly works of M. Kapitonenko[227], L. Vovchuk and M. Dmytriuk[228], A. Atamanenko[229], and the analytical study by A. Khymkuch, R. Steblivskyi, and A. Pashkina[230].

Among international scholars, the most significant contributions include the research of Francesco Giumelli[231], who has developed contemporary approaches to assessing the effectiveness of international sanctions; Matěj Bělín and Jan Hanousek[232], who conducted an econometric analysis of reciprocal sanctions between the EU and the Russian Federation; Angela Pacholczak[233], whose research focuses on the effectiveness of the EU's financial sanctions against Russia; and Teemu

[226] Економічні санкції у сучасному світовому господарстві: монографія / О.*І. Шнирков, А.С. Філіпенко, Р.О. Заблоцька* та ін.; за ред. *О.І. Шниркова*. К.: ВПЦ «Київський університет», 2019. 279 с.

[227] *Капітоненко М.* Антиросійські санкції: інструмент впливу чи демонстрація безсилля? // Міжнародний центр перспективних досліджень. 2018. URL: https://bitly.ws/34A4M

[228] *Вовчук Л., Дмитрюк М.* Роль Європейського Союзу у формуванні нової архітектури європейської безпеки // Старожитності Лукомор'я. 2026. № 2 (35). С. 199-210. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33782/2708-4116.2026.2.445

[229] *Атаманенко А., Піддубний В.* Вплив російсько-української війни на енергетичну безпеку ЄС // Acta de Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI. 2023. Special Issue. С. 35-47.

[230] *Химкуч А., Стеблівський Р., Пашкіна А.* Санкційна політика проти Росії 2014-2022 рр.: прогалини і схеми обходу. Київ, 2022. 29 с.

[231] *Giumelli F.A.* Comprehensive Approach to Sanctions Effectiveness: Lessons Learned from Sanctions on Russia // European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research. 2024. Vol. 30. P. 211–228. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-024-09585-x

[232] *Bělín M., Hanousek J.* Which Sanctions Matter? Analysis of the EU/Russian Sanctions of 2014 // Journal of Comparative Economics. 2021. Vol. 49 (1). P. 244–257. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2020.07.001

[233] *Pacholczak A.* Critical Analysis of the Effectiveness of EU Financial Sanctions against the Russian Federation // Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego. 2024. № 30. P. 353–383.

Makkonen and Timo Mitze[234], who analyse the impact of sanctions on scientific and technological cooperation between the European Union and the Russian Federation.

Russia's occupation of the Crimean Peninsula and parts of eastern Ukraine (the Luhansk and Donetsk regions) in 2014 provoked a strong response from the international community. As a consequence, the United States, the Member States of the European Union, and other democratic countries responded to the actions of the Russian Federation by imposing individual and economic sanctions. The initial response of the EU Member States was their refusal to participate in the G8 Summit scheduled to take place in Sochi. On 3 March 2014, at an extraordinary meeting of the Council of the European Union, the EU Member States and the G8 countries agreed on this course of action while also committing themselves to work swiftly on the adoption of restrictive measures concerning the freezing and recovery of assets of persons identified as responsible for the misappropriation of Ukrainian state funds[235]. On 17 March 2014, the first package of individual sanctions was adopted against 21 Russian and Ukrainian officials for actions undermining the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine[236].

On 20 March 2014, following the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the European Union added a further 12 Russian and Crimean officials to the sanctions list, imposing travel bans and asset freezes on them. In addition, the European Council cancelled the planned EU–Russia Summit and stated that the Member States would no longer hold regular bilateral summits with Russia. EU leaders also requested that the European Commission prepare broader economic and trade sanctions that could be imposed should Russia continue to destabilise Ukraine[237].

On 23 June 2014, in response to the non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea, the Council of the European Union adopted a decision prohibiting the import of goods originating in Crimea or Sevastopol[238]. On 26 June of the same year, EU leaders outlined four

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[234] *Makkonen T., Mitze T.* Geopolitical Conflicts, Sanctions and International Knowledge Flows: EU–Russia Collaboration during the Ukraine Crisis // The World Economy. 2023. Vol. 46. P. 2926–2949. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.1342

[235] Санкції: хто більше і хто ефективніше? Порівняльний аналіз змісту та обсягу санкцій до юридичних осіб // Black Sea News. 2023. 2 листопада. URL: https://www.blackseanews.net/read/209101

[236] Foreign Affairs Council, 3 March 2014 // Council of the EU. 2014. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2014/03/03/

[237] Council condemns the illegal referendum in Crimea // Foreign Affairs Council. 2014. 17 March. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2014/03/17/

[238] European Council focuses on Ukraine crisis and further sanctions // European Council. 2014. 20-21 March. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2014/03/20-21/

specific steps that Russia and the separatists were expected to take in order to de-escalate the conflict. An important milestone in the EU's policy was the signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, which marked the beginning of a new stage in relations between Ukraine and the European Union[239]. However, the restrictive measures imposed by the EU against Russia failed to produce the desired results.

Consequently, on 18 July 2014, EU leaders expanded the legal framework for restrictive measures by allowing sanctions to target entities providing material or financial support for Russia's actions against Ukraine. On 29 July, the European Union introduced additional economic sanctions against the Russian Federation. These measures included restricting Russia's access to EU capital markets, imposing an embargo on the import and export of arms and related materiel to and from Russia, prohibiting the export of dual-use goods and technologies, and requiring the competent authorities of the EU Member States to exercise strict control over exports of energy-related equipment and technologies to Russia. Furthermore, at the COREPER meeting on 28 July, trade and investment restrictions concerning Crimea and Sevastopol were agreed upon. These included a ban on new investments in transport, telecommunications, and energy infrastructure projects, a prohibition on the export of equipment for these sectors to Crimea and Sevastopol, and a ban on the provision of financial and insurance services related to such activities[240].

However, on 30 July 2014, following a sharp escalation of the situation caused by the presence and activities of Russian armed forces on Ukrainian territory, the European Council called for the preparation of additional economic sanctions against Russia[241]. As a result, a new package of EU sanctions against the Russian Federation entered into force on 12 September 2014[242]. Furthermore, on 17 November 2014, EU foreign ministers requested that the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission submit proposals for further sanctions against the separatists in the self-proclaimed "Luhansk People's Republic" (LPR) and "Donetsk People's Republic" (DPR), established with Russia's support.

[239] Council supports Kiev efforts for a peace plan // Foreign Affairs Council. 2014. 23 June. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2014/06/23/

[240] EU leaders choose Juncker to lead the future of the Union // European Council. 2014. 26-27 June. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2014/06/26-27/

[241] EU restrictive measures in view of the situation in Eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea // Council of the European Union. 2014. 29 July. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_restrictive_measures_in_response_to_crisis_in_ukraine_en_0.pdf

[242] Special meeting of the European Council, 30 August 2014 // European Council. 2014. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2014/08/30/

In response, the European Union strengthened its sanctions policy by imposing asset freezes and travel bans on individuals and entities involved in actions undermining Ukraine's territorial integrity. These measures targeted 13 individuals and 5 organisations. Consequently, the total number of persons subject to EU sanctions for violating Ukraine's territorial integrity increased to 132, while the number of entities subject to asset freezes rose to 28[243]. On 18 December of the same year, after discussing the situation on Europe's eastern borders, support for Ukraine, and relations with Russia, EU leaders welcomed the strengthening of restrictions on investment, services, and trade involving Crimea and Sevastopol[244].

Nevertheless, these restrictive measures failed to halt Russia's actions. On the contrary, Russian military aggression against Ukraine intensified. In January 2015, a series of attacks targeted residential areas, particularly in Mariupol, while fighting escalated in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. In response, the Council of the European Union agreed to extend the existing individual restrictive measures targeting 132 individuals and 28 entities until September 2015. On 9 February, the EU Member States unanimously adopted additional listings targeting separatists in eastern Ukraine and their supporters in Russia. These measures included asset freezes and travel bans imposed on 19 individuals and nine entities involved in actions against the territorial integrity of Ukraine[245].

On 16 March 2015, the Council of the European Union adjusted and extended the restrictive measures against Russia, which included the freezing and recovery of unlawfully appropriated Ukrainian state funds[246]. Throughout March–December 2015, the European Union extended the existing economic and individual restrictive measures against the Russian Federation until 31 July 2016[247]. On 1 July 2016, the EU once again extended its economic sanctions against Russia, emphasising that they would remain in place until the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements by the Russian government. On 9 November of the same year, the Council of the European Union added six members of the Russian State

[243] Reinforced restrictive measures against Russia // Council of the European Union. 2014. 11 September. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21992/144868.pdf
[244] EU strengthens sanctions against separatists in Eastern Ukraine // Council of the European Union. 2014. 28 November. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21990/145967.pdf
[245] Two major challenges for Europe: investment and the eastern neighbourhood // European Council. 2014. 18 December. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2014/12/18/
[246] Main results of the Foreign Affairs Council. Ukraine // Foreign Affairs Council. 2015. 9 February. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2015/02/09/
[247] Council extends EU sanctions over misappropriation of Ukrainian state funds // Council of the European Union. 2015. 5 March. URL: https://surl.li/vdigvw

Duma elected from the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the existing sanctions list[248].

The European Union continued expanding sanctions against Russia throughout 2017–2021. The overall list of individuals subject to EU individual sanctions included 185 persons and 48 entities. These individuals were subject to asset freezes, including a prohibition on providing them with funds, as well as travel bans preventing them from entering or transiting through the European Union[249].

On 23 February 2022, the first package of EU sanctions was introduced in response to the decision of the Russian Federation to recognise as independent entities the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that were not under the control of the Ukrainian government, as well as to Russia's subsequent decision to deploy Russian troops there. The adopted package included targeted sanctions against 351 members of the Russian State Duma and an additional 27 individuals; restrictions on economic relations with the non-government-controlled territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions; and limitations on Russia's access to EU capital, financial markets, and services[250].

However, none of the measures introduced prevented Russia from launching a full-scale war in Europe. Russia had begun openly discussing the possibility of such an action as early as autumn 2021. Therefore, it can be assumed that the first package of sanctions adopted against Russia was an attempt by the EU Member States to deter the Russian Federation from launching a "military operation" against Ukraine. On the first day of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, EU leaders urgently convened a special summit, where they agreed on further sanctions against Russia targeting the following areas: the financial sector; energy and transport sectors; dual-use goods; export controls and export financing; visa policy; additional sanctions against Russian individuals; and new listing criteria[251].

On 25 February 2022, the second package of anti-Russian sanctions was adopted, under which the EU decided to freeze the assets of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and the Minister of

[248] Timeline – EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine // Council of the European Union. 2015. URL: https://surl.li/rxzgns
[249] Timeline – EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine // Council of the European Union. 2016. URL: https://surl.li/ixwvqe
[250] Timeline – EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine // Council of the European Union. 2017-2021. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/
[251] EU adopts package of sanctions in response to Russian recognition of the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine and sending of troops into the region // European Council. 2022. 23 February. URL: https://surl.lt/lscvkc

Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov. In addition, restrictive measures were introduced against members of the National Security Council of the Russian Federation and the remaining members of the Russian State Duma who supported Russia's immediate recognition of the self-proclaimed "Donetsk and Luhansk republics". The Council also agreed on the next package of individual and economic sanctions in response to the unjustified military aggression carried out by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. These sanctions targeted the financial, energy, transport, and technological sectors, as well as visa policy[252].

Subsequently, from 2 March 2022 to 23 July 2023, the Council of the European Union adopted nine additional sanctions packages against Russia. However, in December 2022, some European officials began to emphasise that the EU sanctions against the Russian Federation had "already reached their limit".

It was in the 11th package of sanctions, adopted on 23 July 2023, which the EU returned to the issue of restrictions on the supply of energy resources from Russia to European countries. Among other measures, it introduced a "ban on access to European ports for vessels that switch off their navigation tracking systems while transporting Russian oil." The package also provided for ending the possibility of importing Russian oil through pipelines to Germany and Poland, as well as Russian coal and gas[253]. At the same time, the export of Kazakh oil to EU countries was permitted.

The EU sanctions policy has largely overlooked the nuclear energy sector, allowing Russia to continue promoting the development of its own nuclear industry. Germany, having abandoned nuclear energy, supports the implementation of a similar approach among other EU countries. However, Hungary and France, which have actively cooperated with Russia in this field for many years, have refused to follow the German example. Russian companies continue to participate in numerous projects in these countries related to the development of new nuclear energy technologies, while also receiving electronic components from European companies for the construction of nuclear power plants[254].

On 18 December 2023, a comprehensive 12th package of economic and individual sanctions against the Russian Federation was introduced due to the continuation of its aggression against Ukraine. The adopted package included the following measures:

[252] Special meeting of the European Council, 24 February 2022 // European Council. 2022. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2022/02/24/
[253] Russia's military aggression against Ukraine: EU imposes sanctions against President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov and adopts wide ranging individual and economic sanctions // Council of the EU. 2022. 25 February. URL: https://surl.lt/vpyoab
[254] Ibidem.

– a ban on the direct or indirect import, purchase, or transfer of Russian diamonds and jewellery;

– a ban on the re-export to Russia and re-export for use in Russia of certain goods;

– enhanced cooperation with third countries to prevent the circumvention of sanctions;

– strengthened restrictions on the export of dual-use goods and technologies;

– the introduction of a price cap on oil;

– restrictions on imports into Russia of goods generating significant revenues, such as cast iron, copper and aluminium wire, foil, tubes, and pipes;

– a ban on the import of liquefied propane[255].

Within the framework of the comprehensive 12th sanctions package, the Council of the European Union decided to introduce restrictive measures against an additional 61 individuals and 86 entities undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine. The new listings primarily targeted the military and defence sectors. In particular, the list included more than 40 companies involved in Russia's military-industrial complex, seven Russian private military companies and one of their founders, 12 Belarusian individuals involved in military support for Russia's war against Ukraine, as well as Russian officials and Russian business representatives operating in the defence sector.

In addition, restrictive measures were imposed on several important economic entities, including the AlfaStrakhovanie Group, one of Russia's largest insurance companies; Rosfinmonitoring, the Federal Financial Monitoring Service; four telecommunications companies operating in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine: Mirtelecom LLC, AO Luxtrans, Krymtelecom JSC, and Beto JSC, as well as other Russian business representatives.

Among the listed individuals and legal entities were also 14 members of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and 2 members of regional election commissions responsible for organising the illegal referendums in 2022 and the so-called illegal elections in September 2023 in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The sanctions also targeted individuals responsible for the military re-education of Ukrainian children, including representatives of the "Volunteers of Victory" movement, the Avangard Centre, and the "Crimean Patriot" Centre.

Finally, the sanctions lists were expanded to include Russia's IT sector, two organisations and two individuals responsible for circumventing

[255] *Атаманенко А., Піддубний В.* Вплив російсько-української війни на енергетичну безпеку ЄС… С. 39-42.

EU sanctions, as well as entities involved in spreading disinformation and propaganda in support of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including the Tsargrad TV channel and the Spas TV channel, Russian propaganda media outlets.

On 23 February 2024, EU Member States adopted the 13th package of sanctions against the Russian Federation. This package expanded the list of sanctioned individuals and legal entities by adding 106 individuals and 88 legal entities. The new listings targeted the military and defence sectors, members of the judiciary, politicians, and individuals involved in the illegal deportation and military re-education of Ukrainian children. The Council also added 27 new entities to the list of those directly supporting Russia's military-industrial complex in its war of aggression against Ukraine, including organisations located in third countries and involved in circumventing trade restrictions. The EU introduced further restrictions on unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) and on the export of goods that contribute, in particular, to the expansion of Russia's industrial capacity[256].

At the beginning of February 2024, Hungary was the only country that opposed the adoption of this package, explaining its position by the inclusion of Chinese companies that assist Russia in the war against Ukraine in the new sanctions package. According to Hungary, this could have a negative impact on the country's economy[257]. However, on 19 February 2024, the Hungarian government announced that it would not block the adoption of the 13th package of anti-Russian sanctions by the EU Council[258].

EU sanctions against Russia continued to be supplemented in 2025 with new restrictions targeting the Russian military-industrial complex, energy sector, and financial sector. During this period, seven additional packages of anti-Russian sanctions were adopted. However, at the beginning of 2026, European countries faced certain disagreements over the approval of further large-scale packages due to the economic interests of individual states. Despite Viktor Orbán's departure from power in Hungary, EU countries had previously failed to reach an agreement on the new 21st package of sanctions against Russia. Negotiations became more complicated due to disputes among Member States, which began openly defending their own economic interests. These included Greece, France,

[256] 12th package of sanctions on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: additional 61 individuals and 86 entities included in the EU's sanctions list // Council of the EU. 2023. 18 December. URL: https://surl.li/gnipuf

[257] Russia: two years after the full-scale invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, EU adopts 13th package of individual and economic sanctions // Council of the EU. 2024. 23 February. URL: https://surl.li/bceaea

[258] *Тарасовський Ю.* Угорщина заблокувала 13-й пакет санкцій ЄС проти Росії – FT // Forbes. 2024. 15 лютого. URL: https://forbes.ua/news/ugorshchina-zablokuvala-13-y-paket-sanktsiy-proti-rosii-ft-15022024-19229

Italy, Germany, Austria, and Portugal, which demanded a number of exemptions from the new sanctions package, thereby threatening the four-year strategy of support for Ukraine[259].

Thus, Greece opposed the ban on European companies transporting Russian liquefied natural gas to third countries due to concerns regarding the interests of Greek shipping companies. Austria raised the issue of Raiffeisen Bank International, which is seeking compensation for the loss of its assets in Russia.

Some of the proposed restrictions have already been weakened or removed. In particular, EU countries abandoned a complete ban on the import of Russian fish, despite the fact that Moscow receives hundreds of millions of dollars annually from such sales. The sanctions against the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Kirill, were also removed from the final text, and restrictions on former servicemen of the Russian army were significantly eased due to objections from France and Italy.

At the same time, the new package provides for the expansion of restrictions on Russian banks – dozens of financial institutions may lose access to the international SWIFT system. It is also planned to ban entry into the EU for more than 250 Russian citizens[260].

Therefore, an analysis of the EU sanctions policy towards Russia shows that Russia is the undisputed leader in terms of the number of sanctions imposed against it. In the first 10 days of the full-scale war alone, it surpassed Syria, North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela, which had been under EU, UN, and U.S. sanctions for decades. The introduction of sanctions by the EU Council against the Russian Federation was carried out in two stages: 1) from 2014 to 23 February 2022; and 2) from 24 February 2022 to the present day. Regarding the first stage of the EU sanctions policy towards this country, it should be emphasised that it was characterised by its "leniency" and, consequently, limited effectiveness. Among the entire spectrum of European sanctions measures of the second stage, the most significant impact on Russia was the refusal of European countries and the G7 to purchase Russian energy resources. It is no secret that 60–70% of Russia's revenues from energy exports came from oil and gas trade.

[259] *Рябовіл Ю.* Низка країн Євросоюзу вимагає послаблення обмежень проти країни-агресора Росії у новому пакеті санкцій через шкоду для національних бізнесів, пише Financial Times з посиланням на дипломатів 19 липня // NV. 2026. 20 липня. URL: https://nv.ua/ukr/world/geopolitics/sankciji-yes-proti-rosiji-pid-zagrozovu-krajini-vidmovlyayutsya-vid-posilennya-obmezhen-50625651.html

[260] Відхід Орбана не полегшив процес ухвалення санкцій ЄС проти росії – Politico // Слово і діло. 2026. 22 липня. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2026/07/22/novyna/svit/vidxid-orbana-ne-polehshyv-proces-uxvalennya-sankczij-yes-proty-rosiyi-politico

Approximately 40% of the country's budget consists of funds generated from oil and gas exports.

Due to EU sanctions, Russia had to redirect its oil and petroleum products exports to China, India, and Türkiye. During 2022, it significantly increased the export of raw materials to these countries. However, lacking alternative markets and facing additional risks, Moscow was forced to sell oil at $30–35 per barrel, which, for example, in 2024 cost it only $50 billion in revenue. The situation with gas exports became even more complicated for the Russian Federation. According to data from the KSE Institute, during the first 10 months of the war, Russian natural gas exports to European countries decreased more than fourfold (from almost 42% to 8.5%)[261].

In order to avoid the imposed sanctions, Russia has learned how to circumvent them, continuing to conduct foreign economic activities with international partners and increasing its financial potential, which is subsequently used to further carry out actions that destabilise regional and international security.

Since 2014, the European Union's sanctions policy against Russia has been aimed at weakening the economic potential of this aggressor state, particularly in the defence-industrial sector. However, despite the EU embargo on doing business with the Russian defence sector, Russia continued to fulfil contracts with European partners that had been concluded before the introduction of sanctions (before 1 September 2014). Legal arms trade was also facilitated by the absence of a strict ban on the distribution of dual-use goods that could be used in weapons production. For example, such trade with Russia was carried out by leading EU countries: France, Germany, and Austria. Thus, the German company Bosch claimed that it sold automotive equipment to Russia only for peaceful purposes; however, Ukrainian military personnel repeatedly found equipment from this company in captured Russian BMPs[262].

French companies sold military equipment to Russia worth €152 million under contracts concluded before the introduction of the embargo. This accounted for 44% of European arms exports to Russia. It was only from the French companies Safran and Thales that Russia purchased thermal imaging systems for tanks, navigation systems, and infrared

[261] Угорщина не блокуватиме 13-й пакет санкцій проти росії – Сійярто // Слово і діло: аналітичний портал. 2024. 19 лютого. URL: https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2024/02/19/novyna/polityka/uhorshhyna-ne-blokuvatyme-13-j-paket-sankczij-proty-rosiyi-sijyarto

[262] У 2023-му нафтогазові доходи РФ обваляться вдвічі, а ВВП впаде на 8%. Прогнози деградації російської економіки від KSE // Forbes. 2023. 3 січня. URL: https://forbes.ua/money/u-2023-naftogazovi-dokhodi-rf-obvalyatsya-vdvichi-a-vvp-vpade-na-8-prognozi-degradatsii-rosiyskoi-ekonomiki-vid-kse-03012023-10874

detectors for fighter aircraft and combat helicopters, which in March 2022 Ukrainian military personnel found on board ground vehicles, fighter aircraft, and helicopters used in the armed aggression against Ukraine[263].

The Russian Federation also managed to circumvent European sanctions on arms imports without significant obstacles. The sectoral sanctions imposed by the West against Russia were intended to restrict activities in relevant sectors of the country's economy. However, the sanctions list did not include the large company Rosneft, which in 2016 acquired a 49% non-controlling stake in the Indian energy company Essar Oil, thereby allowing it to bypass EU sanctions by using an Indian company to conduct trade and economic operations[264].

When the EU Council adopted a decision prohibiting assistance to Russia in the development of "shale reservoirs", Russian partner companies, in order to avoid "punishment" and pursue their own national interests, simply changed their type of activity to the development of "unconventional fields", while continuing cooperation with the aggressor. It is noteworthy that EU sanctions legislation contains provisions allowing an offender to be exempted from liability. This concerns a regulation of the European Council, according to which, if a party "did not know and had no reasonable grounds to suspect that its actions would violate the measures specified in the regulation", the offender may invoke this justification to prove their innocence. For example, this provision was used by the American company Enerpac Heavylifting, which exported lifts that were used by Russia during the construction of the Crimean Bridge.

Another disadvantage of EU sanctions is their selectivity. Analysts from Trap Aggressor found that the imposed restrictions are often not comprehensive. This means that some entities or sectors were not included in the sanctions regime, although they should have been. As a result, this allows the aggressor state, in this case Russia, to continue conducting business despite the restrictions. Accordingly, a number of companies important for the Russian economy and military sector were not subject to sanctions. These include, for example, the energy giant Gazprom and KAMAZ. If sanctions were imposed on such companies, their subsidiaries often continued operating without restrictions. These include Sberbank, one of Russia's largest banks, and VTB, which used their subsidiaries in EU countries to attract deposits. Thus, in 2014 alone, Sberbank through its subsidiary Sberbank Europe AG collected €1.6 billion. The same applies to leasing operations, which, not being subject to a ban, allowed EU

[263] Тридцять один спосіб. Як Кремль обходив санкції // Економічна правда. 2022. 1 липня. URL: https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2022/07/1/688735/

[264] *Химкуч А., Стеблівський Р., Пашкіна А.* Санкційна політика проти Росії 2014-2022 рр.: прогалини і схеми обходу… С. 7.

companies producing heavy special equipment, buses, and trucks to continue supplying their products to Russia.

Russia has also learned to circumvent a number of EU economic sanctions prohibiting the export of Russian products abroad by using practices aimed at concealing the country of origin of goods. In particular, this involved changing the manufacturer's markings or packaging, as well as concealing sanctioned companies, their beneficiaries, or links with them. For example, sanctioned individuals or companies often "sold" their businesses to partners who were not subject to sanctions, to family members or friends, or used offshore structures or fictitious companies.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia led to the strengthening of EU sanctions measures against Russia in terms of trade relations with EU Member States. As a result, direct official trade in most sanctioned goods between the EU and Russia decreased after 2022. However, the EU observed a sharp increase in the export of these goods to third countries, including Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, Serbia, and China, as well as Russia's neighbouring countries: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia. As for Russia's trade and economic operations with the EU, they were carried out through subsidiaries together with subcontractors of a number of EU companies that manufacture products abroad, produce sanctioned goods, and export them to Russia through intermediaries. These companies make use of exceptions provided for in EU rules concerning the export of dual-use goods to Russia. Such exceptions include humanitarian needs, public health emergencies, natural disasters, and medical necessities. According to Bloomberg data, from February 2022 to December 2023, some EU Member States issued permits for such exports worth more than €560 million. In addition, in 2023 Russia imported sanctioned goods from the EU worth €450 million[265].

Russia most actively uses intermediaries when conducting trade with EU countries. For example, Russia obtained important spare parts for Mi-8 helicopters from the Czech Republic by using the mediation of Indian companies Space Era Materials and Processes, Deep Engineering, and the Kazakh Company Aircraft Repair Plant No. 405[266].

Another problem with EU sanctions against Russian enterprises is the difficulty in identifying the companies that have been subject to sanctions. Thus, a number of annexes to Council Regulation (EU) No. 833/2014 contain legal entities that are end-users of military goods or

[265] Тридцять один спосіб. Як Кремль обходив санкції // Економічна правда. 2022. 1 липня. URL: https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2022/07/1/688735/

[266] У 2023 році росія ввезла підсанкційних товарів з Європи на 450 млн. євро // Trapp Aggressor. 2024. 27 лютого. URL: https://trap.org.ua/publications/u-2023-rotsi-rosiia-vvezla-pidsanktsiynykh-tovariv-z-yevropy-na-450-mln-ievro/

are part of the military-industrial complex, or support Russia's defence and security sectors, and against which restrictive measures have been applied. However, in the sanctions lists, these enterprises are represented only by their names, raising numerous questions regarding their identification. For example, in December 2022, the Russian Scientific and Production Enterprise "Start" was added to the list, where it appeared as NPP Start (Russia). It is noteworthy that in the Russian register of legal entities, a search for the term "Scientific and Production Enterprise 'Start'" reveals at least six active legal entities with the same name: in Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Perm, Taganrog, as well as in smaller towns in the Tyumen and Sverdlovsk regions. In addition, one joint-stock company and five limited liability companies operate under the same name[267].

To counter Western sanctions, Russia also involves other countries that violate international security, including Iran. In December 2023, Moscow and Tehran, against which the EU had also introduced a number of restrictive measures, signed a declaration on countering European Union sanctions[268].

As of 2026, Russia continues to use mechanisms for circumventing EU sanctions through networks of intermediaries in third countries, parallel imports, and a shadow tanker fleet. The main channels remain the re-export of dual-use goods and alternative maritime insurance systems. For this purpose, Russia uses countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as China and Türkiye, through which it imports microchips, electronics, and industrial equipment. It transports oil using older vessels without Western insurance or through alternative maritime guarantee schemes. To carry out covert payments for prohibited goods, Russia actively uses digital assets and chains of exchange transactions[269].

Despite the rather complex process of adopting and implementing sanctions against Russia and other countries violating international norms, the EU has a number of gaps and shortcomings in this process. Therefore, in order to minimise opportunities for sanctions evasion, it is necessary, first, to synchronise the sanctions of all partners within the "sanctions coalition" and promote the introduction of stricter restrictions against all possible legal entities involved in violations of the international order by

[267] Росія та Іран підписали декларацію щодо протидії санкціям Заходу // LB.ua. 2023. 5 грудня. URL: https://lb.ua/world/2023/12/05/587603_rosiya_iran_pidpisali_deklaratsiyu.html
[268] Санкції: хто більше і хто ефективніше? Порівняльний аналіз змісту та обсягу санкцій до юридичних осіб // Black Sea News. 2023. 2 листопада. URL: https://www.blackseanews.net/read/209101
[269] *Попович Т.* Країна, що ходить в обхід: перекрити експортні спромоги Росії // Укрінформ. 2026. 3 березня. URL: https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/4098801-kraina-so-hodit-v-obhid-perekriti-eksportni-spromogi-rosii.html

the aggressor state. Second, effective sanctions policy requires mechanisms and infrastructure for the introduction, implementation, and, most importantly, monitoring of compliance with sanctions. Third, EU Member States need to seriously revise sanctions legislation, particularly with regard to strengthening liability for violations of sanctions prohibitions by EU members themselves.

However, greater effectiveness can be achieved through the coordination of efforts among all participants of the sanctions coalition. As a result, new schemes to circumvent sanctions will become not only more difficult to identify but also significantly more costly to develop or implement.

CHAPTER 5

THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR ON THE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

5.1. Economic Security of the European Union (*Zoriana Lutsyshyn, Olena Katrych*)

5.1.1. Conceptual architectonics of economic security in an integration union: from national thresholds to supranational de-risking. Economic security of the European Union is a supranational category of a new type: it denotes the capacity of an integration union with shared competences to preserve the functional integrity of the single market, the autonomy of its economic-policy decisions and a sustainable trajectory of reproduction under exogenous shocks and deliberate coercion, while remaining the most open large economy in the world (extra-EU trade in goods and services is close to one half of GDP, against roughly one quarter for the United States).

The genesis of the category is asymmetric in time and in space. In the theory of international economics its foundations were laid by A. Hirschman (1945)[1], who distinguished the supply effect and the influence effect of foreign trade: any asymmetric trade relation generates a latent power resource for the less dependent party. In the post-Soviet economic science of the 1990s-2010s, including the Ukrainian school, economic security crystallised into a threshold paradigm – a system of functional subsystems (macroeconomic, financial, energy, foreign-economic, investment-innovation, social, demographic), each measured by indicators normalised against threshold values and aggregated into an integral index[2]. The European Union, by contrast, treated economic openness as the substance of its own existence and did not possess an economic security doctrine until 2023. The rupture came in three waves: the pandemic disruption of supply chains (2020)[3], the weaponisation of energy

[1] *Hirschman A.O.* National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945. 170 p.

[2] Методичні рекомендації щодо розрахунку рівня економічної безпеки України: затв. наказом Міністерства економічного розвитку і торгівлі України від 29.10.2013 № 1277; *Харазішвілі Ю.М.* Системна безпека сталого розвитку: інструментарій оцінки, резерви та стратегічні сценарії реалізації. Київ: Ін-т екон. промисл. НАНУ, 2019. 304 с.

[3] *Baldwin R., Freeman R.* Risks and Global Supply Chains: What We Know and What We Need to Know // Annual Review of Economics. 2022. Vol. 14. P. 153-180.

interdependence by the Russian Federation (2021-2022) and the transition of the United States and China to an openly instrumental use of trade, technology and finance (2018-2025). The European Economic Security Strategy of 20 June 2023[4] therefore reads not as a doctrine of a fortress but as a doctrine of managed interdependence: promote competitiveness, protect against risks, partner with the widest possible circle of countries.

The ontological specificity of the EU as a subject of economic security is expressed in a triad of asymmetries[5], which forms the analytical core of this section:

Asymmetry of interdependence. Following H. Farrell and A. Newman (2019)[6], interdependence in networked global economy is not symmetric: states that control hubs (payment infrastructure, reserve currency, chokepoint technologies, critical raw materials) acquire a chokepoint effect (the ability to cut others off) and a panopticon effect (the ability to observe flows). The EU controls several hubs (the single market as a regulatory hub, the euro, TARGET2/Euroclear) but is a spoke in energy, critical raw materials, semiconductors and cloud infrastructure.

Asymmetry of competences. Trade and customs policy are exclusive competences of the Union (Art. 3 TFEU); national security, energy mix and investment screening remain with member states (Art. 4 (2) TEU; Art. 194 TFEU). The risk is supranational, whereas a considerable part of the instruments is national – hence the 27-fold heterogeneity of screening regimes, export-control practice and energy exposure.

Asymmetry of instruments. The EU is a regulatory power: its toolbox is predominantly defensive and legalistic (screening, subsidies control, anti-coercion procedure), whereas its principal rivals dispose of discretionary, extra-legal and rapid instruments (tariffs by executive order, export bans, informal boycotts). Deterrence therefore depends less on the nominal existence of an instrument than on the credibility of its application (see 5.1.5).

On this basis economic security of an integration union is defined here as a dynamic state of the union's economic system in which three properties are simultaneously maintained above their threshold values: resilience (the capacity to absorb a shock without irreversible loss of production capacity), autonomy (the capacity to take economic-policy decisions without external coercion) and reproducibility (the capacity to

[4] Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council on "European Economic Security Strategy": JOIN(2023) 20 final / European Commission, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Brussels, 20.06.2023. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023JC0020

[5] *Луцишин З.О.* Асиметрія та парадокс фінансової глобалізації // Міжнародна економічна політика. 2008. № 1-2. С. 88-121.

[6] *Farrell H., Newman A.L.* Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion // International Security. 2019. Vol. 44, No. 1. P. 42-79.

sustain investment, innovation and social cohesion in the long run). In formal terms the security state is a mapping of the vector of threats onto the space of functional subsystems:

$$S_t = F(R_t, A_t, D_t \mid \Theta_t), \qquad S_t \in [0;1], \qquad \Theta_t = \{\theta_1, \dots, \theta_m\} \tag{5.1.}$$

Denote by R, A, and D the resilience, autonomy, and reproducibility components. Vector Θ includes the set of active threats (supply disruption, coercion, technology leakage, infrastructure attack, and financial fragmentation). Threshold structure of S identifies five regions – critical, dangerous, unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and optimal. These will be defined in section 5.1.7. Vulnerability of a certain product, technology, or infrastructure constitutes the basic analytical unit and is represented by multiplication of the following components:

$$V_k = E_k \cdot C_k \cdot (1 - \sigma_k) \cdot H_k \tag{5.2}$$

Here, E stands for exposure (extra-EU share of supply in domestic consumption), C denotes concentration of supply sources (Herfindahl–Hirschman index), σ stands for substitutability (demand that can be supplied or substituted by other sources within 12 months), H is the hostility coefficient of the dominant supplier (probability that the supplier uses dependence as the tool of pressure). Dependence turns into a weaponizable form only when all four multipliers are high; this condition perfectly matches the EU exposure profile in gas (2021), rare earths (2025), and legacy semiconductors (2025) as shown in section 5.1.3.

The architecture of the EU economic security system is hierarchical and multi-purpose. It consists of supranational (Commission, Council, European Parliament, and ECB), national (including 27 screening authorities, energy regulators, and export control institutions), and corporate levels (including firm-driven de-risking of supply chain). This architecture is geared towards the four threat categories defined in the 2023 Strategy.

The graphic shows the hierarchy: the threat vector is recognized and valued at the supranational level and then communicated via three functional pillars and two lower levels, finally being utilized for assessing the four risks where the Union has officially declared itself vulnerable.

The two models, the national threshold model and the supranational de-risking model, are compared in Table 5.1.1. The difference between them is more than just in naming: they are different in terms of what is protected, by whom, and how security is measured – and it is precisely this difference that is the problem to be solved in the analysis of the EU.

Scheme 5.1.1. Multi-level architecture of the EU economic security system (compiled by the author)

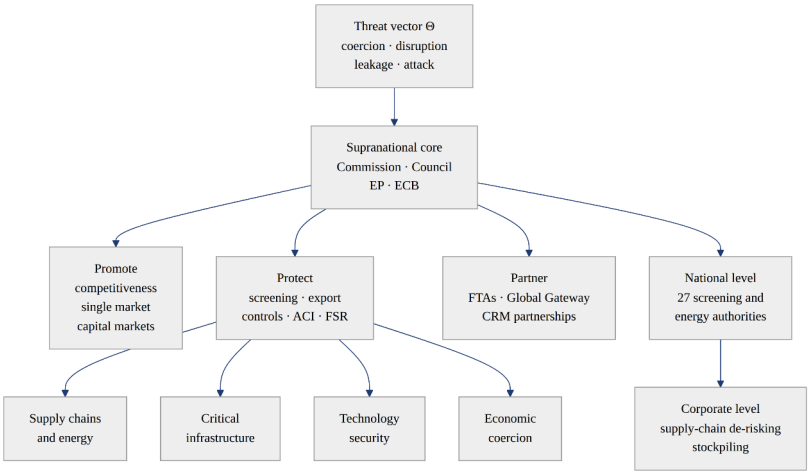


Table 5.1.1. Comparative matrix of the national and the supranational paradigms of economic security

Criterion	National threshold paradigm (Ukrainian school)	EU de-risking paradigm (2023–2026)
Subject of security	Sovereign state with full competence	Integration union with shared competences (27 + Commission)
Object	National economy as a reproductive system	Single market, value chains, critical technologies and infrastructure
Key category	Threshold value, integral index, zone of security	Risk, dependency, resilience, open strategic autonomy
Attitude to openness	Openness as a source of threats to be regulated	Openness as a value; risks are managed, not eliminated (de-risking ≠ decoupling)
Measurement	Normalised indicators, weighted aggregation, thresholds	Risk assessments by product/technology, dependency mapping (HHI, import shares)
Time horizon	Annual monitoring, medium-term thresholds	Rolling risk reviews, 2030 targets (CRM Act, Chips Act, NZIA)
Dominant instruments	Fiscal-monetary, protectionist, administrative	Regulatory: screening, subsidies control, anti-coercion procedure, standards
Weakness	Static thresholds, expert weights, national closure	Weak enforcement, competence fragmentation, low credibility of retaliation
Point of convergence	Integral index with threshold zones	Same index, adapted to supranational indicators (this section, 5.1.7)

Source: compiled by the author.

This synthesis in terms of methodology consists of the transfer of measurement discipline found in the threshold framework, which includes normalization, weighting, integrative aggregation, and threshold regions, to the object of the de-risking framework (dependencies, coercion, technologies, and infrastructure). This synthesis also includes the expansion of the static index by adding elements such as shock propagation (5.1.4), strategic behavior (5.1.5), tariff and debt dynamics (5.1.6), and stochastic simulations (5.1.8).

5.1.2. Institutional and regulatory architecture of EU economic security: genesis, taxonomy and density of instruments (2019–2026). The EU created an ever-developing regulatory structure for economic security from March 2019 to July 2026. Its cornerstone is the Joint Communication of 3 December 2025[7] that replaces the reactive attitude of the 2023 Strategy with proactive use of the toolbox and the readiness to pay economic prices for security. This framework developed organically instead of being designed in advance; every subsequent layer was triggered by some specific shock: the screening regulation adopted in March 2019[8] to counter Chinese takeovers in 2016-2018; the Foreign Subsidies Regulation[9] about state-subsidised bidders in the single market; the Anti-Coercion Instrument[10] that followed from the Lithuanian case in 2021; the Chips and Critical Raw Materials Acts[11] to solve bottlenecks in light of the pandemic; the gas phase-out regulation[12] in

[7] Commission announces strategic approach to strengthen Europe's economic security: press release IP/25/2889 // European Commission. 2025. 3 December. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2889

[8] Regulation (EU) 2019/452 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 establishing a framework for the screening of foreign direct investments into the Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 2019. L 79 I. P. 1-14. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/452/oj

[9] Regulation (EU) 2022/2560 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on foreign subsidies distorting the internal market // Official Journal of the European Union. 2022. L 330. P. 1-45. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2560/oj

[10] Regulation (EU) 2023/2675 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 on the protection of the Union and its Member States from economic coercion by third countries // Official Journal of the European Union. 2023. L, 2023/2675, 7.12.2023. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2675/oj

[11] Regulation (EU) 2023/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem (Chips Act) // Official Journal of the European Union. 2023. L 229. P. 1-53. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1781/oj; Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials // Official Journal of the European Union. 2024. L, 2024/1252, 3.5.2024. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1252/oj

[12] Regulation (EU) 2026/261 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 January 2026 on phasing out Russian natural gas imports and preparing the phase-out of Russian oil imports, improving monitoring of potential energy dependencies and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 // Official Journal of the European Union. 2026. L, 2026/261, 2.2.2026. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/261/oj

response to the Russian weaponization of pipeline deliveries; and the 2025 Communication that came in reaction to two simultaneous shocks: American tariffs and Chinese export controls on rare earths and legacy semiconductors.

Table 5.1.2. Chronology of the formation of the EU economic security architecture, 2019–2026

Date	Act or initiative	Pillar	Object of protection	Security function
19.03.2019 (applicable 11.10.2020)	Regulation (EU) 2019/452 on FDI screening	Protect	Critical infrastructure, technologies, inputs	Ex ante screening, cooperation mechanism (voluntary national regimes)
18.02.2021	Trade Policy Review: "open strategic autonomy"	Promote/ Partner	Trade policy as a whole	Doctrinal reframing of openness
05.05.2021	Updated Industrial Strategy, first dependency review (137 products, ≈6% of extra-EU import value)	Protect	Strategic dependencies	Diagnostic mapping
10–11.03.2022 / 18.05.2022	Versailles Declaration; REPowerEU Plan	Protect/Promote	Energy	Phase-out of Russian fossil fuels, diversification, storage obligations
14.12.2022	Regulation (EU) 2022/2560 on foreign subsidies (FSR)	Protect	Single market, procurement, M&A	Ex ante notification of subsidised concentrations and bids
20.06.2023	JOIN(2023) 20 European Economic Security Strategy	All three	Four risk categories	First doctrine: promote–protect–partner
13.09.2023	Regulation (EU) 2023/1781 European Chips Act	Promote	Semiconductors (target 20% of global output by 2030)	Subsidised capacity, crisis-monitoring toolbox
22.11.2023 (in force 27.12.2023)	Regulation (EU) 2023/2675 Anti-Coercion Instrument (ACI)	Protect	Union and member states as targets of coercion	Deterrence: countermeasures against third-country coercion

24.01.2024	Economic Security Package: 5 initiatives (FDI revision, outbound investment, export controls, research security, dual-use R&D)[13]	Protect	Capital, technology, knowledge	Closing gaps in the toolbox
11.04.2024	Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 Critical Raw Materials Act	Promote/ Partner	34 critical and 17 strategic raw materials	2030 benchmarks: 10% extraction, 40% processing, 25% recycling, ≤65% from one third country
13.06.2024	Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 Net-Zero Industry Act[14]	Promote	Net-zero technologies (40% domestic manufacturing by 2030)	Industrial capacity, resilience criteria in auctions
09.09.2024	Draghi report on competitiveness[15]	Promote	Productivity, investment gap (≈€750–800 bn per year)	Diagnosis of the competitiveness deficit
29.10.2024	Countervailing duties on battery electric vehicles from China (up to 35.3% on top of 10%)	Protect	Automotive value chain	Trade defence against state subsidies
15.01.2025 / 29.01.2025 / 26.02.2025	Recommendation on outbound investment review; Competitiveness Compass; Clean Industrial Deal	Promote/ Protect	Capital outflows, industrial base	Monitoring, simplification, lead markets
27.07.2025 / 21.08.2025	Turnberry political agreement and EU–US Joint Statement	Partner	Transatlantic trade (15% all-inclusive US tariff ceiling)	Stabilisation of the largest export market
03.12.2025	Joint Communication on	All three	Six priority high-risk areas	Proactive doctrine,

[13] New initiatives to strengthen economic security: Communication from the Commission. COM(2024) 22 final. Brussels, 24.01.2024. URL: https://cutt.ly/Eynw2bfT

[14] Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's net-zero technology manufacturing ecosystem // Official Journal of the European Union. 2024. L, 2024/1735, 28.6.2024. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1735/oj

[15] *Draghi M.* The Future of European Competitiveness. Part A: A competitiveness strategy for Europe. Brussels: European Commission, 2024. 69 p. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/draghi-report_en

	strengthening EU economic security + RESourceEU action plan[16]			Economic Security Information Hub, European CRM Centre
11.12.2025 (text 10.02.2026)	Political agreement on the revised FDI screening regulation[17]	Protect	Mandatory screening in all 27 member states, common minimum scope	Harmonisation, indirect foreign control, two-phase review
26.01.2026 (in force 03.02.2026)	Regulation (EU) 2026/261 phasing out Russian gas imports[18]	Protect	Gas market (spot LNG banned from 25.04.2026; pipeline gas by 30.09.2027)	Legal elimination of a weaponised dependence
03.2026 / Q1–Q2 2026	Raw Materials Mechanism (first matchmaking), CRM stockpiling pilot, European Critical Raw Materials Centre	Promote/ Partner	Rare-earth magnets, battery and defence materials	Demand aggregation, joint purchasing, strategic stockpiles
23.04.2026	20th sanctions package against Russia	Protect	Energy revenues of the aggressor	Financial-economic coercion of the adversary
25.06.2026 (in force 01.07.2026)	Implementing regulations of the EU–US Joint Statement[19]	Partner	Zero EU tariffs on US industrial goods; safeguard and sunset (end-2029) clauses	Conditional liberalisation with suspension triggers

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of the Official Journal of the EU, Commission and Council press releases (links in the table and in References).

[16] RESourceEU Action Plan: Communication from the Commission. COM(2025) 945 final. Brussels, 03.12.2025. URL: https://cutt.ly/8ynw1ZmV; RESourceEU Action Plan // International Energy Agency. Policies database. 2026. URL: https://www.iea.org/policies/29510-resourceeu-action-plan

[17] Foreign direct investment: Council and Parliament reached political agreement to improve FDI screening: press release // Council of the European Union. 2025. 11 December. URL: https://cutt.ly/kynw0rl1

[18] Russian gas imports: Council gives final green light to a stepwise ban: press release // Council of the European Union. 2026. 26 January. URL: https://cutt.ly/fynw0m4c

[19] EU-US trade: Council and Parliament strike a deal to implement the tariff elements of the Joint Statement: press release // Council of the European Union. 2026. 20 May. URL: https://cutt.ly/lynw00sn

The intensity of institutional measures in terms of the yearly number of security-related acts and strategies demonstrates an unmistakable non-linear trend, that is, 1 measure in 2019, 2 measures in 2021, 2 measures in 2022, 4 measures in 2023, 5 measures in 2024, 7 measures in 2025, and 5 measures for the first nine months of 2026. In turn, this implies that the stock of instruments rose from 1 to 26 instruments during seven years, out of which more than half were developed after 2023 Strategy. It constitutes a quantified expression of a phenomenon that can be labelled the securitization of EU economic regulation, as economic security moved from being a marginal issue of trade policy to a general framework used to reinterpret trade defense, competition, state aid, research funding, and even budget policies.

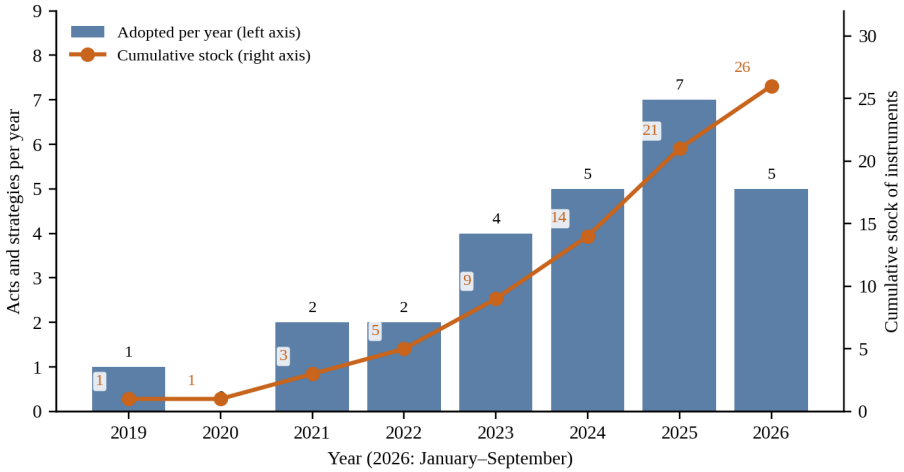


Figure 5.1.1. Institutional density of EU economic security: acts and strategies adopted per year (bars, left axis) and cumulative stock (line, right axis), 2019–2026 (2026: January–September).
Counted by the author from Table 5.1.2

However, a functional classification of the instruments (Table 5.1.3) uncovers an inherent problem with their structure that density indicators do not show; the toolbox of instruments consists of ex ante regulatory and defensive measures, the enforcement of which falls on member states, while the only offensive measure, the Anti-Coercion Instrument, had not been triggered until September 2026, despite the 2025 American tariff hike and Chinese export controls from April to October 2025.

Table 5.1.3. Functional taxonomy of EU economic security instruments (as of September 2026)

Instrument	Pillar	Legal nature	Timing	Enforcement level	Posture	Activation record
FDI screening (2019/452; revised 2026)	Protect	Regulation	Ex ante	National (27 regimes), EU cooperation	Defensive	≈480 notifications per year in 2023–2024 (approximate)
Foreign Subsidies Regulation	Protect	Regulation	Ex ante	Commission	Defensive	In-depth investigations since 2024 (rail, solar, wind, security equipment)
Anti-Coercion Instrument	Protect	Regulation	Ex post	Council + Commission	Offensive (deterrent)	Never activated
Trade defence (AD/AS/safeguards)	Protect	Regulations	Ex post	Commission	Defensive	BEV duties 2024; >150 measures in force
Export controls (dual-use 2021/821)	Protect	Regulation	Ex ante	National authorities	Defensive	Fragmented lists, partial coordination
Chips Act, NZIA, CRM Act	Promote	Regulations	Structural	EU + national funding	Capacity-building	2030 benchmarks; strategic projects selected 2025
Gas phase-out (2026/261), storage regulation	Protect	Regulations	Structural	Commission + national	Defensive	Full effect by 30.09.2027
Sanctions (Art. 215 TFEU)	Protect	Council regulations	Ex post	Council (unanimity)	Offensive	20 packages against Russia by April 2026
EU–US framework, FTAs, Global Gateway, CRM partnerships	Partner	Agreements, statements	Structural	Commission	Cooperative	15% ceiling in force from 01.07.2026; 14 CRM partnerships
Economic Security Information Hub, Economic Security Network	All	Administrative	Continuous	Commission + member states	Analytical	Established after 12.2025

Source: compiled by the author.

Three structural characteristics of the architecture can be inferred from the taxonomy. The first one is the asymmetry of posture, with nine out of the ten instrument classes belonging to a defensive or capacity-building nature and with the only deterrent capacity of the Union resting on a single instrument that has yet to establish its credibility. The second is the asymmetry of enforcement, with the two most important ex ante filters – the investment screening and the export controls - being carried out by 27 administrations with different scopes, which suggests that the security perimeter of the Union is as good as the weakest of its member states (The amended FDI Regulation of 2026 solves this problem by enforcing screening in all member states, although this will only happen in 2027-2028). The third is the asymmetry of speed, with the mean interval between the occurrence of a shock and entry into force of the respective instrument being 26 months for the FDI Regulation, 22 months for the ACI, 27 months for the CRM Act, and 20 months for the gas-phase-out regulation, when the shocks themselves – gas cutoff of 2022, the Nexperia exports suspension of October 2025, and the Strait of Hormuz closure of March 2026 – happened within days.

5.1.3. Asymmetries of interdependence: mapping the strategic dependencies of the EU (concentration model and the Weaponisable Dependency Index). However, the location of the EU's potential dependency weaponization has moved away from energy and to the material and technological substrate of the dual transition itself. In terms of the index of vulnerability (WDI) that is constructed here, magnesium (0.58), rare-earth magnets (0.53) and solar modules (0.47) have a vulnerability level that is ten to fifteen times larger than the expected EU gas dependency level for 2025 (0.04), and four to five times higher than that of Russian gas dependency of 2021 (0.11), which is the largest energy shock in the history of the Union.

The measure used here is built according to the framework of vulnerability decomposition from section 5.1.1. Exposure (E) is the non-EU proportion of the EU consumption of each product, while concentration (C) is defined as the Herfindahl-Hirschman index of the suppliers' countries:

$$C_k = \sum_{j=1}^{n} s_{jk}^2, \qquad H_k = \sum_{j=1}^{n} s_{jk}\, h_j, \qquad WDI_k = E_k \cdot C_k \cdot (1 - \sigma_k) \cdot H_k \tag{5.3}$$

When s is the share of supplier j in the extra-EU supply of product k, h is the hostility coefficient of the supplier j (probability of exploitation on a scale from 0 to 1 of the supplier state due to its dependence: Russia – 1.0; China – 0.7; the USA and Turkey – 0.4; Qatar, DR Congo, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan – 0.30 to 0.35; South Africa, Algeria and India – 0.2; Chile – 0.1; Norway, Japan and Korea – 0.05), and σ is the share of demand that may be substituted within twelve months. The Commission's dependency indicator identifies the product if C> 0.4, extra-EU share is greater than

50% and the EU is a net importer. The World Dependency Index (WDI) incorporates an additional criterion of this filter in two aspects: the political nature of the supplier and time-bound substitutability so that the index shows dependency which relates to dependence that is subject to action. Shares of suppliers' depend on the 2025 year (for the pre-war gas structure - on 2021 year) based on Eurostat, ACER, CRM Act impact assessment, and industry sources. The hostility and substitutability parameters are determined by the author's expertise and form the main source of uncertainty in the rating, clearly mentioned in Table 5.1.4.

Table 5.1.4. Weaponisable Dependency Index of the EU by strategic product (ranked by WDI)

Product	Exposure E	Concentration C (HHI)	Dominant supplier (share)	Substitutability σ	Weighted hostility H	WDI
Magnesium	1.00	0.942	China (97%)	0.10	0.68	0.579
Rare-earth magnets and heavy REE	0.98	0.867	China (93%)	0.05	0.66	0.532
Solar PV modules	0.97	0.905	China (95%)	0.20	0.67	0.472
Boron	1.00	0.961	Türkiye (98%)	0.10	0.40	0.342
Antibiotic APIs	0.85	0.485	China (65%)	0.15	0.52	0.181
Li-ion battery cells	0.85	0.525	China (70%)	0.25	0.51	0.172
Cloud infrastructure services	0.72	0.597	United States (72%)	0.10	0.33	0.128
Platinum group metals	0.99	0.550	South Africa (71%)	0.15	0.27	0.125
LNG (2025)	1.00	0.363	United States (56%)	0.25	0.46	0.125
Natural gas, all sources (2021)	0.83	0.284	Russia (45%)	0.15	0.54	0.109
Cobalt (mined)	0.95	0.534	DR Congo (63%)	0.25	0.28	0.105
Lithium (raw and refined)	0.99	0.646	Chile (79%)	0.20	0.17	0.085
Legacy semiconductors (back-end)	0.90	0.280	China (35%)	0.15	0.34	0.072
Natural gas, all sources (2025)	0.90	0.200	Norway (33%)	0.30	0.29	0.036
Nitrogen fertilisers	0.45	0.318	Russia (28%)	0.50	0.40	0.029
Crude oil (2025)	0.95	0.130	United States (17%)	0.40	0.28	0.021

Source: author's calculations; supplier shares approximate, 2025 (gas 2021 for comparison).

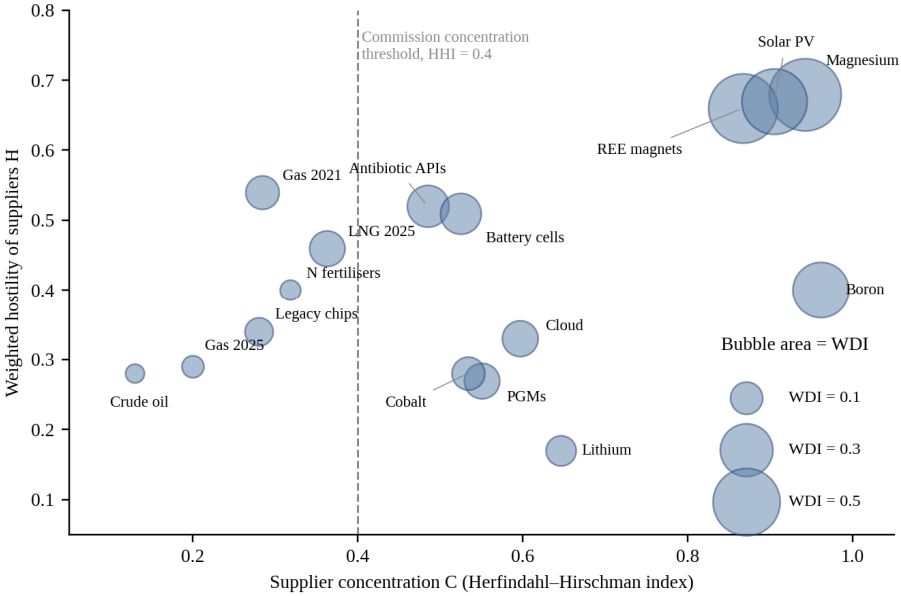


Figure 5.1.2. Dependency map of the EU: supplier concentration (Herfindahl-Hirschman index) against weighted hostility of suppliers; bubble area proportional to the WDI; dashed line – the Commission's concentration threshold of 0.4.
Author's calculations, Table 5.1.4

First, the hierarchy of vulnerability is flipped upside down compared to the hierarchy of political attention. Energy, which constituted the core of EU crisis management operations in 2022-2026, now occupies the lowest rung of the index hierarchy: complete elimination of the Russian share (from 45% in 2021, to 12% in 2025, to zero by 30 September 2027 as per Regulation 2026/261[20]). Several developments - growth in regasification capacity of LNG as well as increased diversification towards Norway, the US, and Algeria – have reduced concentration of the aggregated gas supply from 0.284 to 0.200 and increased its WDI threefold. At the same time, materials related to the green and digital transition continue being in a critical condition as per the threshold approach: there exists a single supplier with a hostility coefficient of 0.7 covering 93-97% of demand with no possibility of intra-year substitution.

[20] Regulation (EU) 2026/261 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 January 2026 on phasing out Russian natural gas imports… // Official Journal of the European Union. 2026. L, 2026/261, 2.2.2026.

Second, diversification on the aggregate level conceals the re-concentration on the sub-market level – paradox of substituted dependence. The LNG sub-market, which currently constitutes 45% of EU gas import, is dominated by a single supplier (US, 56%), whose hostility coefficient grew from 0.1 to 0.4 in 2025 amid the explicit link between tariffs and energy purchases established through the Turnberry negotiations. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to strikes in late February 2026 revealed the second layer of the same paradox: the chokepoint of LNG is geographical rather than political, as this strait carries 20% of world LNG supply (110 bcm a year). Force majeure introduced by Qatar in March 2026 sent the TTF price from the band of €28-40 per MWh to €49 by early June and beyond €80 by mid-September 2026, although the EU's direct dependence on Middle Eastern LNG is minimal (ECB, 2026)[21]. Europe thus traded a dependency on a pipeline to a political chokepoint in favor of dependency on the seaborne route, which includes a maritime chokepoint.

Third, country-level concentration conceals firm-level concentration – asymmetry of scale. The Herfindahl-Hirschman index of legacy semiconductors is relatively low, amounting to 0.28; however, the case of Nexperia company in October 2025, which involved China's Ministry of Commerce to cease export of the chips produced by the company headquartered in the Netherlands but owned by China after the latter used emergency powers in its corporate governance, brought Volkswagen and Volvo to the brink of shutdowns, since 70% of Nexperia's chips are manufactured in China and its diodes and transistors are embedded into the majority of European cars[22]. The partial shipment was restored in November 2025, and the full workaround was implemented by January 2026. The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index of automotive discrete components at the firm level would easily exceed 0.5. Therefore, WDI should be calculated at the level of the most disaggregated substitutable unit – a plant, a firm, or a strait, rather than customs nomenclature.

Fourth, the hostility coefficient is endogenous to policy. The same exposure to the US in cloud services (72%) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) (56%) resulted in the negligible WDI in 2020 and in a noticeable one in 2025. There was no change in the physical infrastructure of supply; only change in willingness of the supplier to employ it was observed. This

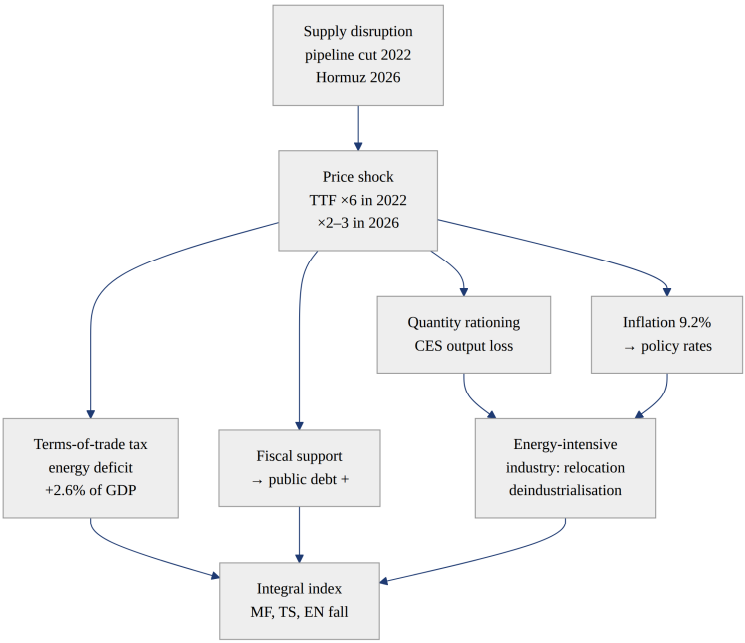
[21] *Demuth L., Manu A.-S., Stalla-Bourdillon A.* Energy shock: why oil and gas prices have risen less than expected // The ECB Blog. 2026. 27 July. URL: https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/blog/date/2026/html/ecb.blog20260727~1212bdb8f9.en.html

[22] *Tan N.* The Nexperia Crisis Shows Why Export Controls Need Allied Coordination // Lawfare. 2026. 27 January. URL: https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-nexperia-crisis-shows-why-export-controls-need-allied-coordination

constitutes a formal elaboration of the Farrell-Newman's idea[23]: the weaponization of interdependence is the decision made by the hub, rather than an inherent feature of the network.

5.1.4. The energy dimension: two shocks in four years and a CES estimation of output losses. The 2022 energy shock caused a loss of 2.6% of GDP to the European Union through the terms of trade channel only. To be more specific, the energy trade deficit grew to €649.5 billion, or €420 billion more than its value for 2015–2021 average of €229 billion. However, the direct loss through the reduced production due to the 13% decline in gas usage was far lower, amounting to 0.3-0.5% of GDP assuming the elasticity of substitution of 0.2. Given the existing set of parameters, the impact of the 2026 Hormuz shock will be about one third of this magnitude, but with a reduced storage cushion and a tight monetary policy already established.

The channels through which an energy shock affects the economy's security are multiple but they are not additive; on the contrary, they reinforce each other.



Scheme 5.1.2. Transmission channels of an energy shock to the economic security of the EU
(compiled by the author)

[23] *Farrell H., Newman A.L.* Weaponized Interdependence… P. 42-79.

The quantity channel will be represented using the constant elasticity of substitution (CES) production function where energy (gas) E is used together with the total amount of all other inputs X using the same method which was used for Germany by Bachmann et al. (2022)[24]:

$$Y = \left[(1-\alpha) X^{\frac{\sigma-1}{\sigma}} + \alpha E^{\frac{\sigma-1}{\sigma}}\right]^{\frac{\sigma}{\sigma-1}}, \qquad \Delta \ln Y = \frac{\sigma}{\sigma-1} \ln\left[(1-\alpha) + \alpha (1-\delta)^{\frac{\sigma-1}{\sigma}}\right] \tag{5.4}$$

where α is the share of gas costs in the cost structure before the shock in prices (0.02 in the EU; 0.035 including gas indexed electricity), σ is the elasticity of substitution between gas and all other inputs, and δ is the proportional decrease in the gas quantity. If we consider the case of price shock not a direct decrease in quantity then rationing will be endogenous:

$$\delta = 1 - \left(\frac{P_1}{P_0}\right)^{-\sigma} \tag{5.5}$$

where P_0 and P_1 are the pre-shock and post-shock gas prices, respectively. Implications that follow from it can be seen in Table 5.1.5.

Table 5.1.5. Output loss from a reduction of gas supply, % of EU GDP (CES model, α = 0.02; α = 0.035 in brackets)

Elasticity σ	δ = 10%	δ = 20%	δ = 30%	δ = 45% (Russian share, 2021)
0.05 (near-Leontief)	0.63 (1.06)	4.54 (6.43)	15.36 (18.19)	39.20 (42.14)
0.10	0.35 (0.60)	1.35 (2.26)	4.32 (6.73)	18.58 (23.86)
0.20	0.26 (0.45)	0.71 (1.23)	1.53 (2.63)	4.53 (7.46)
0.50	0.22 (0.39)	0.50 (0.87)	0.85 (1.49)	1.62 (2.82)
1.00 (Cobb–Douglas)	0.21 (0.37)	0.45 (0.78)	0.71 (1.25)	1.20 (2.09)

Source: author's calculations.

The table provides parameter-space location for the 2022 dispute between the "catastrophe" school (implies σ < 0.1 and 45% reduction) and the "manageable" school (σ ≈ 0.2-0.5 and 20-30% reduction): the two schools differ by factor of ten to thirty in implied loss, but the entire difference is attributable to the curvature of the substitution around Leontief limit. The real-world experience of 2022-2023 provides

[24] *Bachmann R., Baqaee D., Bayer C., Kuhn M., Löschel A., Moll B., Peichl A., Pittel K., Schularick M.* What if? The Economic Effects for Germany of a Stop of Energy Imports from Russia // ECONtribute Policy Brief. 2022. № 028.

information on σ. The ratio of prices in 2021 to 2022 annual TTF averages was about six; under σ = 0.2, CES implies an endogenous quantity reduction of 30% and direct GDP loss of 1.5%, while σ = 0.1 implies a 16% reduction and 0.9% GDP loss. The reduction in EU gas consumption was 13% in 2022 and 20% by 2023 compared to 2019-2021 average; EU GDP grew by 3.5% in 2022 and 0.4% in 2023 – consistent with revealed elasticity of 0.1-0.2, direct GDP loss of 0.4-0.9% and aggregate GDP loss (including terms of trade effect) of 3% of GDP in 2022-2023. In other words, the energy shock was mainly income shock rather than capacity shock, yet the income shock was big enough to make three out of six elements of the integral index go into the danger zone simultaneously (see 5.1.7).

The terms of trade channel is directly measured by the energy trade deficit as a share of GDP. Its path from 2015 to 2025 (Figure 5.1.3) shows the ratchet asymmetry in energy security: the deficit did not return to its pre-shock ratio (1.6% of GDP in 2025) for four years after the shock hit, even though the shock itself took place in a year; meanwhile, the ratio started growing again by 2026, with energy-product imports causing worsening of EU goods balance into a deficit of €21.8 billion in 2Q 2026 (Eurostat)[25].

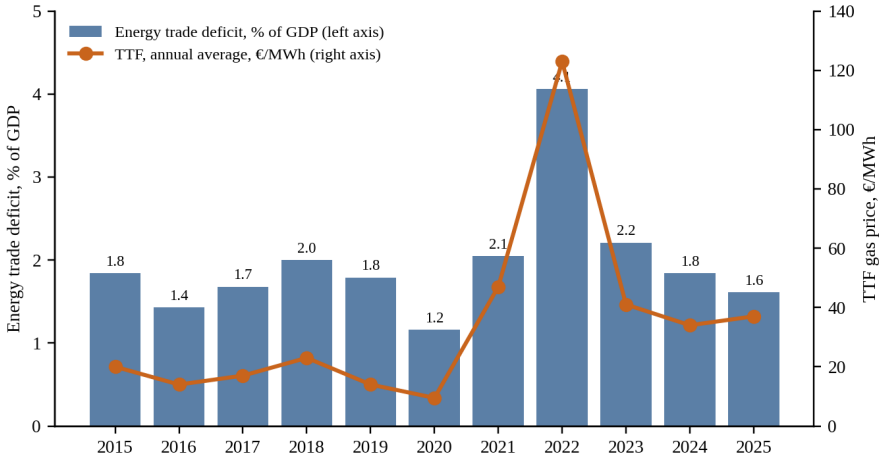


Figure 5.1.3. Terms-of-trade channel of energy shocks: EU energy trade deficit, % of GDP (bars, left axis) and annual average TTF gas price, €/MWh (line, right axis), 2015–2025. Eurostat, ICE Endex, author's calculations; 2016–2019 and 2021–2024 deficits approximate

[25] EU international trade in goods – latest developments // Eurostat. Statistics Explained. 2026. URL: https://cutt.ly/DyneRVGm

The comparison of the two shocks (Table 5.1.6) shows why the second has so far been less destructive, and why this should not be mistaken for resilience.

Table 5.1.6. The 2022 pipeline shock and the 2026 Hormuz shock compared

Parameter	2022 (Russian pipeline cut)	2026 (closure of the Strait of Hormuz)
Physical loss, oil	≈1 mb/d (1% of global supply)	≈14 mb/d on average (14% of global supply); 20 mb/d interrupted
Physical loss, gas	Russian exports to Europe –126 bcm	≈110 bcm/year of LNG transiting Hormuz (20% of global LNG) at risk
Exposure of the EU	Direct: 45% of gas imports from Russia	Indirect: limited direct dependence on Middle-Eastern LNG, price contagion via global LNG market
TTF before the shock	€80–90/MWh (already stressed)	€28–40/MWh (well-supplied)
TTF reaction	+79% (Feb–Aug 2022); peak ≈€350/MWh	+53% to €49/MWh by early June; ≈€65 in August; above €80 by mid-September 2026
Oil price reaction	+30% at peak	+50% at peak, +29% by June (≈$94/bbl); above $100 in September
Storage	Low (≈28–30% in March 2022)	≈28% in March 2026; ≈68% in mid-September 2026, ≈17 pp below seasonal norm
Competition for LNG	JKM–TTF spread negative: cargoes diverted to Europe	Spread positive but small: weaker Asian demand, gas-to-coal switching
Policy response	REPowerEU, storage obligation 90%, price cap, coordinated stock release 182 mb	IEA coordinated release 400 mb; gas phase-out regulation unchanged; ECB rate increase to 2.50% (September 2026)
Dominant driver of price	Physical supply loss after precautionary phase	Precautionary demand; physical loss contained by pipeline rerouting

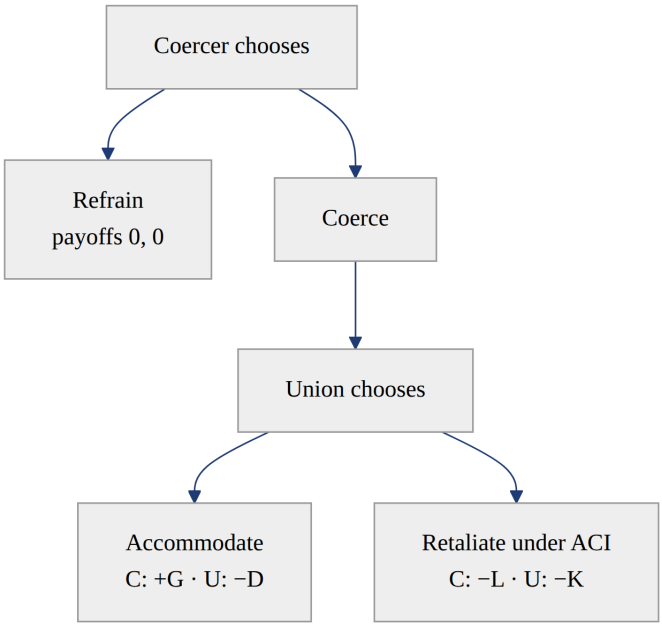
Source: compiled by the author on the basis of ECB (2026) and market reports[26]; September 2026 values approximate.

[26] *Demuth L., Manu A.-S., Stalla-Bourdillon A.* Energy shock… // The ECB Blog. 2026. 27 July; *Caldara D., Cavallo M., Iacoviello M.* Oil price elasticities and oil price fluctuations // Journal of Monetary Economics. 2019. Vol. 103. P. 1-20.

Regarding the 2026 shock, the model predicts the following order of magnitude. A year-long price rise of €20, €40, or €55 per MWh increases the cost of EU gas imports (some 3,000 TWh imported) to €59 billion, €119 billion, or €163 billion, or 0.31%, 0.62%, or 0.85% of GDP, respectively, through the terms of trade channel. Quantity channel endogenously adds 0.37% of GDP with a price doubling and 0.69% with a tripling. The total loss falls between 0.7% and 1.5% of GDP and thus makes up one third to one half of the GDP loss seen in 2022. This effect occurs despite the fact that the level of public debt is not yet back to its pre-2020 level, the inflation rate has just settled around its target, and the storage level cannot now benefit from low demand in Asia for ensuring a second winter, unlike in 2022. The lesson in terms of security of the two shocks is geographically consistent. EU has managed to lower the multiplier of the hostile character of its energy dependence but neither its exposure (import dependence in 57-58% in 2024-2025) nor its concentration. Thus, exposure remains the multiplier of geography into price.

5.1.5. Economic coercion and deterrence: a game-theoretic model of the Anti-Coercion Instrument. ACI is a deterrent only if the probability p held by the coercer that the Union will retaliate is above the critical value $p^* = G/(G+L)$. In the case of the 2025 US tariff episode, the critical value was about 0.56, while the observed behavior of the Union – a six month suspension of its planned €93 billion package of retaliation and an agreement not to raise tariff rates above 15 percent – indicated that p fell somewhere within the range of 0.2–0.3. Thus, the instrument was not credible where credibility was needed, and superfluous where it was cheap to obtain (coercion of a single member state, $p^* \approx 0.09$).

In our model, economic coercion can be viewed as an incomplete information game, in which a coercer (C) and the Union (U) take turns. Specifically, the coercer takes the first move and decides to coerce (by means of tariffs, export controls, boycotts, etc.), thereby securing a gain equal to G for the coercer and a loss of D for the Union. If the Union is coerced, it can choose to retaliate or accommodate, depending on the operation of the Anti-Coercion Instrument (ACI): a retaliation costs the coercer a loss L, and the Union K (trade losses, escalation risk, weaponizable dependency). There are two types of the Union: resolute ($K < D$, retaliate) and accommodating ($K > D$, concede). The coercer's prior belief about the Union is p.



Scheme 5.1.3. Extensive form of the coercion–deterrence game between a third country and the Union
(compiled by the author)

The coercer's expected payoff from coercion is $p(-L) + (1-p)G$; coercion is deterred if and only if this is non-positive:

$$p \geq p^* = \frac{G}{G+L}, \qquad p = \pi_{QMV} \cdot \pi_{speed} \cdot \pi_{cohesion} \tag{5.6}$$

The second equation expresses the Union's credibility via three institutional multipliers: (i) the probability of reaching the required qualified majority by the Council according to Article 5 of Regulation 2023/2675[27] on the identification of coercion (π_QMV); (ii) the probability of implementing the measures before the coercing country gets its gains, based on an entire procedure that can take six to twelve months from review to decision-making and implementation (π_speed); and (iii) the probability of having no defection among member states via bilateral

[27] Regulation (EU) 2023/2675 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 on the protection of the Union and its Member States from economic coercion by third countries ... // Official Journal of the European Union. 2023. L, 2023/2675, 7.12.2023. Art. 5.

accommodation (π_cohesion). Because each of these multipliers is represented as a fraction, the product of all three will be automatically smaller than the lowest multiplier. This is because of the structure of the credibility concept of a union consisting of 27 countries in relation to a unitary state.

Table 5.1.7. Episodes of coercion against the EU and its member states, 2021–2026: estimated stakes, deterrence threshold and revealed credibility

Episode	Instrument of coercion	Estimated stakes G / L, € bn per year	Thres-hold p*	Revealed p (author's estimate)	Outcome
China v. Lithuania, 2021–2022	Informal customs blockade, pressure on EU firms with Lithuanian inputs	3 / 30	0.09	0 (ACI not yet in force)	Coercion executed; WTO case DS610; Lithuanian exports to China fell by about 80%
Russia v. EU, 2021–2022	Withholding of pipeline gas, Nord Stream 2 leverage	120 / 90	0.57	≈0.3 ex ante; ≈1.0 ex post (20 sanctions packages)	Deterrence failed; retaliation massive but after the fact
United States v. EU, 2025	Sections 232 and IEEPA tariffs (steel and aluminium 25–50%, cars 25%, reciprocal 20%→10%)	45 / 35	0.56	0.2–0.3 (€93 bn package prepared, then suspended; Turnberry ceiling of 15% accepted)	Coercion partly successful; asymmetric deal implemented 1 July 2026
China v. EU, April–October 2025	Export licensing of rare earths and magnets; halt of Nexperia chip exports	25 / 60	0.29	0.1–0.2 (no ACI procedure opened; dialogue; RESourceEU)	Relief obtained through the US–China truce of October 2025, not through EU leverage

Source: author's calculations; stakes are order-of-magnitude estimates of annual gains and losses.

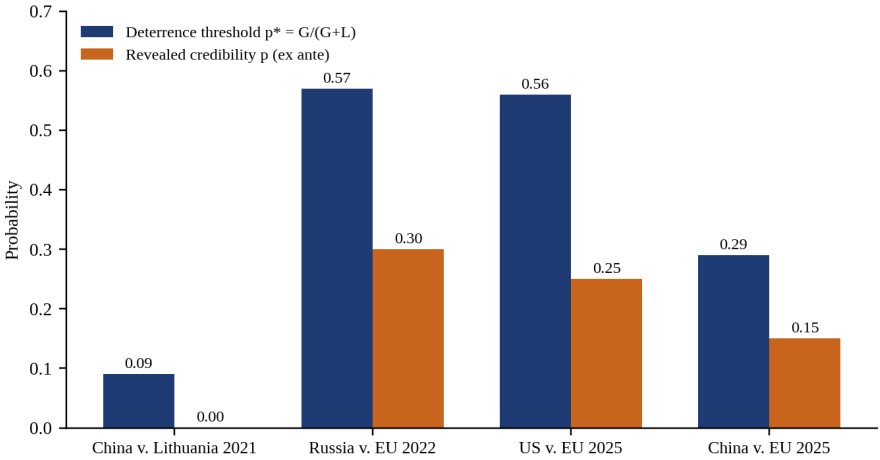


Figure 5.1.4. Deterrence gap of the Anti-Coercion Instrument: deterrence threshold p* = G/(G + L) against the credibility the Union revealed ex ante, four episodes; coercion is deterred only where p exceeds p*. Author's estimates, Table 5.1.7

This table describes what could be seen as the credibility problem associated with the ACI. For the Chinese scenario, the threshold is fairly low (p* = 0.29); that is, the Union's yearly import from China, valued at €559 billion, would make even partial interference cost-effective for the coercer; however, no process was undertaken. Herein lies the solution not in terms of the belief of the coercer but the Union's own payoff matrix, whereby the cost of retaliation K includes the expected damage from exploiting weaponizable dependencies outlined in 5.1.3 by the coercer. Once the coercer controls 93% of rare-earth magnets, 95% of solar modules, and 70% of battery cells, the Union's K will be larger than D, which implies an accommodating position on the side of the Union, recognized by the coercer. Thus, the Union falls into the retaliation trap; its capacity to deter is necessarily bounded above by its own WDI. Namely,

$$K = K_{trade} + \sum_{k} WDI_k \cdot V_k, \qquad \text{retaliation is rational only if } D > K \tag{5.7}$$

where V is the value of EU output that depends on product k. Reducing WDI is therefore not only a resilience policy; it is the precondition for the ACI to become credible at all. In the American episode the mechanism was different: K was dominated by the escalation risk to a market absorbing 21% of EU goods exports and by the security dependence on the coercer, and the credibility multipliers were low; an illustrative decomposition gives

$$p = \pi_{QMV} \cdot \pi_{speed} \cdot \pi_{cohesion} \approx 0.6 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.8 = 0.24 < p^* = 0.56$$

This prior threat of the coercer that the Union will use the tool of retaliation stays far away from the deterrence level. There are three design conclusions that can be drawn from the comparative statics of the model. First, the marginal deterrent value of the ACI reaches maximum when the Union is faced with the coercion of the Lithuania-type (the type characterised by low G, high L and p* lower than 0.1), when even the weakly credible Union is able to deter, and just the presence of the instrument would change the outcome of the events of 2021. Second, when the coercer is a hub on which the Union is dependent, the binding constraint is K rather than p; hence, the focus should be on decreasing the WDI (stockpiling, the CRM Centre, and the 65% single supplier criterion of the CRM Act) rather than increasing the speed. Third, since credibility is multiplicative, the returns to institutional reforms are compounded: increasing each factor from 0.6 to 0.8 increases p from 0.22 to 0.51 – from clearly below to around the American threshold. The Union that is unable to reform its decision making process can still increase π_speed by the pre-authorised automatic response lists, which is exactly the message of the December 2025 Communication and which has not been enshrined in the law yet.

5.1.6. Trade-tariff and financial-fiscal dimensions: the cost of coercion and the debt trajectory of security. With the implementation of the Turnberry settlement, the coercive tariff gets turned into a structural reduction of annual EU goods exports of €40–120 billion (or about 0.2–0.65% of GDP, depending on elasticities and pass-through rates). At the same time, the fiscal expansion driven by security considerations raises the debt ratio of the Union, assuming constant policies, from 82% of GDP in 2025 to around 93% in 2030 and exceeding 100% in 2033. These are the two ways in which coercion and its consequences get transmitted into the financial security of the Union — the element that, oddly enough, turns out to be the most significant one, according to the integrated index of section 5.1.7.

The tariff channel. The EU-US framework agreement dated 21 August 2025, put into effect through the Council regulations adopted on 25 June 2026 and taking effect on 1 July 2026, sets up an all-encompassing cap of 15% for the majority of EU goods shipped to the US (cars capped at 15% down from 27.5%; semiconductors and drugs capped; aircraft and generics maintained at MFN) with zero EU tariffs on US industrial goods. Steel and aluminium continue to be taxed at 50% under Section 232 with the Commission empowered to suspend concessions if the US duty on derivatives does not fall below 15% by 31 December 2026. A sunset clause

ends the arrangement by the end of 2029 (Council, 20 May 2026)[28]. The impact of the first phase of export effects is estimated as follows:

$$\Delta X = X_c \cdot \varepsilon \cdot \varphi \cdot \frac{\tau_1 - \tau_0}{1 + \tau_0} \tag{5.8}$$

where $X_c \approx$ €380 billion is the value of EU exports covered by the ceiling (about two thirds of the €555 billion exported to the United States in 2025), $\tau_0 = 1.5\%$ is the pre-2025 average applied tariff, $\tau_1 = 15\%$, ε is the US import demand elasticity and φ the share of the tariff passed through to US prices (the remainder being absorbed in EU exporters' margins — a loss of income rather than of volume).

Table 5.1.8. First-round loss of EU goods exports to the United States under the 15% ceiling, € billion per year (% of EU GDP in brackets)

Elasticity ε	Pass-through φ = 0.5	φ = 0.8	φ = 1.0
−1.0	−25 (−0.14)	−40 (−0.22)	−51 (−0.27)
−2.0	−51 (−0.27)	−81 (−0.43)	−101 (−0.54)
−3.0	−76 (−0.41)	−121 (−0.65)	−152 (−0.82)

Source: author's calculations.

The actual path falls in the middle cells of the table. EU exports to the USA peaked in the first quarter of 2025 because of frontloading prior to the tariffs and then fell in three consecutive quarters; by the second quarter of 2026, exports were 26% below their peak level, whereas imports from the USA rose by 8%, and the goods trade balance deficit narrowed from €80 billion to €29 billion (Eurostat)[29]. Some of this fall results from frontloading unwinding, and some comes from energy purchases agreed upon at Turnberry; nevertheless, the best guess suggests that the effect is of a permanent nature and implies a loss of roughly €60-100 billion per year, or 0.3-0.5% of GDP, comparable to the direct loss of output suffered during the 2022 gas shock. The disparity in the settlement (zero against fifteen) is, in the language of section 5.1.5, the price D of accommodation, and the scale of D proves that the credibility of the Union is quite low.

The financial-sovereignty channel. The security of financial systems is the component where the Union acts as a hub, not a spoke[30]. The euro

[28] EU-US trade: Council and Parliament strike a deal to implement the tariff elements of the Joint Statement… // Council of the European Union. 2026. 20 May.
[29] EU trade with the United States – latest developments // Eurostat. Statistics Explained. 2026. URL: https://cutt.ly/vynrapVo
[30] *Луцишин З.О.* Трансформація світової фінансової системи в умовах глобалізації: монографія. Київ: Друк, 2002. 320 с.

makes up 20% of global currency reserves, the Eurosystem manages the second largest payment infrastructure, and €210 billion of immobilised Russian central-bank assets are stored in the EU, €185 billion of which are stored in Euroclear in Belgium. The position of the hub of the financial system has been put to test in December 2025, when the European Council, lacking the ability to provide sufficient guarantees to Belgium regarding retaliation and litigation, abandoned the reparations-loan scheme in favour of approving a €90 billion loan to Ukraine for 2026-2027, funded via union-level borrowing on capital markets, with Hungary, Slovakia, and Czechia refusing to take part; the assets remain immobilised, and the Union retains the option to use them to repay the loan (European Council, 18-19 December 2025)[31]. This is a real-life example of the theory of weaponised interdependence. The chokepoint advantage is available to the Union, but it cannot be used due to the same legal-institutional multipliers that constrain the credibility of the ACI.

The fiscal channel. Security is paid for with debt. The June 2025 Hague commitment to spend 3.5% of GDP on core defence and an additional 1.5% of GDP on security-related investments, the SAFE €150 billion loan facility, activation of the national escape clause by sixteen member states, and the Ukraine €90 billion loan add up to 1.0-1.5 percentage points of GDP in annual primary deficits over the course of the decade. The debt ratio follows the standard formula for debt accumulation.

$$d_t = d_{t-1}\frac{1 + i_t}{1 + g_t} - pb_t + sfa_t \qquad (5.9)$$

where i is the implicit interest rate on the stock of debt, g nominal growth, pb the primary balance and sfa the stock-flow adjustment (0.3% of GDP a year, reflecting SAFE and Ukraine-loan lending recorded below the line). Three scenarios are simulated for the EU aggregate from the 2025 ratio of 82% of GDP (Table 5.1.9).

Table 5.1.9. Scenarios of public debt dynamics of the EU-27 aggregate, 2026–2035

Parameter	A. Consolidation baseline	B. Security expansion	C. Security expansion under stagflation
Implicit interest rate i	2.3% rising to 3.0% by 2033 as pre-2022 debt rolls over	2.4% rising to 3.5%	2.6% rising to 4.0% (risk premia, ECB tightening)
Nominal growth g	3.5% (1.3% real + 2.2% deflator)	3.4%	2.6% (0.3% real + 2.3% deflator, then energy-driven inflation)

[31] European Council meeting (18 December 2025): Conclusions. EUCO 24/25. Brussels, 18.12.2025. URL: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-24-2025-INIT/en/pdf

Primary balance *pb*	−1.2% improving to 0 by 2032	−2.2% to −2.4% in 2026–2030, −1.5% by 2035	−2.0% to −2.3% throughout
Debt ratio 2030	83.5%	92.7%	97.7%
Debt ratio 2035	82.9%	103.5%	116.4%
Interest bill 2035, % GDP (i × d)	≈2.5	≈3.6	≈4.7

Source: author's calculations.

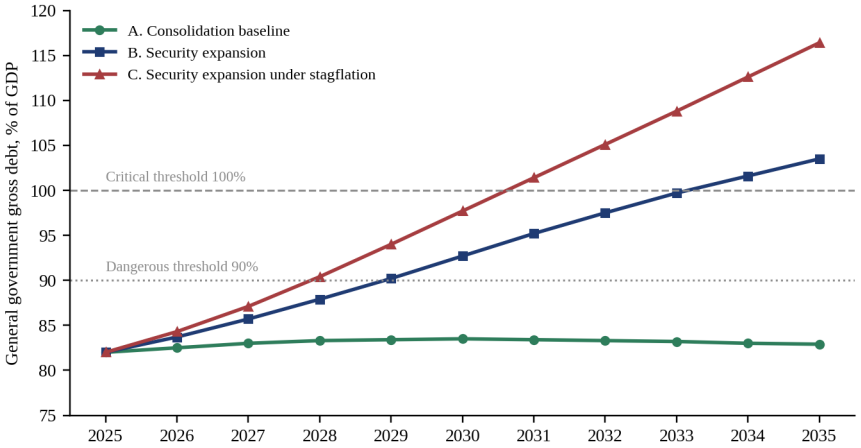


Figure 5.1.5. Debt trajectory of security: general government gross debt of the EU-27 aggregate, % of GDP, three scenarios of Table 5.1.9, 2025–2035; dashed lines – dangerous (90%) and critical (100%) thresholds.
Author's calculations

What the model illustrates is an asymmetry of economic security across time horizons. Actions taken today to reduce exposure and aggression multipliers via defense, stockpiles, energy infrastructure, and subsidized chip and battery capacity get reflected through a worsening of the financial part of the same index in the next period. In Scenario B, interest payments alone will amount to more than the total pre-2022 EU-level budget; in Scenario C, the aggregate ratio exceeds 100 percent – crossing the critical point of the threshold approach – by 2031, while the sovereign-spread proxy for the financial component would move from the current optimum into the danger zone, as seen after 2011–2012. To overcome such an asymmetry does not require any fiscal effort, but a real one. It is only when the nominal growth rate permanently surpasses the

implicit interest rate (Scenario A, g – i ≈ +1 percentage point) that the snowball effect is negative. This is how the competitiveness agenda set forth in the Draghi report[32] and the single market agenda described in the Letta report[33] can be understood as both growth and fiscal security tools.

5.1.7. Integral assessment of EU economic security, 2015–2025: indicator system, thresholds, weights and results. In terms of the IIES-EU developed above, the European Union for a whole decade (2015–2025) was positioned in the unsatisfactory range (0.44–0.63), reaching the satisfactory threshold only in 2016–2017 and 2019. In particular, the lowest point (0.435) in 2022 was the bottom one of this period and belonged to 0.035 of the limit of the dangerous zone. Its recovery to 0.581 in 2025 is classified as cyclical and reflects the monotonous dynamics of two structural components: technological-innovation (0.56 → 0.43) and raw materials and industrial base (0.48 → 0.29).

The index is based on the national threshold paradigm (measurement methodology that involves five characteristic values per each indicator, normalization of indicators on a common scale, their weighting, and aggregation), applied to the risk object related to the EU de-risking paradigm. Six functional components are distinguished: macroeconomic and fiscal (MF), financial and monetary (FM), energy (EN), trade and supply-chain (TS), technological-innovation (TI), and critical raw materials and industrial base (CR). They are measured by 24 indicators (Table 5.1.10), including 11 stimulants (S) and 13 disstimulants (D). Data are taken from the aggregates of EU-27 on the basis of Eurostat[34], European Central Bank (ECB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) COFER, European Banking Authority (EBA), ACER, ICE Endex, and Commission's CRM and Chips Act impact assessments. Values for 2025 are provisional, while several structural indicators (shares of semiconductors and batteries, cloud services, rare earth elements (REE) and photovoltaics (PV) imports) are based on rough industry estimates and need to be validated against the most recent sources.

[32] *Draghi M.* The Future of European Competitiveness… 2024.
[33] *Letta E.* Much More than a Market: Speed, Security, Solidarity. Empowering the Single Market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU Citizens. Brussels, 2024. URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-a-market-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf
[34] EU trade in goods surplus down to €128 billion in 2025 // Eurostat. 2026. 26 March. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20260326-4; Trade in goods with China in 2025 // Eurostat. 2026. 10 April. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20260410-2

Table 5.1.10. Indicators of the integral index of EU economic security: thresholds, selected values and weights

Component indicator (unit)	Type	Thresholds: critical / dangerous / unsatisfactory / satisfactory / optimal	2015	2020	2022	2025	Weight in component
MF Real GDP growth (%)	S	−3 / 0 / 1 / 2 / 3	2.3	−5.6	3.5	1.4	0.240
MF Deviation of HICP inflation from 2% (pp)	D	5 / 3 / 2 / 1 / 0.5	1.9	1.3	7.2	0.3	0.297
MF General government gross debt (% GDP)	D	100 / 90 / 80 / 70 / 60	84.5	90.0	83.4	81.8	0.111
MF General government deficit (% GDP)	D	6 / 4.5 / 3 / 1.5 / 0.5	1.9	6.6	3.3	3.3	0.225
MF Unemployment rate (%)	D	12 / 10 / 8 / 6 / 4	10.0	7.2	6.2	5.9	0.127
FM Current account balance (% GDP)	S	−4 / −2 / 0 / 1 / 2	2.4	2.1	0.6	2.6	0.181
FM Euro share in global FX reserves (%)	S	12 / 15 / 18 / 20 / 25	19.5	21.3	20.5	20.0	0.143
FM 10-year spread Italy–Germany, annual average (bp)	D	400 / 300 / 200 / 100 / 50	120	160	200	100	0.252
FM Non-performing loans ratio of EU banks (%)	D	12 / 8 / 5 / 3 / 2	5.7	2.6	1.8	1.9	0.424
EN Energy import dependency (%)	D	70 / 60 / 50 / 40 / 30	56.0	57.5	62.5	57.5	0.138
EN Share of Russia in extra-EU gas imports (%)	D	50 / 35 / 20 / 10 / 0	40	43	24	12	0.365
EN TTF gas price, annual average (€/MWh)	D	120 / 70 / 40 / 25 / 15	20	9.5	123	37	0.327
EN Renewables in gross final energy consumption (%)	S	10 / 15 / 20 / 25 / 32	17.8	22.0	23.0	25.5	0.170
TS Share of China in extra-EU goods imports (%)	D	30 / 25 / 20 / 15 / 10	20.3	22.4	20.8	22.3	0.146
TS Goods trade deficit with China (% GDP)	D	3.0 / 2.0 / 1.5 / 1.0 / 0.5	1.5	1.3	2.5	1.9	0.279
TS Energy trade deficit (% GDP)	D	4.0 / 3.0 / 2.0 / 1.5 / 1.0	1.84	1.16	4.06	1.61	0.433
TS Share of the United States in extra-EU goods exports (%)	D	30 / 25 / 20 / 15 / 12	20.7	18.3	19.8	21.0	0.141
TI R&D expenditure (% GDP)	S	1.0 / 1.5 / 2.0 / 2.5 / 3.0	2.04	2.31	2.24	2.20	0.198

TI EU share in global semiconductor manufacturing (%)	S	3 / 5 / 10 / 15 / 20	10	9.5	9	9	0.179
TI Share of US providers in the EU cloud market (%)	D	80 / 65 / 50 / 40 / 30	55	67	70	72	0.623
CR · Share of China in EU imports of rare-earth magnets and REE (%)	D	90 / 80 / 65 / 50 / 30	95	96	95	93	0.154
CR Manufacturing share in gross value added (%)	S	10 / 12 / 14 / 16 / 20	16.0	15.1	15.6	14.9	0.127
CR · EU share in global battery-cell manufacturing capacity (%)	S	2 / 5 / 10 / 15 / 25	1	6	7	10	0.221
CR · Share of China in EU imports of solar PV modules (%)	D	90 / 80 / 65 / 50 / 30	60	90	95	95	0.497

Source: compiled and calculated by the author; thresholds set by the author on the basis of Maastricht and Stability and Growth Pact reference values, CRM Act and Chips Act 2030 benchmarks, the Commission's dependency criteria and the practice of the Ukrainian methodology of economic security assessment[35].

Each indicator is mapped onto the interval [0; 1] by a piecewise-linear function anchored at its five characteristic values $x^{(1)} < \ldots < x^{(5)}$ (critical, dangerous, unsatisfactory, satisfactory, optimal; the sequence is reversed for disstimulants), to which the levels 0.2, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8 and 1.0 are assigned:

$$y_{it} = 0.2\,k + 0.2\,\frac{x_{it} - x_i^{(k)}}{x_i^{(k+1)} - x_i^{(k)}}, \quad x_{it} \in \left[x_i^{(k)}, x_i^{(k+1)}\right], \; k = 1, \ldots, 4; \qquad y_{it} = 1 \text{ for } x_{it} \geq x_i^{(5)} \tag{5.10}$$

with a linear descent to zero below the critical value. The function is deliberately non-linear in the original units: a movement from the satisfactory to the optimal value counts as much as a movement from the critical to the dangerous one, which encodes the security judgement that thresholds, not averages, matter.

Within each component the weights combine an equal-weight prior with entropy weights derived from the information content of each indicator over 2015–2025, which penalises indicators that are uninformative because they never move:

[35] Методичні рекомендації щодо розрахунку рівня економічної безпеки України... від 29.10.2013 № 1277.

$$e_i = -\frac{1}{\ln T}\sum_{t=1}^{T} p_{it}\ln p_{it}, \quad p_{it} = \frac{y_{it}}{\sum_t y_{it}}, \quad w_i = 1/2\,\frac{1}{n_c} + 1/2\,\frac{1-e_i}{\sum_{j\in c}(1-e_j)} \tag{5.11}$$

Across components the weights are expert priors aligned with the risk hierarchy of the 2023 Strategy and the 2025 Communication: MF 0.15, FM 0.15, EN 0.20, TS 0.20, TI 0.15, CR 0.15. The component score is a weighted arithmetic mean of its normalised indicators; the integral index is a weighted *geometric* mean of the component scores, so that a collapse in one component cannot be compensated by strength in another — the non-compensatory property that distinguishes a security index from a welfare index:

$$S_{ct} = \sum_{i\in c} w_i\, y_{it}, \qquad IIES_t = \prod_{c=1}^{6} S_{ct}^{W_c} \tag{5.12}$$

Five zones are read off the result: optimal (≥ 0.8), satisfactory (0.6–0.8), unsatisfactory (0.4–0.6), dangerous (0.2–0.4), critical (< 0.2).

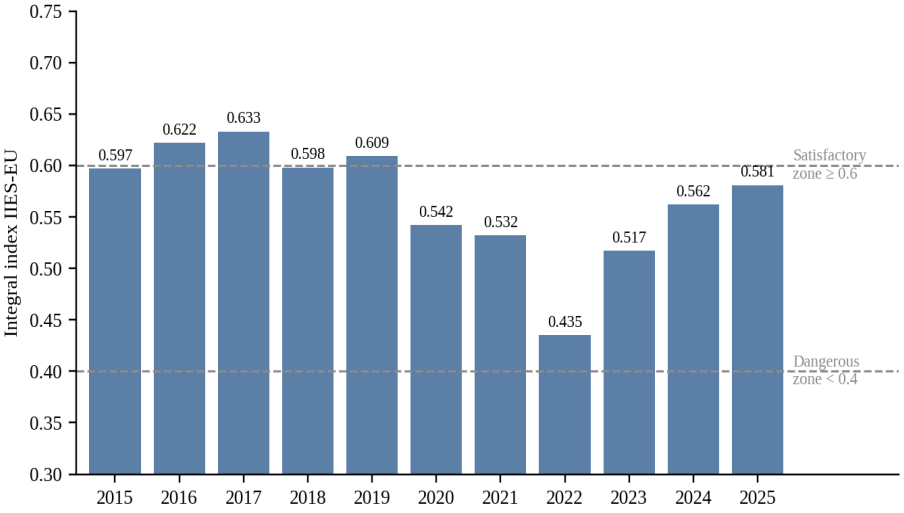


Figure 5.1.6. Integral index of economic security of the EU (IIES-EU), 2015–2025: weighted geometric mean of six components; dashed lines — satisfactory (0.6) and dangerous (0.4) thresholds.
Author's calculations, Table 5.1.11

Table 5.1.11. Component scores and the integral index of EU economic security, 2015–2025

Component	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
MF Macroeconomic and fiscal	0.666	0.688	0.876	0.872	0.868	0.384	0.714	0.524	0.477	0.725	0.752
FM Financial and monetary	0.714	0.721	0.755	0.756	0.815	0.847	0.919	0.823	0.881	0.898	0.921
EN Energy	0.569	0.603	0.585	0.552	0.599	0.612	0.461	0.432	0.642	0.650	0.687
TS Trade and supply chain	0.622	0.704	0.671	0.607	0.689	0.763	0.569	0.334	0.558	0.594	0.604
TI Technological-innovation	0.562	0.538	0.524	0.503	0.487	0.480	0.456	0.446	0.436	0.426	0.426
CR Raw materials and industrial base	0.478	0.494	0.476	0.420	0.347	0.299	0.296	0.268	0.265	0.274	0.292
IIES-EU (geometric)	**0.597**	**0.622**	**0.633**	**0.598**	**0.609**	**0.542**	**0.532**	**0.435**	**0.517**	**0.562**	**0.581**
Zone	unsat.	satisf.	satisf.	unsat.	satisf.	unsat.	unsat.	unsat.	unsat.	unsat.	unsat.
Sensitivity: arithmetic aggregation	0.601	0.627	0.646	0.614	0.635	0.577	0.564	0.462	0.549	0.597	0.617
Sensitivity: equal component weights	0.597	0.618	0.634	0.600	0.605	0.529	0.534	0.442	0.509	0.556	0.574

Source: author's calculations.

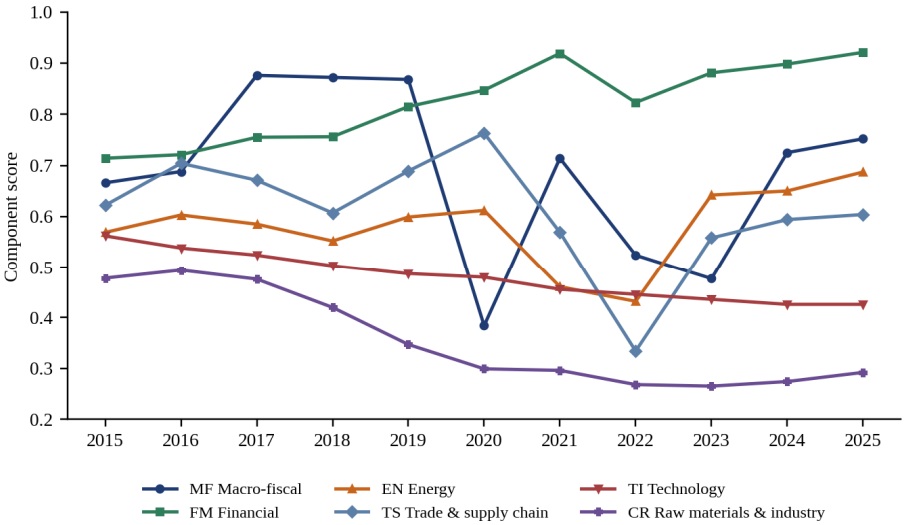


Figure 5.1.7. Component scores of the IIES-EU, 2015–2025.
Author's calculations, Table 5.1.11

The results admit five interpretations. The Union has never been economically secure in the threshold sense. Even at the 2017 peak the index stood at 0.633, in the lower half of the satisfactory zone; the average for the decade is 0.566. The reason is structural: two components (TI and CR) never left the unsatisfactory and dangerous zones respectively, and the geometric aggregation transmits their weakness to the whole.

The 2022 shock was a compound shock. The fall of the index from 0.532 in 2021 to 0.435 in 2022 decomposes into contributions of −0.235 from the trade component (energy deficit at 4.1% of GDP, China deficit at 2.5%), −0.190 from the macroeconomic component (inflation deviation of 7.2 pp), −0.097 from the financial component (spread widening, current account collapse) and −0.029 from energy – whose fall had already occurred in 2021 (−0.151), when the Russian withholding of supply began. The energy component is, in other words, a leading indicator of the other three.

Structural erosion beneath cyclical recovery. Over 2015-2025 the financial component improved by 0.207 and energy by 0.118, while technological-innovation fell by 0.136 and raw materials by 0.186. The correlation between the financial and the two structural components is strongly negative (−0.92 with TI, −0.90 with CR), and the two structural components move together (+0.94). This is the paradox of financial-real divergence: the decade in which the Union repaired its banks, compressed its

sovereign spreads and consolidated the euro's reserve role was the decade in which it lost ground in every capacity-based dimension of security. A security index that stopped at the financial subsystem – as national indices of financial security typically do - would have reported steady improvement.

Aggregation choice matters exactly where it should. Arithmetic aggregation overstates the index by 0.03-0.04 in every year and by 0.027 in 2022, and would have kept the Union out of the neighbourhood of the dangerous zone; equal component weights change little (±0.01), which shows that the result is driven by the data, not by the expert priors.

The revealed policy hierarchy is inverted relative to the measured one. The components in which the index is weakest (CR at 0.29, TI at 0.43) are those in which the instruments of 5.1.2 are youngest and least funded – the CRM Act of 2024, RESourceEU of December 2025, the CRM Centre of 2026 – whereas the component in which the index is strongest (FM at 0.92) is the one with the most mature institutional architecture (banking union, ESM, the ECB's transmission protection instrument). Economic security policy has been following the shocks, not the index.

5.1.8. Scenario modelling of EU economic security to 2030: a Monte Carlo simulation of the integral index. Under the assumption of inertia of the current policy regime, the overall index reaches the level of 0.587 in 2030, remaining in the unsatisfactory range. In the fragmented and coercive world, the index falls to 0.475 (with an 80% confidence interval of 0.44–0.51). The only scenario in which the Union will be able to overcome the satisfactory threshold is the managed de-risking approach, leading to a 2030 mean level of 0.704 and 99% probability of exceeding 0.6 in 2029. The 2026 nowcast for all three scenarios is 0.549, showing a reduction of 0.032 compared to 2025 due to the Hormuz energy shock (average TTF €58/MWh), deficit in energy equal to 2.3% of GDP, and inflation 1 percentage point higher than the target. The trajectory of each of the 24 indicators is a stochastic one around a scenario-specific path that linearly interpolates from the 2026 nowcast to the 2030 target value:

$$x_{i,t} = \mu_{i,t}^{(s)} + 0.5\left(x_{i,t-1} - \mu_{i,t-1}^{(s)}\right) + \varepsilon_{i,t}, \qquad \varepsilon_{i,t} \sim N(0, s_i^2), \quad s_i = 0.6 \cdot \mathrm{sd}(\Delta x_i)_{2015\text{–}2025} \tag{5.13}$$

The autoregressive term passes on half of the deviation experienced every year to the next year. The variance in the innovations is scaled down to match that of the annual variations between 2015 and 2025, multiplied by 0.6 in order to rule out the pandemic and war-related outliers in the base noise. 10,000 simulations are carried out for each scenario, while the index is rescored using the cut-offs and weightings given in 5.1.7. The three scenarios are identified by their 2030 objectives for the policy-movable indicators (see Table 5.1.12).

Table 5.1.12. Scenario assumptions: 2030 target values of key indicators (2025 actual and 2026 nowcast for reference)

Indicator	2025	2026 nowcast	S1 Managed de-risking	S2 Fragmentation and coercion	S3 Inertial status quo
Real GDP growth, %	1.4	0.9	1.6	0.5	1.2
Inflation deviation from 2%, pp	0.3	1.0	0.3	1.8	0.8
Government debt, % GDP	81.8	82.5	82	94	86
Italy–Germany spread, bp	100	110	90	220	130
TTF annual average, €/MWh	37	58	32	70	42
Share of Russia in gas imports, %	12	6	0	5	0
Renewables share, %	25.5	26.5	32	28	29
Energy trade deficit, % GDP	1.61	2.3	1.4	3.0	1.9
Goods deficit with China, % GDP	1.9	2.1	1.6	2.4	2.0
Share of the US in extra-EU exports, %	21.0	19.5	18	16	19
R&D expenditure, % GDP	2.20	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.25
EU share in semiconductor manufacturing, %	9	9	12	8	9.5
US share of the EU cloud market, %	72	72	62	75	72
China share in REE and magnet imports, %	93	92	75	92	88
EU share in battery-cell capacity, %	10	11	18	9	13
China share in PV module imports, %	95	95	75	96	92
Scenario narrative	—	Hormuz closure, ECB tightening	Strait reopened 2027; gas phase-out completed; CRM Centre, stockpiles and RESourceEU deliver; Chips Act 2.0; EU–US framework holds; debt stabilised	Prolonged Hormuz closure; EU–US framework collapses after the steel deadline of 31.12.2026; Chinese export controls resume after the truce lapses; defence surge financed by debt; spread widening	Partial implementation; benchmarks of the CRM Act missed by half; no new coercion episode

Source: author's assumptions.

Table 5.1.13. Simulation results: integral index IIES-EU by scenario, 2026–2030 (mean of 10,000 replications; 10th–90th percentile band in brackets)

Year	S1 Managed de-risking	P(IIES ≥ 0.6), S1	S2 Fragmentation and coercion	S3 Inertial status quo	P(IIES ≥ 0.6), S3
2026 (nowcast)	0.549 (0.519–0.579)	0.02	0.549 (0.520–0.579)	0.549 (0.519–0.578)	0.02
2027	0.591 (0.557–0.626)	0.37	0.529 (0.497–0.562)	0.558 (0.525–0.591)	0.06
2028	0.632 (0.595–0.669)	0.87	0.510 (0.478–0.542)	0.568 (0.533–0.603)	0.12
2029	0.670 (0.633–0.707)	0.99	0.492 (0.460–0.523)	0.578 (0.543–0.614)	0.21
2030	0.704 (0.667–0.741)	1.00	0.475 (0.443–0.506)	0.587 (0.552–0.623)	0.33
Components 2030: MF / FM / EN / TS / TI / CR	0.70 / 0.93 / 0.83 / 0.69 / 0.55 / 0.59		0.53 / 0.70 / 0.67 / 0.44 / 0.39 / 0.26	0.64 / 0.87 / 0.78 / 0.57 / 0.43 / 0.36	

Source: author's calculations.

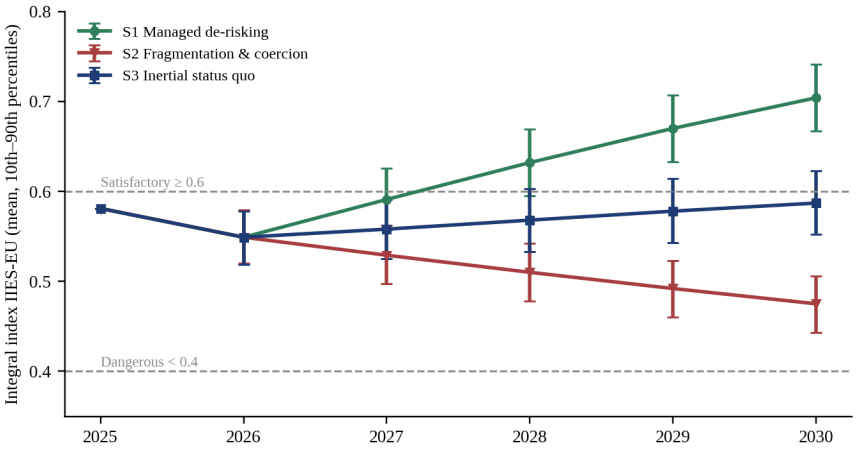


Figure 5.1.8. IIES-EU to 2030 under three scenarios: mean of 10,000 Monte Carlo replications with 10th–90th percentile whiskers; 2025 actual, 2026 nowcast; dashed lines – satisfactory (0.6) and dangerous (0.4) thresholds. Author's calculations, Table 5.1.13

The model produces four insights that would have been impossible with a deterministic forecast. First, policy worth can be quantified: the 2030 gap between de-risking and fragmentation scenarios is 0.23 index points, with the structure of the gap breaking down into 0.33 points for the raw materials component, 0.25 for trade and supply chains, 0.23 for the financial component, and 0.17 for the macro-fiscal component. As a result, the order in which the Union's security is decided is exactly opposite to the order in which its tools are concentrated.

Second, even the success scenario keeps the structural components below the acceptable level: technological innovation is 0.55 and raw materials 0.59 in 2030 under Scenario 1. Such a result is a direct reflection of the benchmarks for the 2030 CRM Act, which set 65% single-supplier ceiling corresponding to an unsatisfactory characteristic value of the scale used here rather than a satisfactory one. The benchmarks were designed for a decade of diversification and cannot be considered as security benchmarks.

Third, security is built up gradually but is lost quickly – the asymmetric ratchet effect mentioned above is visible at the index level as well. Under Scenario 1, it takes four years to gain 0.155 points; the 2022 shock led to a loss of 0.097 points in one year; a shock of the same type, combined with the fragmentation trend, will drop the index to 0.38 – into the dangerous region – in 2030. The probability of such an outcome is low only in terms of noise calibrated to the baseline volatility; geopolitical risk is the issue, not the statistics.

Fourth, the financial component acts as a buffer, whereas the fiscal transmission mechanism defines its limits: under Scenario 2, the financial component drops from 0.92 to 0.70 (gap of 220 bps, NPLs at 3.5%, debt 94% of GDP) and stops absorbing the geometric mean. The most powerful component of the Union is also the one that is directly affected by funding its actions against problems in other areas – that is, the intertemporal asymmetry discussed in section 5.1.6.

Conclusions. The European Union enters the second half of the 2020s with the most elaborate regulatory architecture of economic security of any open economy and with an integral level of economic security that has not left the unsatisfactory zone in eleven years. The gap between the two is the central finding of this section, and it can be stated in nine theses.

Economic security of an integration union is a category sui generis. It is defined by a triad of asymmetries – of interdependence (the Union is a hub in finance and regulation and a spoke in energy, materials and technology), of competences (supranational risk, national instruments) and of instruments (a regulatory power facing discretionary coercers) – which no national concept of economic security, including the threshold paradigm of the Ukrainian school, can accommodate without adaptation. The

synthesis proposed here keeps the measurement rigour of the threshold paradigm and transfers it to the risk object of the de-risking paradigm.

The architecture grew by accretion, not by design. Twenty-six acts and strategies between 2019 and September 2026, more than half of them after the 2023 Strategy, form a toolbox that is dense but asymmetric: nine of ten instrument classes are defensive or capacity-building, enforcement rests on 27 administrations, and the shock-to-instrument lag averages two years against shocks that unfold in days. The Joint Communication of December 2025 corrects the posture; it has not yet corrected the lag.

Vulnerability has migrated from energy to the material-technological base. On the Weaponisable Dependency Index, magnesium (0.58), rare-earth magnets (0.53) and solar modules (0.47) exceed the 2021 gas dependence on Russia (0.11) four- to five-fold, while the 2025 gas supply (0.04) is among the least vulnerable positions. Three regularities govern the map: diversification at the aggregate level conceals re-concentration in sub-markets (the paradox of substituted dependence: pipeline Russia seaborne LNG through Hormuz); country-level concentration understates firm-level chokepoints (the Nexperia asymmetry of scale); and the hostility multiplier is endogenous to the supplier's policy, so that the same exposure to the United States carried no risk in 2020 and a material one in 2025.

Energy shocks are income shocks before they are capacity shocks. The CES estimation locates the direct output loss of 2022 at 0.4-0.9% of GDP (revealed elasticity of substitution 0.1-0.2), against a terms-of-trade loss of 2.6% of GDP; the 2026 Hormuz shock is running at a third to a half of that intensity (0.7-1.5% of GDP combined). The Union reduced the hostility of its energy dependence but neither its exposure (57-58% import dependency) nor, fully, its concentration - and exposure is what geography converts into price.

Deterrence is bounded by the Union's own dependencies. The Anti-Coercion Instrument deters only where the coercer's belief in retaliation exceeds $p^*=G/(G+L)$; the Union's revealed credibility (0.2-0.3) lay below the threshold in the American episode (0.56) and – despite a low threshold of 0.29 – no procedure was opened in the Chinese one, because the retaliation cost K includes the second-round use of the dependencies mapped in thesis 3. Reducing the WDI is therefore the precondition of credibility, and credibility, being multiplicative in institutional factors, has compounding returns to reform.

The cost of accommodation and the debt trajectory of security are the two financial channels of coercion. The 15% ceiling costs €60-100 billion of annual exports (0.3-0.5% of GDP); security-driven primary deficits carry the aggregate debt ratio to 93-98% of GDP by 2030 and above 100% by 2031-

2033 unless nominal growth durably exceeds the implicit interest rate. Competitiveness policy is, in this reading, fiscal-security policy.

The integral index has never reached the satisfactory zone for more than two consecutive years. IIES-EU averaged 0.566 over 2015-2025, troughed at 0.435 in 2022 (0.035 above the dangerous zone) and recovered to 0.581 in 2025. The recovery is cyclical: the financial component rose by 0.21 over the decade while technological-innovation fell by 0.14 and raw materials by 0.19 – the paradox of financial-real divergence, invisible to any index confined to the financial subsystem.

Policy is worth 0.23 index points by 2030, and benchmarks are not thresholds. Managed de-risking lifts the index to 0.70 with near certainty of crossing 0.6 by 2029; fragmentation and coercion lower it to 0.475; inertia leaves it at 0.587. Even in the success scenario the structural components remain below 0.6, because the CRM Act's 65% single-supplier benchmark corresponds to the unsatisfactory, not the satisfactory, characteristic value. Security is accumulated at 0.04 points a year and lost at 0.10 points a year.

Five imperatives follow. (i) From instrument density to instrument credibility: pre-authorised, automatic response lists under the ACI that raise π_speed without treaty change. (ii) From product-level to unit-level monitoring: the WDI computed at the narrowest substitutable unit – plant, firm, strait – as the official metric of the Economic Security Information Hub. (iii) From benchmarks to thresholds: the 2030 targets of the CRM, Chips and Net-Zero Industry Acts re-based on security zones rather than diversification percentages. (iv) The growth imperative as fiscal precondition: $g > i$ is the only sustainable financing of security. (v) The partner pillar as the cheapest reduction of the WDI: for Ukraine, whose lithium, titanium, graphite and gas-storage capacity map directly onto the Union's weakest components, integration into the EU economic security perimeter – through the CRM investment framework, the Energy and Raw Materials Platform and the joint stockpiling pilot – is both a contribution to European security and the economic content of accession.

5.2. Energy Security of the European Union (*Alla Atamanenko*)

In the contemporary global world, energy is an important factor in economic development and in ensuring the viability and social functioning of every country; consequently, a stable energy supply is of great importance for the functioning of the economy and society. Accordingly, energy security constitutes an important component of the national security of each individual Member State and of the EU as a unique supranational entity. This becomes particularly pertinent under conditions of geopolitical

instability, when energy resources become a weapon employed by states as an instrument of political influence. Russia's gas wars against Ukraine in the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s; the Russian-Ukrainian war, which began in February 2014 with the occupation of Crimea and transitioned to a full-scale format in February 2022; the changes in the supply of energy resources from Russia caused by this war, including as a result of the sanctions imposed; the post-pandemic increase in demand for energy resources amid the revival of economies; and, finally, the sharp rise in hydrocarbon prices as a result of the American-Israeli-Iranian war, have had a substantial impact on EU energy security in the twenty-first century. These processes have generated a need for substantial changes in various spheres of energy security and have demonstrated their interrelationship with the introduction of a decarbonising economy, which, evidently, is determined not solely by climate-related imperatives. In responding to these challenges, the EU has introduced adaptive policies in the energy sector, taking into account the need to combine the imposition of sanctions with economic development. However, owing to differences in the economic capacity of individual countries to respond to energy crises, it was compelled to take into account the gradual nature of market diversification and the development of energy-saving technologies. Thus, the interconnectedness of geopolitical, geoeconomic and climate processes has a substantial impact on EU energy security and requires the strengthening of its resilience to security challenges in the energy sector, while energy security is not merely an economic problem but is closely connected with the transformation of the contemporary world order.

Literature Review. The importance and topicality of EU energy security have prompted the emergence of a substantial body of analytical research and scholarly literature both within the EU and Ukraine and beyond. The analysis undertaken by researchers reveals various aspects of the problem from geopolitical, political, economic, social, environmental and other perspectives. Platforms for discussion have included the websites of think tanks such as the *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, the *EU Institute for Security Studies*, the *National Institute for Strategic Studies*, the *Oxford Institute for Energy Studies*, the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, the *Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air*, the *Warsaw Institute*, *GLOBSEC* and others.

Important aspects of the analysis of the situation can be found in the research of numerous foreign and Ukrainian scholars – B.K. Sovacool, I. Yakovyuk, M. Tsvelikh, A. Covatariu, O. Pindyuk et al., who examine the principal components of energy security as a phenomenon; the conditions under which energy influence is transformed into a weapon (the weaponisation of energy); the EU's institutional and political decisions

aimed at building energy security; their impact on the energy resilience of states, based on case studies of individual Member States; the impact of the EU's sanctions policy towards Russia on the Russian and European economies; the recovery of the world's economies after the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the process of diversification of global resource markets, including within the EU; the dangers of new dependencies; the interrelationship between energy policies and the green transition; and other related issues. Somewhat apart from traditional geopolitical and economic research trends in the field of security are studies addressing various energy-generation options as a comprehensive response to contemporary challenges, the transformation of the technological aspects of energy flexibility, the use of artificial intelligence for the management of energy systems, and the challenges associated with these developments, among other issues. In other words, the existing scholarly literature and analytical studies offer valuable research, but they remain somewhat fragmented and do not take into account all aspects of energy security. Without claiming comprehensiveness, this section constitutes an attempt at a generalised examination of EU energy security, the Union's policies in this sphere, contemporary security challenges, and the prospects for EU energy security, taking into account the diverse risks and influencing factors, as well as the need to build energy resilience. This makes it possible to partially address the existing gaps and underscores the relevance of the study.

Theoretical Framework. The study draws upon the views of representatives of several theoretical paradigms, thereby making it possible to understand EU energy security in a comprehensive manner. The theoretical foundation for understanding the security impact of the weaponisation of energy is the realist paradigm, which explains the relationship between control over energy and control over influence and power. The liberal paradigm provides an understanding of the EU's approaches to a common institutional response to challenges and threats with the aim of regulating the energy market, maintaining energy stability, and ensuring state resilience. Constructivism makes it possible to understand the influence of shared value-based approaches on ensuring the adoption and implementation of political decisions, as well as the significance of information narratives both in the sphere of internal strategic communications of the EU and its Member States for ensuring energy security and resilience, and in the context of disinformation influences under contemporary hybrid confrontation, which expand the range of challenges and threats.

In addition, the study was informed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver's regional security complex theory (RSCT), which takes into account the complexity of regional security, the inclusion of all states within the

regional system in a global network of security interdependence, and their capacity to withstand not only military and political threats but also challenges in the social sphere, the economy, the environment, and other areas[36]. From this perspective, RSCT is compatible with the realist, liberal, and constructivist paradigms, including A. Wendt's social theory.

Understanding Energy Security. An understanding of the definition of energy security can be found both in individual studies and in the definitions provided by international organisations. It traditionally encompasses economic, environmental, technological, social and geopolitical factors. The energy security of each state has its own specific characteristics and, according to some scholars, may differ in national, institutional and individual dimensions[37]. This refers to differences among countries in their ability to access energy resources, their cost, environmental sustainability, infrastructure resilience, the impact of climate shocks, and so forth[38]. Developed countries find it easier to attract investment, whereas developing states need to make considerable efforts to secure capital. Thus, the energy security of an individual country depends to a considerable extent on the willingness and capacity of its governmental institutions to work towards the achievement of established energy-development objectives. Energy security has emerged as a defining force and a source of competitive advantage in the global energy landscape[39].

First appearing in 1960[40], the term "energy security" gradually evolved to incorporate new and relevant components. The theoretical elaboration of the concept deepened considerably in the context of the oil crises of the 1970s; in the twenty-first century, energy security became a fundamental component of national security, international law and the global economic order. Researchers have approached its assessment from different perspectives. In particular, M. Wilrich, as early as 1976, rightly emphasised the importance of separated "Security of Supply" and "Security of Demand", linking them to the security dependencies of hydrocarbon-importing and hydrocarbon-exporting countries[41]. According to the

[36] *Buzan B., Wæver O.* Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 564 p. URL: https://cutt.ly/YygXDnYx
[37] *Yakymchuk A. et al.* Modeling and Governance of the Country's Energy Security: The Example of Ukraine. // International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy. 2022. Vol. 12. № 5. P. 280. URL: https://doi.org/10.32479/ijeep.13397
[38] Energy Transition Index 2026 // World Economic Forum, 2026. 18 June. URL: https://cutt.ly/dygXDCAl
[39] Ibidem.
[40] *Lubell H.* Security of Supply and Energy Policy in Western Europe // World Politics. 1961. Vol. 13. № 3. P. 400–422. URL: https://doi.org/10.2307/2009482
[41] *Willrich M.* International energy issues and options // Annual Review of Energy. 1976. Vol. 1. № 1. P. 743–772. URL: https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.eg.01.110176.003523

prominent American scholar of energy security B.K. Sovacool, who has studied the development of the energy sector in the countries of Asia and the Pacific region, an important component in understanding the concept is "Energy Poverty", which affects the quality of human life, health, the environment, economic development, and so forth[42].

Contemporary international and European institutions employ both general classical definitions and specialised normative approaches developed to reflect the specific characteristics of particular energy sectors when defining the concept of "energy security". The most authoritative and universally recognised definition in international analytical and law-making practice is that formulated by the International Energy Agency (IEA). IEA defines energy security as "uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price"[43]. At the same time, whereas previously the agency focused exclusively on traditional security components, in particular on oil security, its work has since broadened to include the security of natural gas, electricity and clean energy supply chains[44]. Today, the IEA continually monitors and analyses these threats, including geopolitical risks, cyberattacks on energy infrastructure, supply chain disruptions and extreme weather events[45]. It should also be noted that the organisation's website refers to attention being paid to critical minerals[46], which indicates the growing share of alternative energy in the contemporary world, for the technological development of which these minerals are required.

For the elaboration and practical application of the concept of "energy security" in global analytical practice, the "4A" conceptual framework (Availability, Accessibility, Affordability, Acceptability)[47] proposed in 2007 by the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre is used. This approach makes it possible to comprehensively assess the resilience of the energy sector of a state or region by means of the four interrelated dimensions. Availability denotes the physical presence of primary energy resources, including imported resources. The principal threats in this regard may include disruptions to supply chains, depletion of deposits,

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[42] *Sovacool B.K.* Energy Access and Energy Security in Asia and the Pacific. Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2013. URL: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/31154/ewp-383.pdf

[43] Energy Security // Glossary. International Energy Agency. URL: https://www.iea.org/glossary#E

[44] Energy Security. Reliable, affordable access to all fuels and energy sources // IEA. URL: https://www.iea.org/topics/energy-security#critical-minerals

[45] Ibidem.

[46] Ibidem.

[47] Oil and Gas Security Indexation. APEC Oil and Gas Security Studies. Series 8. Tokyo: Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APERC). 2017. P. 5-6. URL: https://aperc.or.jp/file/2017/5/16/Oil_and_Gas_Security_Indexation.pdf

natural disasters, and so forth. Accessibility determines the political, economic and technological capacity of a state or consumers to obtain access to available resources when required. The principal threats in this sphere may be geopolitical in nature, ranging from armed conflicts to market monopolisation. Affordability is associated with energy prices, which determine the economic competitiveness of businesses and the purchasing power of households. Finally, acceptability is primarily associated with social and environmental acceptability: the extent to which methods of energy extraction are environmentally sustainable and the use of energy resources is consistent with climate objectives. It should be noted that the formation of social acceptability can be influenced both by a state's strategic communications and by hostile propaganda under conditions of conflict. At the same time, in the twenty-first century, owing to global climate change and the resulting changes in climate policies associated with the concept of the green transition, the criterion of environmental acceptability is becoming an equal factor in ensuring energy security. In the contemporary geopolitically unstable world and under conditions of volatility in energy-resource prices, not all security components can be guaranteed by the state, but it should seek to anticipate risks, challenges and threats and attempt to mitigate them.

This is why the currently relevant concept of "energy resilience" is closely linked to the concept of "energy security", denoting a state's capacity to withstand risks, challenges and threats in the energy sector. Resilience entails long-term processes: energy security is primarily oriented towards the timely implementation of strategic investments to ensure energy supply in accordance with the pace of economic development and the environmental needs of society. It encompasses long-term (10 years and more) and medium-term (up to 10 years) planning of generating capacities, the development of transport infrastructure, and the harmonisation of national energy policy with sustainable-development strategies. By contrast, short-term energy security focuses on the capacity of the energy system to respond promptly to sudden changes in the balance between demand and supply or to physical disruptions in supply caused by accidents, natural disasters or geopolitical factors[48]. The combination of these aspects determines the energy resilience of a state or, in the case of the EU, of an association of states. While in the twentieth century some states were dependent on markets for fossil fuels and products derived from them, in the first decade of the twenty-first century ongoing liberalisation of

[48] *Яковюк І.В., Цвеліх М.П.* Енергетична безпека Європейського Союзу в умовах російської агресії проти України // Проблеми законності = Problems of legality: зб. наук. пр. Харків: Нац. юрид. ун-т ім. Ярослава Мудрого, 2023. Вип. 160. С. 175-176. URL: http://doi.org/10.21564/2414-990X.160.274518

EU and a range of other major energy markets have widened the range of actors that influence long-term supply risks for end users. Before the advent of liberalisation long-term energy security responsibility resided with the large multinational oil companies and mainly public companies in other energy domains[49].

The EU's Energy Dependence on Russia. Under the policy of détente, the Soviet Union, having offered a cheaper and more stable alternative for energy supplies, became the most powerful exporter of gas and other hydrocarbons to the countries of Central Europe initially and, subsequently, to those of Western Europe. The principal elements of this pipeline network were initially the *Brotherhood* and *Northern Lights pipelines*, constructed in the 1960s and 1970s, through which Austria (1968) and the Federal Republic of Germany (1970) became the first countries in Western Europe to receive gas. In 1983, gas exports increased following the completion of construction of the *Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhhorod gas pipeline*.

Following the dissolution of the USSR, Russia inherited the pipelines, and for many years the export of energy resources remained a principal source of revenue for Russia[50] and an instrument of manipulation, while it was the largest exporter of natural gas to the EU and continued to expand its energy influence through hydrocarbon exports, particularly in cooperation with Germany. At the end of the 1990s, the *Yamal-Europe pipeline* was constructed, running through Belarus and Poland to Germany. On the basis of an agreement signed in 2005 between *Gazprom*, responsible for the export of Russian gas, and the German partners *E.ON Ruhrgas* and *BASF*, with the support of the governments of both countries, two lines of the *Nord Stream gas pipeline* were constructed directly from Russia to Germany[51]. This provoked discussions among EU countries, particularly Germany and Poland, but did not affect the decision that had been taken.

The German leadership did not consider the launch of *Nord Stream* from the perspective of Poland's or other countries' interests, which resulted in a lack of coordination among their energy policies. Despite an awareness of the danger posed by *Gazprom*'s monopoly on the gas market prior to the aggressor's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, neither Germany in particular nor the EU as a whole took significant practical steps to attract a

[49] *Jansen J.C., Seebregts A.J.* Long-term energy services security: What is it and how can it be measured and valued? // Energy Policy. 2010. Vol. 38. Issue 4. P. 1654–1664. URL: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.02.047

[50] Russian Federation. In: Trade Profiles 2022. Geneva: World Trade Organization, 2022. P. 298–299. URL: https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/daily_update_e/trade_profiles/RU_e.pdf

[51] Energy security in Europe // Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). 2017. URL: https://www.sipri.org/research/conflict-peace-and-security/europe/energy-security-europe

comparable number of alternative suppliers. The reasons for this lay in Germany's considerable dependence on fossil-fuel imports.

In 2020, Germany imported from Russia 50% of the coal it required and 65% of its gas. Poland was also heavily dependent on Russian hydrocarbons: prior to the beginning of the full-scale war, it met 20% of its domestic coal requirements with Russian coal and imported approximately 50% of the gas it used and more than 60% of its oil from Russia. Together, Germany and Poland accounted for more than 70% of total coal consumption in the EU, against the background of the overall decline since 2000 in both coal use and domestic coal production. Overall, even before the onset of COVID-19, in 2019 Russia accounted for 41.1% of natural gas imports, 26.9% of crude oil imports, and 46.7% of solid fuel imports[52] in the EU. From 2014 to February 2022, Germany continued its cooperation with Russia, launching in 2015 the implementation of the Nord Stream 2 project, which had been under construction since 2018[53]. At the same time, for various reasons, Russia did not implement its plan to construct the South Stream pipeline along the bed of the Black Sea to supply gas to the countries of Southern Europe[54], instead constructing TurkStream.

On the eve of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, almost the entire nuclear power sector of Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia), as well as that of Finland, was also dependent on Russian nuclear fuel, since the aforementioned European countries operate Soviet-era nuclear power units[55] as well as modernised Russian ones. As of 2022, Russian nuclear fuel accounted for 20.2% of imported nuclear fuel, compared with 0.1% supplied by Niger[56]. From 2014, Hungary expanded its cooperation with Russia on the basis of the completion of new capacity at the *Paks* Nuclear Power Plant, which is intended to enable two new power units to be commissioned by the beginning of the 2030s. After the outbreak of Russia's unprovoked full-scale war against Ukraine, at the end of August 2022, the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority granted *Rosatom* permission to construct Units V and VI at the plant[57].

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[52] *Renou-Maissant P., Abdesselam R., Bonnet J.* Trajectories for Energy Transition in EU-28 Countries over the Period 2000–2019: a Multidimensional Approach // Environmental Modeling & Assessment. 2022. Vol. 27. P. 817–835. URL: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8977436/

[53] *Найт Б.* Історія «Північного потоку» // DW. 2021. 27 July. URL: https://www.dw.com/uk/istoriia-pivnichnoho-potoku/a-58648983

[54] *Бесчасна І.В.* Проект «Південний потік» – нереалізовані амбіції газового монополіста // Гранi. 2015. Т. 18, № 3. С. 23–27. URL: https://doi.org/10.15421/1715053

[55] *Petkova M.* Weekly data: Cutting nuclear links with Russia may be harder than cutting fossil fuel imports // Energy Monitor. 2022. 24 March. URL: https://www.energymonitor.ai/sectors/power/weekly-data-russian-uranium-supply-chains/

[56] Ibidem.

[57] *Коваленко О.* Кремль збільшив ядерний хабар Орбану – Bloomberg // УНІАН. 2023. 5 червня. URL: https://cutt.ly/hygXHu9e

EU Energy Policy. The energy policy aimed at ensuring energy security has always been important for the EU, from its establishment in 1951 as the European Coal and Steel Community and in 1957 as the *European Atomic Energy Community*. It was further specified following the signing of the *Treaty of Lisbon*. Measures to promote energy security were introduced from the outset of European integration, driven by major oil crises (the Suez Crisis of 1956–1957, the 1970 OPEC oil crisis, and others).

Subsequently, energy security became an integral element of the European Union's long-term strategies[58]. In 1991, the *European Energy Charter* was signed, the provisions of which were given legal form in the 1994 *Energy Charter Treaty*[59], which constitutes a unique multilateral legally binding agreement establishing the legal framework for international cooperation in the energy sector. Although it does not formally contain a definition in the form of a single generalising sentence, the Treaty defines energy security through a system of legal institutions oriented towards the creation of open, competitive and non-discriminatory markets. However, under contemporary conditions of sanctions and the green transition, it does not always correspond to the interests of states.

In order to create a security environment, a series of strategic documents was adopted successively, including the *Energy 2020 Strategy* on competitive, sustainable and secure energy, which was intended to help the EU reduce its dependence on fossil fuels while maintaining the affordability of energy for consumers and businesses. In the 21st century, issues of energy efficiency, EU climate policy and the use of renewable energy sources assumed an increasingly prominent role. Among the documents adopted were *Renewable Energy Directive* (2009), revised and updated in 2018 and 2021, *Green Paper A 2030 framework for climate and energy policies* (2013), *Communication of the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030* (2014), and others. In 2011, *Energy Roadmap 2050* was adopted[60].

In the *European Energy Security Strategy* adopted in May 2014, the European Commission noted the EU's significant dependence not only on

[58] Energy security in Europe // Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). 2017. URL: https://www.sipri.org/research/conflict-peace-and-security/europe/energy-security-europe

[59] Договір до Енергетичної Хартії та Заключний акт до неї. Протокол до Енергетичної Хартії з питань енергетичної ефективності і суміжних екологічних аспектів: договір, міжнародний документ від 17.12.1994 // Верховна Рада України. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_056#Text

[60] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Energy Roadmap 2050 // European Commission. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52011DC0885

Russian hydrocarbon exports (imports accounting for 53% of energy consumed, including almost 90% of crude oil imports, 66% of natural gas imports, 42% of solid fuel imports and 40% of nuclear fuel imports[61]), but also the greater vulnerability of the Baltic and Eastern European countries compared with other members, six of which depended on Russia as a single supplier, while three Member States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) were dependent on one external operator for the operation and balancing of their electricity network[62]. The Strategy became an integral component of *A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030* and envisaged eight areas intended to improve the situation in the energy sector: measures aimed at enhancing the EU's capacity to withstand substantial disruptions during the winter period; strengthening the solidarity mechanism and response to emergencies, including the coordination of risk assessments and contingency plans, as well as the protection of critical infrastructure; reducing energy needs; developing a properly functioning and fully integrated internal market; increasing energy production within the EU; further developing energy technologies; diversifying external supplies and the related network infrastructure; and improving the coordination of national energy policies and the formation of a common position embodied in an external energy policy[63].

The EU's measures prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine mainly concerned strengthening cooperation among states, including the development of the *Energy Union*, the construction of the internal energy market, the diversification of sources of supply, improvements in energy efficiency, and the reduction of harmful emissions into the atmosphere[64]. Specific directives adopted in the 2000s and subsequently safeguarded the supply of energy resources – gas, oil, electricity and others – and promoted energy efficiency.

When Russia reduced natural gas supplies to Europe by 80% in 2022, a rapid and complex transition took place from long-term dependence on Russian hydrocarbon imports towards the diversification of energy sources[65].

In May 2022, in response to the hardships and global energy market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European

[61] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. European Energy Security Strategy. European Commission (Brussels). 2014. 28 May. P. 2. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0330
[62] Ibidem.
[63] Енергетична безпека: європейський досвід // Офіс з фінансового та економічного аналізу у Верховній Раді України. 2016. 28 листопада. С. 2.
[64] Ibid. C. 3.
[65] *Гербут Н.А.* Енергетична політика ЄС: зміна фокуса в контексті агресії Росії проти України // Політикус. 2023. Вип. 4. С. 138. URL: https://doi.org/10.24195/2414-9616.2023-4.21

Commission introduced its *REPowerEU Plan* to phase out Russian fossil fuel imports. The Plan safeguarded EU citizens and businesses from energy shortages, supported Ukraine by weakening Russia's war chest, accelerated the transition to clean energy and stabilised prices. Key achievements of the implementation of *REPowerEU* as of 2025 included the complete cessation of coal purchases, a reduction of gas purchases by more than 30%, and a reduction of oil purchases by almost 25%. In accordance with Roadmap to fully end dependency on Russian energy, it is planned to stop all imports of Russian pipeline and liquefied natural gas by November 2027, to take action against Russia's 'shadow fleet' transporting oil and stop Russian oil imports by the end of 2027, and to restrict imports of uranium, enriched uranium and other nuclear materials deriving from Russia[66].

EU countries have their own diversification plans, agreed with the European Commission. In addition, the EU Energy Platform, which has played a crucial role in helping to diversify energy supply, was established in April 2022, while in 2025 the Commission expanded this mechanism into the *EU Energy and Raw Materials Platform* to empower EU companies in sourcing energy products and raw materials. The platform hosts a set of mechanisms covering hydrogen, raw materials, biomethane, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and natural gas[67]. Work on the development of green energy also continued. Given the need to speed up the EU's clean energy transition, the *Renewable Energy Directive* EU/2018/2001 was revised in 2023. The amending Directive EU/2023/2413 entered into force on 20 November 2023 with an 18-month period to transpose most of the directive's provisions into national law, and a shorter deadline of July 2024 for some provisions related to permitting for renewables[68].

The sharp increase in energy prices following the outbreak of the American-Israeli-Iranian war in February 2026, together with the continuation of the Russo-Ukrainian confrontation, also affected the EU. The import of only 8% of liquefied gas from this region did not shield Europe from fluctuations in European gas markets. The increase in global oil prices also resulted in higher prices in EU countries. However, this crisis demonstrated that EU countries remain considerably dependent on fossil fuels (57%)[69], despite the high share of energy generated from renewable sources. In response, the European Commission presented a comprehensive set of actions and measures on 22 April 2026. The objective

[66] REPowerEU. Affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe. European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/energy/repowereu_en
[67] Ibidem.
[68] Renewable Energy Directive // European Commission. URL: https://cutt.ly/UygXQVm8
[69] Accelerate EU to strengthen EU energy resilience // European Commission. URL: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/strategy/accelerateeu-strengthen-eu-energy-resilience_en

is an *Energy Union* that delivers energy security and clean, abundant, homegrown energy that is affordable to EU consumers and businesses. The EU will strengthen its energy system, invest further in clean energy and phase out fossil fuels from electricity production. The goal of creating the Energy Union is to provide assistance to consumers.

To this end, closer EU coordination is planned regarding exceptional uses of oil and gas reserves and the adoption of national measures, the protection of consumers and businesses, the production of greater quantities of clean energy, the strengthening of the EU energy system, and increased investment[70].

Thus, the principal components of the policy are the decarbonisation of the economy, adaptation to challenges, the improvement of crisis management at the level of the EU and its Member States, and the continued replacement of hydrocarbon suppliers. Market diversification and technological development, including in the field of alternative energy, as well as threats to critical infrastructure under conditions of hybrid confrontation, create additional challenges.

Threats to EU Energy Security and Ways of Overcoming Them following Russia's Unprovoked Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine. Prior to 2022, the EU purchased relatively inexpensive energy resources from Russia. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, supplies have decreased substantially, and in 2025 European Union countries purchased more than €235 billion worth of these exports[71], which was considerably lower than previous figures. The structure of the energy market changed following the conclusion of new agreements. Among fossil fuels, the share of liquefied natural gas increased significantly, with the United States becoming its principal supplier to Europe. Market diversification led to an increase in the EU's pipeline gas imports from Azerbaijan from 8.1 BCM in 2021 to almost 11.4 BCM in 2022, while imports from Norway rose from 82 BCM in 2021 to almost 90 BCM in 2022[72].

Meanwhile, the EU still imports approximately 12% of its total gas imports from Russia, both through pipelines and in liquefied form. Following the termination, upon the expiry of the relevant contract, of gas transit through Ukraine on 1 January 2025, the principal route became TurkStream, through which Russian gas reaches Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and Greece. Liquefied gas continues to be delivered under long-

[70] Ibidem.

[71] Payments to Russia for fossil fuels since 24 February 2022 // Russia Fossil Tracker. https://www.russiafossiltracker.com/

[72] *Singh U., Kaur A., Yadav A.* Energy security dynamics in Europe amid transatlantic decoupling from Russia // Discover Global Society. 2026. Vol. 4. № 90. P. 8. URL: https://doi.org/10.1007/s44282-026-00431-5

term contracts to terminals in Spain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Between January and May 2026, pipeline imports rose by 7% year-on-year, while LNG imports increased by 11%[73]. From November 2027, a complete ban on the use of Russian gas will take effect, and all Member States will be required to diversify their sources of procurement.

EU energy security is also to be supported by the *Regulation on gas storage* introduced in June 2022. Gas storage, in particular *Underground Gas Storage* (UGS), is instrumental to the security of supply as it provides an additional reserve in case of strong demand or supply disruptions. Typically, storage provides 25–30% of gas consumed in the EU during winter. It reduces the need to import additional gas and contributes to absorbing supply shocks[74]. In view of price volatility and uncertainty in the global energy sector, the *Regulation* was extended in March 2025 until the end of 2027.

The United States has become one of the principal beneficiaries of the Russian-Ukrainian war, increasing its energy-resource supplies to the EU owing to European restrictions on the use of gas and the ban on imports of seaborne crude oil from Russia in 2022 and petroleum products in 2023[75]. The development of shale-gas production has transformed the United States to the extent that by 2025 the country had attained "energy independence", at least in a nominal sense[76]. The EU's replacement of its previous dependence with dependence on the United States under conditions of contemporary geopolitical instability may constitute a threat, particularly with regard to the price affordability of hydrocarbons and all the potential consequences thereof. The Biden Administration actively brokered deals through the U.S.-EU Energy Security Task Force, committing to supply an additional 15 BCM of LNG annually through 2030. U.S. energy giants such as Cheniere and Venture Global secured 20-year contracts with EU buyers, ensuring long-term market dominance[77]. Unless the EU accelerates the green transition of its economy, this new dependence on American energy resources may have negative consequences. On the other hand, the availability of American LNG under long-term agreements may somewhat slow the green transition in certain countries. The situation continues to be complicated by the war in the

[73] Russian gas import contracts and diversification – 2026 // ACER: European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators. URL: https://cutt.ly/wygXEjnB
[74] Gas storage. Ensuring shared gas storage capacities in the EU is crucial to guarantee security of energy supply // European Commission. URL: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-security/gas-storage_en
[75] *Francis M.* The United States is a major energy exporter and importer, especially for petroleum // EIA. 2026. 27 May. URL: https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=67724
[76] *Singh U., Kaur A., Yadav A.* Energy security... P. 3.
[77] Ibid. P. 17.

Middle East, which also affects the global cost of oil and gas, while the political decision by the United States to temporarily lift sanctions, including energy sanctions, against Russia contradicts EU decisions, despite having only a very limited impact on European oil prices.

Russia's reorientation towards importers outside the EU has turned China, India and Turkey into the principal purchasers of Russian hydrocarbons. Despite Russia incurring certain financial losses when larger volumes are sold at a lower price per barrel, security threats to the EU can also be identified in this regard. From an economic perspective, the EU's purchase of Indian petroleum products indirectly replenishes the Russian budget with European money. Moreover, although the Chinese market is sufficiently diversified, cheaper fossil fuels from Russia and the use of domestically produced coal strengthen the economy of the PRC and create a threat of economic vulnerabilities for the EU through higher energy-resource prices and, consequently, higher prices for other goods compared with its economic competitors, China and the United States. This may affect the economy as a whole and the development of the defence sector under conditions of geopolitical threats. Thus, in 2023, electricity prices for energy-intensive industries in the EU were twice as high as those in China and the United States, making European competitiveness almost unattainable because of higher costs for energy used in production[78].

The green transition remains a logical response by the EU to geopolitical risks and, like the sanctions against Russia, fits fully within the liberal paradigm, not only through institutional and regulatory decisions, but also owing to an understanding of collective climate responsibility and the economic benefits offered by the use of alternative energy sources. The *REPowerEU Plan* not only commits to phasing out Russian oil but also accelerates the green transition and promotes substantial investment in renewable energy. The EU has doubled its solar energy use since 2019, achieving a record of almost 406 GW of new solar energy capacity installed by 2025. Wind alone reached a capacity of about 234 GW in 2023 and produced more electricity than gas. The EU has ensured that over 47.5% of its electricity now comes from renewables, and in Q2 2025, renewable sources generated 54% of the EU's net electricity, with solar reaching 22% and surpassing nuclear energy (21.6%) for the first time[79]. According to IEA data for 2025, global trends in the energy sector indicate that world demand for energy derived from all sources is increasing, with electricity

[78] *Covatariu A.* Strategy at the Geopolitical Crossroads: The Imperative for Secure and Clean Energy in Central and Eastern Europe // Clean Air Task Force. 2025. 30 June. URL: https://cutt.ly/HygXEZox

[79] In focus: solar energy – a shining star of Europe's clean transition // European Commission. 2026. URL: https://cutt.ly/MygXE7BR

assuming a dominant position in the contemporary world. Growth in solar PV met more than one-quarter of global primary energy demand growth, the first time on record that a modern renewable source contributed the largest share of the growth in global energy demand[80]. Almost half of the energy produced in the EU in 2024 came from renewable sources (48%). This was followed by nuclear (28%), solid fuels (15%), natural gas (5%) and crude oil (3%). Meanwhile, EU energy imports are dominated by fossil fuels[81]. Therefore, another reason for accelerating the green transition is the global vulnerability of the fossil-fuel market, as clearly demonstrated by the Middle Eastern crisis of 2026.

Motor vehicles account for almost half of global oil consumption, making this sector particularly vulnerable to fuel-price volatility and supply disruptions. According to IEA data, amid the crisis in the second quarter of 2026, electric-vehicle sales increased, with further growth forecast[82], which will also include increased sales of vehicles from China in the EU. The European energy market is affected by the electrification of transport, the functioning of households and industry, as well as the operation of data centres and AI. The need for secure electricity generation and supply also requires high-quality infrastructure and resilient grids protected against cyberattacks and physical threats.

The importance of renewable energy cannot be overstated as renewables offer a pathway to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and mitigate geopolitical risks[83]. However, the production of clean energy is also capable of creating economic dependencies. Analysis indicates that the United States may soon become the world's leading producer of blue hydrogen (hydrogen produced from natural gas in combination with carbon capture and underground storage), with projects having a total capacity of more than 1.5 million tonnes per year[84].

The production of such hydrogen as an environmentally sustainable low-carbon energy source will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the development of the US economy. Moreover, provided that it, together with other sources, is used to supply the domestic market, it may be sold to the EU. At the same time, the EU has introduced important documents intended to regulate the production and import of hydrogen. In particular,

[80] Global Energy Review 2026 // Global trends. URL: https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2026/global-trends
[81] Ibidem.
[82] Quarterly sales of electric cars break records in several key markets amid energy crisis // IEA, 2026. 30 July. URL: https://cutt.ly/uygXRzyH
[83] *Singh U., Kaur A., Yadav A.* Energy security... P. 3.
[84] *Soria S.C.* Commodities 2025: hydrogen's role redefined as decarbonization fuel in US. S&P Global Commodity Insights. 2024. 31 December. URL: https://cutt.ly/DygXROeT

in 2020, the *EU Hydrogen Strategy* sought to explore the potential of clean hydrogen to help decarbonise its economy in a cost-effective way, in line with the climate neutrality goal by 2050 set out in the *European Green Deal*. The strategy was also intended to contribute to the recovery from the economic effects of COVID-19. The strategy also outlined actions to support the production and use of clean hydrogen, focusing in particular on the mainstreaming of renewable hydrogen[85].

The 2020 European Hydrogen Strategy set out the objective to produce up to 10 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen in the EU. The 2023 *REPowerEU* plan proposes to complement this goal by facilitating 10 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen imports by 2030[86]. In 2024, an institutional framework was approved for the establishment of a fully functioning internal hydrogen market in the EU. These and other measures envisage the use of transitional low-carbon hydrogen, produced through nuclear energy or carbon capture from natural gas. At the same time, priority No. 1 is green (RFNBO) hydrogen, produced through the electrolysis of water using renewable energy from the sun and wind. Grey hydrogen, produced from gas without carbon capture, is in the process of being phased out of the EU energy sector. Thus, it can be argued that the EU is regulating the production and procurement of environmentally sustainable hydrogen, but critics of the green transformation have expressed concerns that regulation may be insufficient and some of the most polluting industries will receive billions in state aid and financing from EU funds, laws will be amended to suit their agenda, and deregulation will go as far as weakening recently adopted laws[87].

China is currently one of the EU's largest trading partners. The EU sells its goods to the PRC, but also purchases numerous Chinese products, including textiles, electrical equipment and electronic products. Analysts and policymakers are concerned about the EU's dependence on China, which is primarily associated with the PRC's exports of goods related to the green transition. These include electric vehicles, solar panels, batteries, and so forth. State subsidisation of such goods makes them more competitive than comparable products on the EU market. This dependence is also a source of other threats.

[85] A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe. European Commission. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/PIN/?uri=celex:52020DC0301

[86] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Hydrogen Bank. European Commission. URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023DC0156

[87] Polluters get paid. A costly 'Industrial Deal' by and for industry // Corporate Europe Observatory. 2025. 26 February. URL: https://corporateeurope.org/en/2025/02/polluters-get-paid

One of the significant long-term risks for the EU is associated with the import of Chinese electric vehicles, given that the automotive industry is a strategic commercial sector for the EU. In six EU countries, automobile manufacturing accounts for more than 10% of industrial employment, representing approximately 7% of EU GDP and 8.5% of employment in manufacturing[88]. Today, the EU has taken steps to protect itself against the threats arising from dependence on the PRC and possesses significant battery-manufacturing capacity in Hungary, Poland, France and Germany. The employment of people in the manufacture of electric vehicles and in the installation and maintenance of imported solar panels creates jobs and contributes to economic development to a certain extent[89].

Today, EU countries are actively investing in production across all value chains in solar energy, battery manufacturing and electric vehicles. These investments include the construction of new capacity as well as the expansion or retrofitting of existing facilities, particularly electric-vehicle assembly lines. Since 2017, Germany, Spain, Hungary, France and Sweden have invested the most in clean technologies[90].

However, the danger of dependence on China remains pertinent because of China's dominance of the critical-minerals market. Critical minerals are essential for a range of today's energy technologies and for the broader economy. For example, lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese and graphite are crucial to battery performance. Rare earth elements are indispensable to the permanent magnets used in wind turbines and electric vehicle motors. Electricity networks need a huge amount of aluminium and copper, the latter of which is the cornerstone of all electricity-related technologies. As demand for these materials grows strongly, their strategic importance has also increased – and policymakers have made ensuring secure and resilient mineral supply chains a major priority[91]. It is important that, despite production being almost sufficient in volume, 84% of the market in 2025 was concentrated in three leading producing countries (the PRC, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Of these, only Indonesia is a supplier of nickel, while China is the principal supplier of all other critical elements[92].

[88] *Fix L., Crebo-Rediker H.* China's Double Threat to Europe. How Beijing's Support for Moscow and Quest for EV Dominance Undermine European Security. // Foreign Affairs. 2024. 5 Septeber. URL: https://cutt.ly/qygXTc2o

[89] *Garsia-Herrero A.* Europe's green tech renaissance: seizing opportunities while guarding against over-reliance on China. Bruegel. 2025. 29 September. URL: https://cutt.ly/BygXTZqy

[90] Investments Overview. Bruegel. URL: https://cutt.ly/eygXT6Ke

[91] A new frontier for global energy security. Critical Minerals. IEA. URL: https://www.iea.org/topics/critical-minerals

[92] Ibidem.

A typical electric car requires six times the mineral inputs of a conventional car, and an onshore wind plant requires nine times more mineral resources than a gas-fired power plant. The IEA estimates that meeting the Paris Agreement goals would mean a quadrupling of mineral requirements for clean energy technologies by 2040. Lithium would see the fastest growth, with demand growing to over 40 times the current level by 2040, followed by graphite, cobalt, and nickel (around 20–25 times the current level)[93].

Of the 30 raw materials that the EU classifies as critical, 19 are predominantly imported from China. Although only 23% of global supply of all lithium-ion battery raw materials comes from China, its dominance in chemical production of battery-grade raw materials stands at 80% of total global production. For lithium-ion batteries, China accounted for 73% of global production in 2021. China's share in the manufacturing stages for solar panels, from the production of polysilicon to the panels themselves, exceeds 80%. This reliance on China puts the EU's access to minerals at risk from natural disasters and geopolitical developments. There have already been precedents of China using its dominant position in the supply of rare earths to exert pressure on its political opponents[94]. Therefore, under these conditions, rare-earth elements can readily become a form of energy weaponisation employed to achieve geopolitical objectives[95].

A negative trend is the slowdown in global extraction of critical minerals due to the lengthy process of bringing deposits into production. On average, 16 years elapse between discovery and full-scale extraction. The EU, which possesses sufficiently rich deposits of many rare-earth elements[96], is in no hurry to develop them, partly because of the environmentally harmful nature of their extraction and processing, which may contaminate water and soil and affect public health and biodiversity. Environmental threats generate negative public perceptions of the construction of mines and processing facilities, for which fresh water may be in insufficient supply under conditions of contemporary climate change.

A way out of this situation is to build capacity for the manufacture and recycling of used batteries within the EU and to attract investment in

[93] *Pindyuk O.* Implications of China's Growing Geo-Economic Influence for the EU: Addressing Critical Dependencies in the Green Transition // The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies. Policy Notes and Reports 67. 2023. March. P. 13. URL: https://cutt.ly/5ygXYbYS

[94] Ibidem.

[95] *Chia O.* China has found Trump's pain point – rare earths // BBC. 2025. 17 October. URL: https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckg1jr18z4ko

[96] *Goodenough K.M. et al.* Europe's Rare Earth Element Resource Potential: An Overview of REE Metallogenetic Provinces and Their Geodynamic Setting // Ore Geology Reviews. 2016. Vol. 72 (1). P. 838-856. URL: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oregeorev.2015.09.019

battery and electric-vehicle production. The EU has introduced a customs tariff on electric vehicles manufactured in China; from 2023, used batteries must be recycled within the EU, while the export of waste to China, as well as beyond the EU in general, is prohibited. From 2031, all new batteries sold in the EU must contain a mandatory minimum percentage of recycled cobalt, lithium and nickel recovered specifically in Europe[97].

Since January 2017, companies have invested €38 billion in European battery manufacturing facilities and a further €34 billion in electric vehicle facilities. One of the latest Bruegel studies indicates that factories in Europe thus have the capacity to produce twice as many EVs as domestic demand, and to meet approximately two-thirds of domestic battery cell demand[98]. Therefore, provided that the EU adheres to the established policy, it is capable of overcoming the existing threat, although the principal investors in the EU's manufacturing capacity in this field are South Korean companies, which currently account for four-fifths of production, having built plants in Poland and Hungary[99]. Other investors today include Chinese and European companies. The EU exports electric vehicles primarily to the United Kingdom and the United States. The latter direction has slowed substantially since 2025 because of high U.S. import tariffs, but the EU has already become a strong industrial base for the production of batteries and electric vehicles and an exporter of the latter. The key priority for the EU today is to develop production and refrain from changing legislation concerning CO2 emissions, which will stimulate the attraction of new investment.

Nevertheless, the EU currently faces other problems in its relations with China. There have been frictions over the transfer of intellectual property to China, which has sought to obtain Western technology as the price of gaining entry to the Chinese market. As a result, in March 2019 the European Commission referred to China in a paper to guide European Council discussion not only as 'a co-operation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives', but also as a 'systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance'[100].

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[97] Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2023 concerning batteries and waste batteries, amending Directive 2008/98/EC and Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Directive 2006/66/EC (Text with EEA relevance). 2023. 28 July // European Commission. URL:https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1542/oj/eng

[98] *Jugé M., Keliauskaitė U., McWilliams B., Tagliapietra S.* Europe has a solid basis for battery and electric vehicle manufacturing growth. Europe is successfully building up battery and EV manufacturing capacity, though mainly thanks to foreign investment // Bruegel. 2025. 16 December. URL: https://cutt.ly/5ygXUvH5

[99] Ibidem.

[100] *Fix L., Crebo-Rediker H.* China's Double Threat to Europe. How Beijing's Support for Moscow and Quest for EV Dominance Undermine European Security // Foreign Affairs. 2024. 5 September. URL: https://cutt.ly/TygXIjSK

China covertly supports Russia's war in Ukraine, primarily by supplying the aggressor with dual-use goods such as computer chips and machine components. The EU recognises that China's support for Russia derives from strategic rather than merely commercial or economic considerations. By helping to sustain Russia's war in Ukraine, China undermines European security, obstructs a Ukrainian victory that is beneficial to the West, and weakens the Western-led world order[101]. The PRC is simultaneously a partner, a competitor and a systemic rival. At the same time, in the EU's view, despite their different political and economic systems, the European Union and China have a shared interest in pursuing constructive and stable relations, anchored in respect for the rules-based international order, balanced engagement and reciprocity[102].

New technologies associated with energy security, particularly with the development of energy infrastructure, are based on chip manufacturing as a structural component of the semiconductor and microchip ecosystem. To address the need to ensure chip supplies, the EU adopted *the EU chips act*. Chips are relatively complex human inventions that are used in various fields. Their manufacture uses semiconductor-grade neon, more than half of whose global supply was provided by two Ukrainian companies in Mariupol and Odesa, which were forced to halt supplies. In June 2022, the Russian Federation restricted the supply of helium and neon[103]. The share of Europe in global fabrication capacity is below 10%. In 2013, the Commission adopted a *European strategy for micro- and nanoelectronic components and systems*. Its objective was to reverse the decline of the EU's share of world supply. However, the Commission itself has recognised that the strategy has failed[104]. The PRC, United States, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have significantly increased state funding directed towards chip manufacturing. The EU has set itself a similar objective, adopting *the European Chips Act* in September 2023. Current developments in the field of AI are also relevant, as they are connected with ensuring the operation – and addressing the risks – of critical energy infrastructure, including cyber threats capable of causing supply disruptions.

Important changes have taken place in the nuclear energy sector. The focus has shifted from conventional resource management towards diversification of nuclear-fuel supplies, breaking dependence on Rosatom, and integrating nuclear energy into the EU's green transition. Following the

[101] Ibidem.
[102] European Council conclusions on China, 30 June 2023 // European Council. 2023. 30 June. URL: https://cutt.ly/TygXIXBe
[103] The EU chips act Securing Europe's supply of semiconductors // European Parliament. 2023. June. URL: https://cutt.ly/iyntiIjs
[104] Ibidem.

dissolution of the USSR and the eastward enlargement of the European Union, five Central and Eastern European countries (Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Finland) inherited substantial dependence on Soviet technologies and, consequently, on fuel in the nuclear-energy sector.

The roadmap for overcoming dependence on Russian energy resources, including in the nuclear-energy sector, set the objective to restrict the import of uranium, enriched uranium and other nuclear materials deriving from Russia[105]. In the nuclear-energy sector, *REPowerEU* provided an impetus for cooperation with alternative suppliers, in particular the American company *Westinghouse* and the French company *Framatome*, to create alternative fuel for VVER-440 and VVER-1000 reactors. The *Euratom Supply Agency* strengthened diversification requirements. According to ESA's internal directives and reports, nuclear power plant operators are required to have at least two alternative suppliers of nuclear materials and enriched uranium.

Despite opposition from certain countries (for example, Germany), nuclear energy has acquired the legal status of a "clean" and strategic technology at EU level. *The EU Taxonomy Complementary Climate Delegated Act* (adopted in July 2022 and in force from January 2023) classified nuclear energy as an "environmentally sustainable transitional activity" subject to compliance with strict safety standards and requirements for the management of radioactive waste. This opened access to private and institutional financing for the construction of new nuclear power plants and the extension of the operating lives of existing facilities. The *Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA)*, officially approved in 2024) included nuclear technologies, including small modular reactors (SMRs) and Generation IV reactors, in the list of Net-Zero technologies. This simplified permitting procedures and expanded state support for equipment manufacturing[106]. *The European SMR Industrial Alliance*, launched by the European Commission in February 2024, became an official industrial alliance for small modular reactor (SMR) construction. Its objective is to accelerate the deployment of the first small modular reactors in the EU by the beginning of the 2030s, reducing dependence on fossil-fuel imports and large monopolistic suppliers.

All these measures aimed at changing the perception of EU nuclear energy as compatible with the decarbonisation of the economy are fully consistent with the decisions of a number of United Nations Conferences on Climate Change (COP). Whereas nuclear energy was previously regarded as

[105] REPowerEU. Affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe // European Commission. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/energy/repowereu_en

[106] Net-Zero Industry Act. Making the EU the home of clean technologies manufacturing and green jobs // European Commission. 2024. URL: https://cutt.ly/MygXOHaI

controversial because of safety risks and radioactive waste, after 2022 – against the background of the global energy crisis and the need for decarbonisation – it was officially recognised as a key component of the global green transition[107]. More than 20 countries, including the United States, France, Japan, the United Kingdom, Ukraine and a number of other EU countries, committed themselves to tripling global nuclear-energy capacity by 2050 compared with the 2020 level by signing the *Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy*, adopted in December 2023 at COP28. In November 2024, at COP29, the number of signatories to the Declaration increased to 31 countries[108]. Within the framework of COP decisions, more than 14 of the world's largest financial institutions, including *Bank of America*, *Barclays*, *Citi*, *Goldman Sachs* and *Morgan Stanley*, announced their readiness to finance new nuclear projects, while technology giants such as *Google*, *Amazon* and *Meta* declared their support for nuclear power plants as sources of clean baseload energy for data centres and AI[109]. As a direct continuation of the decisions of COP28, a Nuclear Energy Summit was held in Brussels, organised by the IAEA and the Government of Belgium. Its outcome was a *Joint Declaration on Nuclear Energy* calling on the *World Bank* and other international banking institutions to include nuclear power plants in their green-financing programmes[110].

Thus, the use of nuclear energy is currently developing in the EU, making energy generation more stable than that based on renewable sources, namely solar and wind energy. Gradually, the EU will develop the use of small modular reactors (SMRs) for the production of heat and environmentally sustainable hydrogen, for which the European Commission established the *European Industrial Alliance on Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)*.

Nuclear energy is not entirely safe or environmentally sustainable, particularly under conditions of geopolitical and climatic cataclysms. The storage and processing of nuclear waste remain a persistent issue. Physical damage to the *Fukushima-1* Nuclear Power Plant in Japan in 2011 as a result of an earthquake and tsunami led to radioactive contamination of the territory. The capture by the aggressor, during the Russian-Ukrainian war, of Ukraine's largest nuclear power plant – the *Zaporizhzhia* Nuclear Power Plant – poses a significant danger. A terrorist attack on any nuclear power

[107] Global energy developments // World Nuclear Association. 2026. 19 January. URL: https://cutt.ly/IygXPaNJ
[108] Six More Countries Endorse the Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy by 2050 at COP29 // World Nuclear Association. 2024. 14 November. URL: https://cutt.ly/AygXPZvd
[109] Global energy developments // World Nuclear Association. 2026. 19 January. URL: https://cutt.ly/IygXPaNJ
[110] Ibidem.

plant could, in effect, substitute for the use of nuclear weapons and have substantial negative consequences. Under conditions of water scarcity in many regions of Europe and high temperatures, problems arise with the cooling systems of nuclear power plants, particularly in France and Romania in summer 2026[111]. Problems with water supply under contemporary climate change also have a significant impact on the development of hydropower.

In order to regulate the decarbonisation process in the EU, the *Clean Industrial Deal* was adopted, based on the principle of technology neutrality. Under it, nuclear energy is officially regarded as an equal instrument of decarbonisation alongside renewable energy sources. Although there are substantial reservations concerning the wording of the agreement[112], it nevertheless addresses many of the problems associated with the green transition. Largely free from Russian influence, yet not entirely devoid of potential risks, European nuclear energy provides countries with energy under conditions of growing energy demand and the green transformation.

The political dimension is also important for EU energy security. This concerns both relations among Member States and the possibility, under conditions of hybrid confrontation with Russia, of informational influence, particularly on electoral processes, based on candidates' positions regarding energy issues. The divergent positions of certain European Union Member States (in particular Hungary, Slovakia and, previously, Austria) have a significant and ambiguous impact on the overall process of EU energy diversification. They create internal imbalances, affect the effectiveness of sanctions policy, and compel Brussels to seek flexible institutional compromises. While the majority of EU states rapidly reduced imports from the Russian Federation (for example, the Czech Republic completed its withdrawal from Russian oil entirely through the TAL-PLUS project in April 2025), some countries retained or even increased their dependence on Russian pipeline supplies. In particular, Hungary and Slovakia continued to use the *Druzhba oil pipeline* and *TurkStream gas pipeline*, explaining this in terms of their geographical position (lack of access to the sea) and economic risks. This created a significant divergence in the pace at which Russian fossil fuels were phased out within the EU. Moreover, when, upon the adoption of the sixth sanctions package in 2022, the EU granted temporary exemptions (derogations) for pipeline oil in order to give landlocked countries time to adapt their infrastructure, these

[111] *Koranyi B.* How the hard reality of climate change hit Europe's economy this summer // Reuters. 2026. 10 August. URL: https://cutt.ly/NygXAnVX

[112] *Mühlenhoff J.* EU's Clean Industrial Deal: what next for Europe's energy transition? // Heinrich Böll Stiftung. 2025. 25 March. URL: https://cutt.ly/FygXAHNa

countries began to use their status to threaten to exercise their veto during votes on subsequent sanctions packages and legislative initiatives. One example was the vote in the Council of the EU on the final *REPowerEU* mechanism, which establishes a legal ban on imports of Russian gas, where Hungary and Slovakia voted against it, although the decision was nevertheless adopted by a majority.

Despite the sharp rhetoric surrounding oil and gas, even countries with divergent positions are compelled to address long-term security. In the nuclear sector, Hungary, despite its cooperation with *Rosatom* on the expansion of the *Paks Nuclear Power Plant*, has signed contracts with the Western companies *Framatome* (France) and *Westinghouse* (United States) for the supply of alternative fuel for existing VVER-440 reactors from 2027–2028.

The purchase of Russian energy resources under preferential contracts or at a discount provided certain companies (in particular the oil-refining group *MOL*) with higher profit margins than their European competitors that had switched to more expensive liquefied natural gas (LNG) or alternative types of crude oil. This distorts the level playing field within the single European market, and the cause is a deliberate political and economic choice by national governments rather than infrastructure-related problems.

The divergent positions of certain countries have compelled the European Commission to modify its approaches to energy-market governance through special monitoring mechanisms designed to prevent the covert transit of Russian gas disguised as blended supplies. Member States are required to submit national import-diversification plans. A positive development for decision-making on energy issues would be the application of qualified-majority voting rather than consensus in matters concerning the energy market, in order to prevent individual members from blocking strategic EU decisions.

Strategic communications with the population and the business community are of great importance for EU energy security. Without thorough explanatory work or changes to programmes involving environmentally hazardous or energy-intensive production, EU countries have encountered protests by local communities against lithium extraction (Spain, Portugal and others), the construction of battery-manufacturing plants, and similar projects.

EU energy security has undergone substantial transformation since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war. By supporting Ukraine through sanctions and renouncing Russian energy resources, the EU is diversifying its sources of hydrocarbon supply and developing climate policies associated with the green transition, hydrogen technologies and nuclear energy. Rising energy prices may provoke protests and thereby

destabilise society, requiring the implementation of a clear energy policy, an accelerated transition to energy-saving technologies, and a shift towards renewable energy sources, which would simultaneously contribute to combating climate change. The EU is strengthening the resilience of its energy system by investing in energy storage, green hydrogen and low-carbon sources. An important security component remains the need to reconcile EU policy with the national interests of Member States, develop strategic communications, prevent the aggressor's informational hybrid influence, and avoid new dependencies on the United States and China. The pursuit of energy sovereignty necessitates anticipating potential risks, challenges and threats in the energy sector and rapidly adapting policies.

5.3. Ukrainian Refugees in the European Union: Challenges and Prospects
(*Anatolii Khudolii, Viktor Shanskyi*)

Migration has become a vital issue for the European Union in the light of full-scale war sparked by Russia in 2022. It has tectonically changed the political, security, and social landscape of almost all European states. Many of them have hosted migrants from Ukraine temporarily or on a regular basis. Several million Ukrainians fled the country in 2022.

Uncontrollable migration is perceived as a threat to EU security. It is a complex issue that balances real security challenges against heightened social prejudices. Real migration threats are connected with radicalization, organized crime, and deliberate instrumentalization of migrants who can be used by hostile actors for political and social destabilization[113]. This is the reason why the issue of migration attracts the attention of politicians, and, of course, scholars.

Topicality of the research is in the combined approach that presupposes analysis of the migration from Ukraine as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the study of migration as a weapon and a tool for pressurizing European states. In this case the migration phenomenon is closely connected with the security of European states and the EU.

The aim of the research is to analyse migration as an instrument of hybrid warfare waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and Western states. Our research also demonstrates how the Russian-Ukrainian war affected Europe and enhanced EU migration policies by addressing both humanitarian needs and state security concerns. The goal is achieved

[113] *Arbatova N.* Migration Threat to EU Security: Prejudices and Realities // World Economy and International Relations. 2022. Vol. 66. № 2. P. 61-70. DOI: https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2022-66-2-61-70

by pursuing the following objectives: 1) to trace migration in Europe within 2014–2026 as a consequence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine; 2) to draw a parallel between migration and security of European states.

Literature review. There are numerous studies dedicated to migration in Europe. This topic is in the focus of both Ukrainian and foreign scholars, but the emphases differ. E. Libanova[114] outlined the problems and development prospects of war migration from Ukraine, though her research focused more on the social aspects of the problem. M. Milova and H. Trushevych[115] delved into multilateral assistance provided to refugees and main directions of the EU policy regulating migration flows from February 2022 to the summer of 2023. The authors highlighted the consequences of forced migration for Ukraine. N. Tchermalykh[116] shifted her attention to European migration policy shaped after the start of migration from Ukraine as a result of the Russian aggression. O. Malynovska has analysed the dynamics, directions, and composition of forced migration flows from Ukraine though avoided security aspects of the problem[117].

Foreign scholars also paid significant attention to migration from Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion. J. Andrle, apart from general trends in migration from Ukraine, drew attention to internal refugees and returnees[118]. L. Macková analysed EU documents in order to examine the evolving dynamics of forced migration and its impact on refugee host countries and regional migration flows[119].

At the same time, there are scholars whose research is directly related to the security aspects of migration. F. Alvarez in his research focused on irregular migration and its consequences, such as organized crime, national security and human security[120]. W. Kasmi studied migration

[114] *Libanova E.M.* 'War Migration' From Ukraine: Problems and Development Prospects // Ukrainian Geographical Journal. 2024. № 4. P. 3-11. DOI: https://doi.org/10.15407/ugz2024.04.003

[115] *Milova M.I., Trushevych H.B.* Ukrainian migration to Europe at the period of the Russian-Ukrainian war: politics of regulation. // International and Political Studies. 2023. October. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18524/2707-5206.2023.36.288721

[116] *Tchermalykh N.* Navigating the Controversy: European Migration Policies and Ukrainian Refugees // Україна модерна. 2024. 24 лютого. URL: https://lnk.ua/XIJirfxwI

[117] *Malynovska O.* The migration of the population of Ukraine due to a foreign invasion // Strategic Panorama. 2023. № 2. P. 55-67. DOI: https://doi.org/10.53679/2616-9460.2.2022.05

[118] *Andrle J.* Ukrainian Refugee Crisis: The Current Situation // People in Need. 2025. 9 December. URL: https://lnk.ua/M5kgxrtZc

[119] *Macková L.* Conflict on the Eastern Frontier: The Russia-Ukraine Crisis and the Evolving Landscape of Migration and Refugees in EU Countries. *Handbook of Migration, International Relations and Security in Asia*. 2025. 29 March. P. 1-16. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-8001-7_84-1

[120] *Alvarez F.* Migration and Security: A European perspective. Opinion Document 127/2018 // Iee.es. 2018. 11 de diciembre. URL: https://lnk.ua/s2L6YfyPr

from the point of view of security in the EU with focus on the balance between state security and human security[121]. M. Padua analysed migration as a case of hybrid threat against the EU[122]. A. Bostan critically assessed migration from the perspective of weaponization[123] in the light of the Russian-Ukrainian war, though his research lacks up-to-date statistics. B. Garcés observed migration as a threat for Europe[124], but did not connect migration with the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Despite numerous studies, the correlation between the Russian-Ukrainian war, migration from Ukraine and the security of the EU is not consistently studied, so the issue of migration and European security is topical and timely.

Structurally, the chapter consists of several sections. The first section provides background of the current migration situation in the EU, setting the context for analysis. The second section explores the phenomenon of migration from Ukraine to Europe during 2014–2025, laying the foundation for understanding the implications of migration. The third section critically evaluates security aspects of migration. The fourth section examines migration as a weapon and its application against European states. The fifth section observes the EU countermeasures applied to confront migration in order to find approach that aligns with the EU's core values and a path toward sustainable migration management. Final section deals with conclusions that summarise main ideas of the research.

1. Migration as a current complex phenomenon. Migration is one of vital issues in recent European political and social landscapes, with challenges and political tensions as consequences of the increasing migrant flows. Framing migration as a potential threat to national stability and security means that analysing its influence on European states can provide a better understanding of the problems and help identify better solutions.

After the beginning of the full-scale war, millions of Ukrainians fled their native state looking for refuge in European states. As a reaction to Russia's aggression, the EU has united its efforts and provided Ukraine

[121] *Kasmi W.* Migration and Security in the EU: Reframing the Balance Between State Security and Human Security // Revue Internationale du chercheur. 2024.Vol. 5. № 4. P. 1296-1319. URL: https://lnk.ua/svaDqNQ2c

[122] *Padua Martina di.* The weaponization of migrants: a case of hybrid threat against the EU. A legal perspective // Astrid Rassegna. 2023. № 17. URL: https://cutt.ly/mtFqlDEX

[123] *Bostan A.* Weaponisation of migration in the context of hybrid warfare strategies: The case of Russia-Ukraine war. *Çetinkaya Ş.* (Ed.) *Security in Eurasia: Threats, Challenges and Opportunities* (P. 98-108). İstanbul University Press, 2025. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26650/B/SSc15.2025.009.07

[124] *Garcés Blanca.* Migration as a "Threat". IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook. 2022. URL: https://cutt.ly/TtFqWUY5

with multifaceted support including political, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic assistance.

Migration is a familiar phenomenon for the European Union, but in the case of Ukraine, it has developed new mechanisms and approaches as solutions to the problem. The EU has taken decisive steps to help Ukrainian migrants. The European Union provided: 1) the temporary protection mechanism for Ukrainians in the EU; 2) humanitarian aid for internally displaced people in Ukraine; 3) civil protection support to Ukraine, as well as countries hosting refugees; 4) financial and technical support for Member States hosting refugees; 5) border management support for EU countries hosting refugees and for Moldova. The temporary protection mechanism for Ukrainians was implemented in March 2022 and was extended until 4 March 2027. Currently, almost 4.4 million refugees from Ukraine have registered for temporary protection in the EU, benefitting from this mechanism[125].

2. Migration from Ukraine to European states. According to Eurostat (by February 2026) there are 5,374,780 Ukrainian refugees in Europe. The UN statistics indicate that 549,090 Ukrainian refugees were recorded beyond Europe and 5,923,870 Ukrainian migrants were registered globally[126]. Demography of the above-mentioned refugees includes 26% of men, 44% of women and 30% of children. Statistics is based on available official data. The European Union laid the foundation for Ukrainian refugees. In January 2026, 4.38 million non-EU citizens who fled Ukraine had temporary protection status in the EU. Compared with December 2025, the total number of people from Ukraine under temporary protection increased by 23,110. Among the European states hosting the highest number of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine were Germany (1,260,230 people; 28.8% of the EU total), Poland (965,990; 22.1%) and Czechia (397,185; 9.1%)[127]. About 3.7 million people are internally displaced within Ukraine, while around 12.7 million people within Ukraine are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance[128].

According to updated UNHCR data, there were 5.349 million Ukrainian refugees in Europe in January 2026 (as of 11 December 2026 – 5.311 million), and 5.898 million (5.860 million) in the world as a whole. In

[125] How the EU helps refugees from Ukraine // European Council. 2026. 25 March. URL: https://lnk.ua/rlv4GVLVE
[126] UNHCR Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation: Data Explanatory Note – revised in November 2025. URL: https://lnk.ua/tFcOJyYlN
[127] Temporary protection for 4.38 million in January 2026 // Eurostat. 2026. 10 March URL: https://lnk.ua/VXE5zHQ25
[128] Crisis in Ukraine // IOM. 2025. 14 March. URL: https://www.iom.int/crisis-ukraine

Ukraine itself, according to the latest UN data, there were 3.340 million internally displaced persons compared to 3.757 million in April[129].



Figure 5.2.1. Statistics about Ukrainians who fled their native country but did not return home within 2021-2025[130]

In 2022, more than 2 million people migrated from Ukraine and quite few returned home the same year. However, with every passing year the difference between those who fled and those who returned to Ukraine narrowed. That is what we can see in Figure 5.2.1. There was a slight increase in 2024 when things got worse and there were numerous air raids and shelling in Ukraine, but next year, 2025 there was a decrease in migration. Nevertheless, we can see a stable tendency towards migration throughout the entire period of the full-scale war.

The war, which broke out in 2014 pushed Ukrainians to seek safer places for living and working. According to Figure 2, the time period between 2014 and 2021 was marked by low migration from Ukraine to Europe, between 594,000 and 750,000 people annually. Nevertheless, 2022, the year of the full-fledged war of Russia, was the beginning of the

[129] *Кулеба О.* Міграційна динаміка змінюється: українці частіше повертаються додому // Дзеркало Тижня. 2026. 24 січня. URL: https://lnk.ua/atj6K7BcQ
[130] *Медончак О.* Скільки українців виїхало за кордон // Fair.org.ua. 2026. 19 February. URL: https://lnk.ua/4BdihpDN3; *Барсукова О.* Найбільше за 11 років: у 2021-му з України виїхала рекордна кількість людей // Українська правда. 2021. 17 грудня. URL: https://lnk.ua/QBaint8fl

massive migration from Ukraine. While migration figures before the full-scale war numbered in the thousands, the figures for 2023–2025 were extraordinary in this context. Due to the available data more than 2 million Ukrainians fled the country annually. The war is ongoing and people are still leaving the country in order to survive.

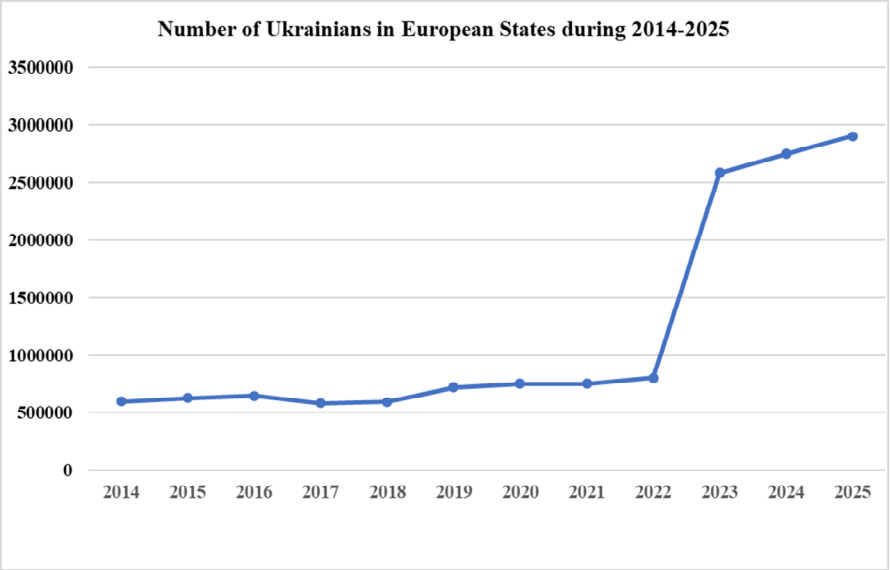


Figure 5.2.2. Dynamics of the number of Ukrainians registered in European states during 2014-2025
Source: Eurostat[131]

Among the countries that accepted Ukrainians are Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Ireland, Finland, Norway and many others. Despite the developed mechanism of accepting, registering and providing support for migrants, regulations have differences that vary from one country to another. Germany provides support with focus on employment and integration. Some Ukrainians stay in Poland, but in many cases, it is a transition place to other countries of the European Union. The Czech Republic offers an extension until 2027 but requires confirmation every year. Ukrainians have temporary protection in Spain, but financial assistance has been discontinued. People from Ukraine

[131] Population on 1 January by age group, sex and citizenship // Eurostat. 2026. 31 March. URL: https://lnk.ua/xnnPc5VB8

have temporary protection in Italy until 4 March 2027. Bulgaria has also extended the stay of Ukrainians until 2027, but confirmation is required annually. In Romania, the temporary protection for Ukrainian citizens has been extended until March 2027, so they have rights and benefits, but with regular confirmation of residence. Ireland shares the same approach, it provides temporary protection status until 2027, but housing for newcomers is not free. Finland offers Ukrainians an unrestricted right to work and support through reception centres and municipalities. Norway gives a collective protection for one year though there are changes due to regional security assessments[132].

3. Security aspects of migration. Migration is a multidimensional phenomenon that affects the life of society. Migration as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine caused repercussions in all spheres of life, whether it is social, economic, cultural or political activity. The security dimension of migration is no less important than its social dimension. In most cases, security challenges caused by migration embrace exploitation of migrants, terrorism and radicalization, illegal border crossing and crimes etc. In 2021, the Poland-Belarus border experienced a severe migration and humanitarian crisis, initiated in the summer when the Belarusian regime began funnelling migrants, primarily from the Middle East and Africa, towards EU borders[133].

Migrants are manipulated by hostile actors who direct them to EU borders (the Belarus-Poland and Russia-Finland borders) to cause instability. Depending on the adversary's objectives, migrants can be a political, ideological or a military means. Poor integration of migrants in social life can lead to marginalization that can cause threats of terrorism and radicalization. Irregular migration and illegal border crossing accompanied by poor border management create dangerous environment, chaos in reception facilities and promotes conditions for drug and human trafficking. Uncontrollable migration raises questions not only about external, but also about internal migration, related to the challenges of intelligence gathering on migrants who enter the state without documents[134].

In accordance with the EU Council report, most illegal immigrants reach the EU borders getting support and assistance from Moscow. Russia stands behind the migration crises in Europe over the past decade. It was

[132] Temporary protection for Ukrainians in Europe in 2026: which countries are accepting refugees and what you need to know about the conditions // Visit Ukraine. 2026. 6 February. URL: https://surl.li/uzfgrk

[133] *Nahmen Alexandra von*. Poland's Belarus border fence: A controversial deterrent // DW. 2025. 18 January. URL: https://surl.li/gwnlav

[134] *Klein Graig R*. Reframing Threats from Migrants in Europe // IC.CT. 2021. 13 December. URL: https://lnk.ua/SdMZumfEo

claimed by the European Commissioner for Migration, Magnus Brunner[135]. "The Russian Federation is involved in large-scale refugee flows – from the Syrian war in 2015 to the consequences of the invasion of Ukraine. The Kremlin is deliberately prolonging armed conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, using migrants as a tool for hybrid depletion of Western budgets," the report says[136].

According to the EU Council report, most illegal immigrants reach the EU borders with the support of the Kremlin. The scheme includes the issuance of Russian visas and transportation through Belarus to the borders of Poland, Lithuania or Finland to create provocations.

Under the guise of migrants, the enemy is trying to infiltrate its agents to damage critical infrastructure facilities and radicalize the internal situation in NATO countries. Artificial migration crises are beneficial to Moscow for political destabilization of Europe and they influence elections by strengthening the ratings of radical parties. By creating tension on the borders, the Kremlin seeks to force the EU to shift its focus from military support for Ukraine to tackling domestic security problems. The European Union has implemented a new approach (a new five-year strategy) to migration and visa policy, in which Russia and Belarus are actually considered enemy states[137]. Despite the fact that the above-mentioned countries are not directly mentioned in the document, the formulation of the strategy provides grounds for significantly tightening restrictions, and further issuance of visas to their citizens may be considered inappropriate for security reasons.

Nowadays, hybrid warfare waged by the Russian Federation embraces various means to undermine Europe's economic, political, military and social aspects of life. Belarus, as Moscow's counterpart, supports its efforts to undermine public trust in democratic institutions of the EU.

4. Migration as a weapon. The strategy of applying migration as a weapon increases social tensions and polarizes public opinion. In 2021 Lithuania, Latvia and Poland reported that migrants were arriving from Belarus who had been brought, or encouraged to come to Minsk intentionally with the purpose of pressurizing the EU to change its policy towards Belarus. As a result of aggressive policy, more than 8,000 irregular border crossings from Belarus were detected in 2021, with 1000 % increase in comparison with the previous year. Many people were trapped at the border, and at least 21 died. There were accusations then that Russian

[135] *Порощук Н.* Для чого Кремлю міграційні кризи: аналіз Центру протидії дезінформації // Главком. 2026. 25 березня. URL: https://surl.li/xqmmhi
[136] Ibidem.
[137] *Stiller M.* How the EU Commission Backs up Pushbacks at the EU-Belarussian Border // VerfBlog. 2025. 1 July. DOI: https://doi.org/10.59704/0c39891676fe2392

intelligence and security services were cooperating with Belarus to bring migrants, mainly from Iraq, to the EU's doorstep[138].

Given the significant importance of migration for EU security, the European Commission adopted a Communication in 2024. It was intended to support Member States and strengthen security at the EU's external borders. The Communication was supposed to: 1) identify the challenges at the EU's external land borders with Russia and Belarus; 2) strengthen the EU policy response, operational and financial support to allow Member States (Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) and Norway to upgrade electronic surveillance equipment, improve telecommunication networks, deploy mobile detection equipment and counter drone intrusions; 3) set the legal context of the situation related to migration; 4) increase cooperation between the Member States and the Union; 5) improve coordination among neighbouring Member States to ensure the consistency and effectiveness of any action[139].

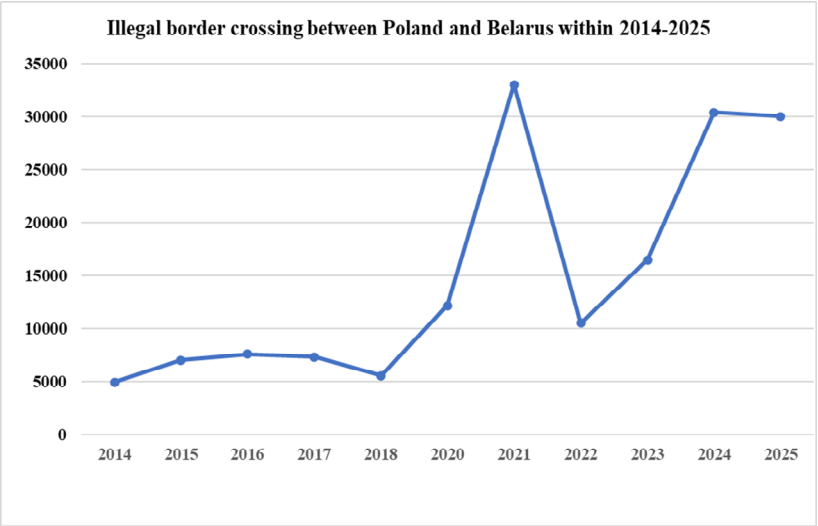


Figure 5.2.3. Illegal border crossing between Poland and Belarus during 2014-2025[140]

[138] *Marion M.G.* Russia alleged to be smuggling migrants to Europe in 'hybrid attack' // InfoMigrants. 2024. 22 May. URL: https://lnk.ua/Vy65m5274

[139] The EU Commission wants to further help Member States to act firmly against the weaponisation of migration. European Migration Network. 11 December 2024. URL: https://surl.li/xvdsep

[140] *Perkowska M.* Polish Response to Irregular Migration in Recent Years. Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica. Article 4, Vol. 18 (2) (2020). https://doi.org/10.46381/reic.v18i2.371; Country factsheet. July 2024. Poland 2023. Eurostat. European Migration Network. URL: https://lnk.ua/qJdribA93

Migration is a weapon of hybrid warfare waged against European states, in particular those bordering with Russia or Belarus. Figure 5.2.3 demonstrates changes in illegal border crossing during eleven years, between 2014 and 2025. According to the diagram, almost the same number of illegal border crossings was observed between 2014 and 2018, but since 2020, there has been a sharp increase in the number of border violations. It was on the eve of the full-scale war. Then during 2022–2023 there was a slight increase, but then during 2024–2025 there was a dramatic increase in illegal border crossing (see Figure 5.2.3). Migrants were supported and encouraged by the Belarusian regime that is Russia's closest partner. This way Belarus was trying to destabilize the situation in Poland, pressurizing it to stop supporting Ukraine in its war against Russia.

Migration is a weapon when migrants uncontrollably move from neighbouring states (Russia and Belarus) to European countries, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Finland. "We have the support of the European Commission, which called this what it is: the instrumentalization of migrants and their use as a weapon" by Belarus, an ally of Moscow, Poland's interior minister, Tomasz Siemoniak said. He added that Brussels has allocated €52 million to support Poland's border enforcement efforts. In a separate post, T. Siemoniak, said that about 11,000 personnel from the police, border guards and army were stationed along the Belarusian border[141].

In 2024, Polish border authorities recorded more than 13,000 attempts by undocumented migrants to enter the country. The prime minister of Poland, Donald Tusk, accused Russia of increasing tensions on the border with Belarus: "It is the Russian state that is behind the organization of the recruitment, transport and attempts to smuggle thousands of people" into Europe, D. Tusk said. "More than 90 % of those who cross the Polish border illegally are people with Russian visas," he added[142].

After D. Tusk's claims about Moscow's regular recruitment of refugees and sending them to the Polish border, several German media organizations published similar allegations that prove the idea that Belarus and Russia are jointly waging a hybrid war against Western states. The effects of the hybrid warfare are being felt not only in Poland, but also in Germany, where the number of irregular arrivals increased from 30 detected crossings in winter to 670 in April. In most cases, the migrants at the German-Polish border reached it via the Balkan Route, Slovakia or the Czech Republic. The European Union sees the weaponization of migrants as

[141] Poland reports rise in illegal crossings of border with Belarus // TVP World. 2025. 5 April. URL: https://lnk.ua/gEmxyJW7t

[142] *Marion M.G.* Russia alleged to be smuggling migrants to Europe in 'hybrid attack' // InfoMigrants. 2024. 22 May. URL: https://lnk.ua/Vy65m5274

a new strategic threat. The media organizations say that surveys of migrants revealed that around half had received visas from Russian missions in their native countries. Their documents are short-term tourist, business or student visas that allowed them to fly to Moscow or St. Petersburg, and then to Belarus and the EU[143].

Russia and Belarus efficiently apply hybrid warfare tactics, including the weaponization of migration. Moscow and Minsk artificially and illegally facilitate illegal migration flows towards the EU's external borders. Communication adopted by the EU (2024) acknowledges that Member States must take precaution in order to defend themselves against hybrid attacks carried out by Russia and Belarus. About 30,000 illegal attempts to cross the Polish-Belarusian border were recorded in 2025, though in 2024 there were fewer incidents, according to broadcaster TVP World. Migration has served as a threat for Warsaw since 2021 due to Belarus policy instigated by Russia in order to increase tension in the EU as a means of the hybrid warfare waged by Moscow against European states, especially those supporting Ukraine. Poland has accused Belarus and Russia of using illegal migration routes as a "hybrid war" tactic to destabilize NATO's eastern flank[144].

5. EU countermeasures. Facing challenges through migration, European countries are at the cutting-edge position between the EU and Belarus and Russia, so they take decisive steps to keep the situation with migrants under control. For instance, Poland enacted a law in July 2024 permitting its police and military forces to use live ammunition in "self-defense" at the Belarusian border, though such an approach raised questions regarding human rights. This is one of the measures taken by Warsaw in order to protect its borders as a counteraction against migration threats from Belarus[145]. Neighbouring countries to Russia also reacted similarly. Finland passed a law that allowed the suspension of asylum procedures at its border with Russia. Finnish officials claimed that it was justified because of hybrid threats that emanate from Moscow. At the same time, critical voices argue that such policies prioritize state security over humanitarian obligations, and they lead to the restriction of basic protections for asylum seekers[146]. Instrumentalized migration is one of the means used by Russia to put pressure on and affect the security and social stability of Finland and the EU. Finland's eastern border is the longest

[143] Ibidem.
[144] *Cakirtekim Ilayda*. Poland records around 30,000 illegal entry attempts from Belarus in 2025 // AA. 2025. 3 December. URL: https://lnk.ua/gjB4m6xoh
[145] New law on border security and the use of live ammunition at Belarusian border // Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2024. URL: https://lnk.ua/QVTRjBgJW
[146] *Szumski C.* Helsinki adopts 'pushback law' to suspend asylum for migrants coming via Russia // Euractiv. 2024. 12 July. URL: https://lnk.ua/Oc8NcdWcw

external border that both the EU and NATO have with Russia. This step taken by Finland is defending the eastern flank of NATO, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it prepares Helsinki for the possibility that Russia may continue to exert pressure for a long time and in a more serious way[147].

The countermeasures, mentioned above, demonstrate a tendency across Europe, where migration is predominantly framed as a security threat, so it prompts policies with priority on border control and deterrence. Facing challenges, Germany has tightened its border controls, implemented checks at all land borders in response to rising concerns about irregular migration. The German government cited recent incidents involving foreign nationals as justification for heightened security measures, which include a focus on deportations and stricter border surveillance[148].

The European Union's migration policy significantly changed over the last 12 years as a response to increasing migration flows, particularly since 2014 as the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The EU has also taken into consideration the 2015 migrant crisis. Regional and global instability has led to intensification of the migration pressure on European states and the EU. Facing challenges, the European Union has implemented a range of measures aimed at managing migration so as to balance state security, humanitarian responsibilities and logistics. Steps, taken by the European Union, include the New Pact on Migration and Asylum[149], the operations of Frontex and cooperative agreements with non-EU countries.

The challenges, faced by the EU in the context of migration, include the 2015-2016 migrant crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the border conflicts in the European Union's eastern regions. In 2020, the European Commission proposed a document on migration and asylum, a comprehensive legislative framework designed to streamline the reception of asylum seekers in the EU. The pact was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2023. It illustrates significant reforms in this sphere and consists of 10 legislative acts that bring together policies on migration, asylum, integration, and border management. Its key objectives include greater responsibility sharing, solidarity and effective border management among the EU Member States [150]. It is supposed to be implemented in 2026.

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[147] Finland enacts legislation to combat instrumentalised migration // Ministry of the Interior, Finland. 2024. 16 July. URL: https://lnk.ua/7Zk6iysyo

[148] *Kasmi W.* «Migration and Security in the EU: Reframing the Balance Between State Security and Human Security» // Revue Internationale du chercheur. 2024. Vol. 5. № 4. P. 1296-1319. URL: https://lnk.ua/65XQKOL1y

[149] Implementation of the EU pact on migration and asylum. Briefing 27-01-2025 // Think Thank. European Parliament. URL: https://surl.li/kwvujl

[150] Ibidem.

The Commission has also developed an implementation plan based on 10 building blocks. It identifies key milestones for establishing the necessary legal and operational frameworks for Member States. Despite the adoption of 10 legislative acts, their support among the Member States differs. Nevertheless, Member States raise questions about further changes. Experts identified key challenges and potential scenarios for the implementation of the pact and raised doubts whether the new rules will be efficient enough to tackle the complexities of migration including the issue of protecting fundamental rights[151].

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum represents the EU's updated attempt to develop and implement a comprehensive and cohesive migration policy. The document emphasizes solidarity and responsibility-sharing among Member States with focus on border control, efficient asylum processing, and accelerated deportation for those without valid claims to stay. Nevertheless, despite its attempt to create a more unified system, the New Pact faced criticism for its emphasis on deportation and return. The New Pact is based on the four principles of the new migration and asylum policy: secure external borders, fast and efficient procedures, effective system of solidarity and responsibility and embedding migration in international partnerships[152].

The European Union utilizes comprehensive, tailored partnerships with non-EU countries to manage migration, focusing on preventing irregular migration, reinforcing border management, and organizing readmissions. They are components of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and include legal readmission pacts with countries like Turkey, Ukraine, and Pakistan, as well as non-binding, practical arrangements[153].

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum is strengthened by the operations of Frontex and cooperative agreements with non-EU countries. All these measures in combination are supposed to produce a significant effect on the migration policy of the European Union. Frontex activities develop European border management in line with the EU fundamental rights charter. Frontex operations include: joint operations, standing Corps, risk analysis and intelligence, return operations, coast guard cooperation and hotspot support[154]. As a result, the number of detections fell sharply in the first two months of 2026, dropping by 52% compared with the same

[151] *Radjenovic Anja*. Implementation of the EU pact on migration and asylum // European Parliament. 2025. 30 January. URL: https://cutt.lv/otDFoZt6

[152] Pact on Migration and Asylum. European Commission. 21 May 2024. URL: https://surl.li/skfldt

[153] An effective, firm and fair EU return and readmission policy // European Commission. 2025. May. URL: https://surli.cc/hghuln

[154] Who we are // Frontex. 2026. 8. April. URL: https://cutt.ly/rtDHTsBD

period last year. Nearly 12,000 irregular crossings were recorded, according to preliminary data collected by Frontex[155].

One more aspect of efficient migration policy of the EU concerns cooperative agreements with non-EU countries. The EU negotiates cooperative migration agreements with non-EU countries to control irregular migration, enhance border management, and facilitate returns, leveraging trade, visa policy, and development aid. These agreements aim to establish "tailor-made" partnerships, particularly with origin and transit nations in Africa, the Middle East, and the Western Balkans[156]. Among key aspects of the Migration Partnerships the EU prioritizes readmission agreements, "return" strategy, including the possible establishment of "return hubs" for rejected applicants, conditionality of aid/trade and developing relations with key partner countries[157].

Conclusions. Migration is a vital issue in the European Union policy. the Russian-Ukrainian war caused negative consequences for many European states, not to mention Ukraine. The number of Ukrainian migrants in Europe has grown over time. With the beginning of the full-fledged war, the number of Ukrainian refugees has significantly increased and there is a tendency to expand as the war is still ongoing. Since 2022, thousands of people have been moving to Europe from Ukraine, but few return.

Migration concerns security domain of European states. One of the repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian war is uncontrollable migration that affected many aspects of life of European states. Under the indirect influence of the Russian aggression and the migration, the European Union turned out to be in a critical position, because Russia and Belarus manipulate migrants. Since 2021, both of them provoke border conflicts with Poland, the Baltic states and Finland. Belarus as the Kremlin's partner uses migrants as a weapon against the EU. Since 2021, there were numerous cases of illegal border crossing and violations between Belarus and Poland. Similar activity was experienced by Finland and the Baltic states. Russia and Belarus, using migrants as a means, try to destabilize bordering European countries, forcing them to stop supporting Ukraine in its confrontation with Russia. As migration flows continue to test the EU's policies and values, it is clear that a security-focused approach is a priority nowadays.

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[155] Frontex: 52% drop in irregular border crossings in the first 2 months of 2026 // FRONTEX. 2026. 12 March. URL: https://cutt.ly/StDHIV7t

[156] Return and readmission: improving cooperation within the EU and with external partners. Brussels. Feb 10, 2021 // European Commission. URL: https://cutt.ly/gtDCWaIg

[157] Feld Simone De La. EU will suspend trade preferences for countries that do not cooperate on migrant returns // EU News. 2025. 2 December. URL: https://cutt.ly/ltDCUMTj; Migration, Mobility & Forced Displacement // European Union External Action. 2025. 5 May. URL: https://cutt.ly/vtDCPgLJ

Migration as a multifaceted problem cannot be solved easily, so it requires complex decisions and careful measures. Over the last few years, the European Union has taken decisive measures to tackle the issue of migration. The approach applied by the EU included the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, improvements in Frontex activities and operations, and the development of cooperation with non-EU countries. The complex of measures is supposed to be fruitful.

The study demonstrates that securitization strengthens the EU. It lays the foundation for further improvement of its migration policy.

5.4. Value Transformations in Times of War (*Alina Iovcheva*)

War, as an extreme form of political conflict, is a powerful factor in the transformation of social values. Its impact lies primarily in the fact that it alters the conditions under which individuals and political communities prioritize fundamental normative guidelines. In peacetime, freedom, security, well-being, autonomy, solidarity, and justice may be perceived as complementary values, whereas an existential threat forces society to determine which of them should take precedence in a conflict situation, thereby altering their actual hierarchy, political weight, and modes of practical implementation.

This approach has a solid theoretical foundation in contemporary political sociology. One of the most influential lines of research on value changes is the concept developed by American researcher *Ronald Inglehart*, according to which long-term changes in socioeconomic conditions facilitate a shift from materialistic to post-materialistic priorities, particularly toward greater emphasis on self-expression and autonomy. This theory, however, also implies a reverse mechanism, whereby a sense of threat and instability can increase the importance of security, order, and material security[158]. In this case, war is a situation in which the fundamental sense of existential security directly influences the structure of a society's political priorities as a whole

A conceptually related yet distinct perspective on analysing the impact of war on the transformation of a society's value system is explored through *Shalom Schwartz's theory*. Within this model, value orientations emerge as a cohesive, circular system built on motivational conflicts between individual blocks. First and foremost, this concerns the opposition between the dimension of "*preservation*" (security, conformity, tradition)

[158] *Inglehart R., Welzel C.* Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 333 p.

and "*openness to change*" (autonomy, stimulation)[159]. Under martial law, this antagonism spills over into practical politics, as the heightened desire for security transforms into a strong public demand for order, consolidation, and regulatory restrictions – measures that, under normal societal conditions, would be viewed as discrimination or a suppression of individual freedom.

In light of this, it is important to note that the decisive factor is not so much the mere existence of a threat as its interpretive framework (framing), which is shaped by political discourse, elites, and institutional mediators[160]. In this context, war emerges as a specific environment in which a reconfiguration and a dynamic balance between competing normative frameworks take place.

Of particular importance for this analysis is the concept of a "*critical juncture*," formulated within the framework of historical institutionalism by American researchers *James Mahoney* and *Kathleen Telen*. They view critical junctures as periods of heightened uncertainty, when established institutional and political trajectories become less defined, and the choices made by political actors can have long-term consequences[161]. In terms of value transformation, war presents precisely such a critical juncture. It destabilizes the usual relationship between normative principles, institutional practices, and conceptions of a legitimate political order. This situation in and of itself merely expands the scope for reevaluating previous models, creating conditions for the reinterpretation or revitalisation of core values.

The concept of collective identity is closely linked to this process. As British sociologist *Michael Bilig* demonstrates in his concept of "*banal nationalism*," political affiliation is reproduced both during extraordinary surges of mobilisation and through everyday practices and routine symbolic markers of community[162]. However, war naturally radicalizes this mechanism, since the existential question "Who are we?" is directly linked to the question "What and whom are we defending?" Consequently, values cease to be abstract normative categories and take on a clear identity-based and political meaning. Democracy, freedom, sovereignty, and human rights are transformed from declarative guiding principles into practical criteria

[159] *Schwartz S.H.* Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries // Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. 1992. Vol. 25. P. 1–65. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60281-6
[160] *Entman R.M.* Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm // Journal of Communication. 1993. Vol. 43. Issue 4. P. 51–58.
[161] *Mahoney J., Thelen K.* Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 254 p.
[162] *Billig M.* Banal Nationalism. London: SAGE Publications, 1995. 200 p.

for distinguishing between "us" and "them," and between a legitimate and an unacceptable social order.

The transformation of the value system during wartime takes on particular significance for the European Union, as its political identity has long been shaped around the ideals of peace, human rights, democracy, economic interdependence, and overcoming the logic of violent confrontation. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has confronted these principles with a fundamentally different question: Can they remain effective values in a situation where preserving them requires practical readiness for political, economic, and security defence? Answering this question requires an analysis of how the erosion of the architecture of regional stability is distorting the very foundations of European normative discourse.

Today, the changing security environment provides grounds for rethinking what has long been understood as "peace" within the European political project. In the post-war logic of European integration, peace was both a desired political outcome and, at the same time, a guiding principle for organising the integration process itself. Achieving it entailed the gradual elimination of the structural preconditions for interstate conflict through economic interdependence, shared institutions, legal regulation, and the formation of a political community. In this sense, "peace through integration" meant much more than the absence of war. It was about creating an order in which conflict between European states would lose its political rationale. This became one of the central elements of the historical self-understanding of European integration and the unique nature of the European Union's functioning[163].

This model of peace was most convincing in a context where the main threats to European stability could be viewed through the lens of the gradual expansion of multilateral cooperation. Even during this period, European security was not devoid of a military dimension. Military deterrence was provided primarily by NATO, while the European Communities focused on regulating other forms of cooperation in the region. That is why "*peace through integration*" and "*peace through strength*" have historically not been mutually exclusive models. Moreover, they functioned in parallel for a long time, as the EU developed an integration-based model of internal peace, while NATO provided the military-strategic component of European security. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally altered the balance between these two logics, forcing the EU to become significantly more actively involved in an area where its functional role had previously been limited.

[163] *Manners I., Murray P.* The End of a Noble Narrative? European Integration Narratives after the Nobel Peace Prize // Journal of Common Market Studies. 2016. Vol. 54. № 1. P. 185–202. URL: https://lnk.ua/tkescnQPt

And by 2022, Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine had demonstrated the fundamental limitations of the European conception of peace as primarily an institutional, legal, and economic order. It turned out that even a high level of interdependence does not guarantee that a state will refrain from using force, and economic ties can also create asymmetrical dependencies that are used as a tool for political pressure. Consequently, interdependence itself began to be viewed as a potential source of vulnerability. This shift is of fundamental importance for European strategic thinking. Whereas interdependence was previously associated primarily with stabilisation, it is now increasingly viewed through the lens of risk and resilience. As evidence, *Niklas Helwig's* research shows that, following the Russian invasion, the concept of strategic autonomy, which, alongside other functions of the Union, encompasses the EU's ability to defend itself against external coercion and to assert its own interests and values externally, has taken on a qualitatively new meaning[164].

In this context, there is a functional reconceptualisation of the understanding of peace, which is increasingly seen less as a state that can be maintained solely through rules and interdependence, and more as a political order that requires the ability to resist coercion[165]. This explains why the concept of resilience – which specifically refers to the ability of states and institutions to maintain functionality and continue pursuing political goals in the face of external pressure – has become fundamentally important in contemporary EU strategic discourse. In this context, resilience serves as a sort of intermediate concept between peace and security. It allows the EU to maintain its normative orientation while acknowledging that upholding it requires material and defence resources. An analysis of the transformation of EU security narratives also shows that the concept of resilience is gradually supplanting the traditional narrative of the EU as an exclusively peaceful project, though it does not entirely replace it[166].

This change was most clearly reflected in the fact that defence capability was no longer viewed as a category external to the Union's regulatory framework. The adoption of *the Strategic Compass* in March

[164] *Helwig N.* EU Strategic Autonomy after the Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Europe's Capacity to Act in Times of War // JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 2023. Vol. 61. Issue S1. P. 57–67. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13527

[165] *Steinbach A.* EU's Turn to 'Strategic Autonomy': Leeway for Policy Action and Points of Conflict // European Journal of International Law. 2023. Vol. 34. № 4. P. 973–1006. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chad048

[166] *Orenstein M.A.* The European Union's transformation after Russia's attack on Ukraine // Journal of European Integration. 2023. Vol. 45. № 3. P. 335–342. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2023.2183329

2022 marked a pivotal institutional milestone in this regard[167]. The document explicitly linked the protection of European citizens and interests to the need to strengthen the EU's capacity to respond to crises, invest in defence capabilities, develop military mobility, enhance resilience to hybrid and cyber threats, and expand the capabilities of the Common Security and Defence Policy. Importantly, the logic behind the Strategic Compass is based on the premise that the ability to protect citizens, interests, and values is a prerequisite for their preservation.

A telling example in this context is the creation and expansion of *the European Peace Facility (EFP)*, which was established in 2021[168]. This mechanism illustrates a shift in political logic, in which peace is no longer automatically contrasted with military instruments. The EFP made it possible to finance military aid to EU partners, and after the outbreak of full-scale war, it became one of the key channels for supporting Ukraine[169]. Thus, military aid was conceptually integrated into European peace-support policy, which in turn had an important normative consequence: the EU no longer viewed the use or support of military force as a negation of the European peace project, provided that such actions were aimed at defending sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the right to self-defence. This position serves as the EU's official justification for providing military support to Ukraine: assistance as a means of safeguarding the international legal order and Ukraine's ability to resist aggression.

This transformation is simultaneously altering the very relationship between peace and deterrence. In the classical logic of deterrence, peace is maintained not by the absence of military force, but by the credibility of the signal that such force is ready to be used in response to aggression. The European Union was not historically designed as a collective defence system; therefore, its new security role does not require it to become a counterpart to NATO. On the contrary, the modern European model is taking shape as a multilayered structure in which NATO remains the foundation of its members' collective defence, while the EU increasingly provides the economic, civilian, sanctions, and military-support components of European resilience. This distinction is also enshrined in the Strategic Compass, which simultaneously emphasises the strengthening of

[167] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security. Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2022. Doc. 7371/22. 47 p. URL: https://lnk.ua/WSXUPGE53

[168] Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 establishing a European Peace Facility, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528 // Official Journal of the European Union. 2021. L 102. P. 14–62. URL: https://lnk.ua/D38Kcg7EB

[169] European Peace Facility – support for the Ukrainian Armed Forces: Summary // EUR-Lex: Access to European Union law. 2023. URL: https://lnk.ua/UoIvM9jKn

the EU's defence capabilities and the complementarity of these activities with NATO[170].

In light of this, it must be emphasised that the defence of European values is gradually ceasing to be an exclusively normative or diplomatic function and is taking on a distinct material dimension. Freedom, democracy, the rule of law, sovereignty, and other European values require not only legal guarantees and political consensus but also the capacity to resist external coercion, military aggression, economic blackmail, cyberattacks, information interference, and so on. This constitutes a fundamental shift following February 2022, as security is increasingly viewed as a prerequisite for the practical existence of the entire EU value- and norm-based system.

This logic does not resolve the normative dilemma. The more the protection of values is linked to security instruments, the more acute the questions become regarding the limits of permissible coercion, the balance between security and freedom, and just how far the securitisation of the political order can go. The search for answers to these questions goes beyond purely military-strategic calculations and touches on the value foundation of European integration, requiring a fundamental rethinking of how security, peace, and democratic principles relate to one another in the new realities.

Such a reformulation of security logic inevitably leads to a deeper level of transformation – a rethinking of the fundamental values through which the European political community seeks to give war normative and political meaning. In this context, the difference between the declarative existence of values and their practical implementation becomes particularly evident. Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine has placed the European Union in a situation where solidarity, freedom, and democracy are no longer merely normative guidelines for internal order but have become principles requiring institutional safeguards. At the same time, it is worth noting that by supporting Ukraine as a state defending its territorial integrity, sovereignty, and democratic choice, the EU is simultaneously rethinking its own notions of the meaning and limits of European values. Thus, we can conclude that in this process, Ukraine emerges not only as the object of European solidarity but also as one of the factors driving change in the European value system.

This change was most directly reflected in the transformation of the very concept of s*olidarity*. Before the full-scale war, solidarity within the EU was largely viewed as a principle of internal distribution of resources,

[170] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security. Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2022. Doc. 7371/22. 47 p. URL: https://lnk.ua/WSXUPGE53

responsibilities, and risks among Member States, as reflected in cohesion policies, financial support mechanisms, social policies, and joint responses to internal crises. After February 24, 2022, the spatial and political scope of European solidarity underwent a fundamental expansion. It began to extend to a country outside the EU's formal membership, as Ukraine's struggle was increasingly interpreted as a defence of the fundamental principles of the European political order. In this context, support for Ukraine has served as a test of the Union's ability to translate normative proximity into practical responsibility. As *Tanja Börzel* notes, it was precisely the discourse on shared European values that became the key factor in mobilising the political will to impose sanctions, provide military and humanitarian aid, and undertake the large-scale reception of Ukrainian refugees[171].

A symbolic and institutional manifestation of this new form of solidarity was the EU Council's decision of March 4, 2022, to activate the Temporary Protection Directive[172]. This decision provided Ukrainian citizens who had left the country as a result of hostilities with simplified access to housing, the labour market, education, health care, and social benefits without having to go through a bureaucratic asylum process. The significance of this step went beyond a purely humanitarian response, as it demonstrated the EU's ability, in a moment of crisis, to rapidly extend the practical meaning of solidarity beyond the formal membership community. Temporary protection set a legal precedent, demonstrating that de facto adherence to the European value system can entail real institutional guarantees even before a state's formal integration into the Union's structure. Nevertheless, an analysis of the EU's response confirms that the imposition of sanctions against Russia and the protection of Ukrainians were motivated not only by pragmatic security considerations but also by a normatively grounded awareness of the duty to protect the civilian population and the shared community of values[173].

It is precisely at this stage that a fundamental dichotomy emerges between solidarity as a normative value and solidarity as a political practice. While the value is rooted in the universality of the principle, its practical implementation is always tied to the specific allocation of

[171] *Börzel T.A.* European Integration and the War in Ukraine: Just Another Crisis? // JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 2023. Vol. 61. Issue S1. P. 14–30. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13550

[172] Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection // Official Journal of the European Union. 2022. L 71. P. 1–6. URL: https://lnk.ua/n4bw8Ta7l

[173] *Bosse G.* Values, rights, and changing interests: The EU's response to the war against Ukraine and the responsibility to protect Europeans // Contemporary Security Policy. 2022. Vol. 43. Issue 3. P. 531–546. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2022.2099713

resources. Financial aid, the reception and social integration of refugees, support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure, sanctions, and arms supplies place an uneven burden on Member States and, consequently, inevitably lead to differences in assessments of the appropriate level and scope of support. Empirical studies of public opinion show that behind the consensus of external unity within European society regarding support for Ukraine lie significant intergovernmental and domestic political differences[174]. This helps avoid a simplistic interpretation of European solidarity as a linear and homogeneous process, confirming that it should be viewed as a complex political mechanism involving the constant reconciliation of normative commitment with the willingness of individual actors to bear the associated material and security costs.

An equally significant transformation is taking place in the conceptualisation of the notion of *freedom*. While the European political tradition has traditionally interpreted freedom primarily through the prism of individual rights, civil liberties, and the opportunities for autonomous participation in public life, the Russian-Ukrainian war has brought to the fore its collective-political dimension, which manifests itself in the capacity and right of a political community to independently determine its own internal structure and the direction of its sovereign development. In the Ukrainian context, this aspect is crucial, as Ukraine's resistance is not limited to the categories of territorial defence but is simultaneously an existential struggle for society's right to political self-determination, institutional choice, and foreign policy orientation. In European discourse, this struggle is largely perceived as a defence of freedom and democratic self-determination. As *Tanja Börzel* argues, after 2022, the Ukrainian issue became fully integrated into the broader European discourse on the geopolitical confrontation between democracy and autocracy, and Ukrainian resistance began to be understood as the defence not only of national but also of shared European political principles[175].

This means that the Ukrainian experience influences the very conceptualisation of freedom in Europe. While under conditions of systemic stability, freedom is perceived primarily as the right to individual autonomy, in a situation of existential threat, its collective-political dimension takes on key significance - namely, the ability and willingness of society to resist external coercion. In this context, the Ukrainian case serves

[174] *Stolle D.* Aiding Ukraine in the Russian war: unity or new dividing line among Europeans? // European Political Science. 2024. Vol. 23. Issue 2. P. 218–233. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-023-00444-7

[175] *Börzel T.A.* European Integration and the War in Ukraine: Just Another Crisis? // JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 2023. Vol. 61. Issue S1. P. 14–30. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13550

as a kind of normative mirror for the European Union, since by defending Ukraine's right to independently determine its own future, the EU simultaneously conceptualises and refines its own understanding of what freedom means in an international system where an actor's political autonomy can become the target of forceful denial.

A similar transformation is taking place with regard to the perception of *democracy*. In the context of a peaceful political process, a democratic system is often reduced to purely procedural characteristics of the regime: the existence of competitive elections, institutional pluralism, freedom of speech, the rule of law, and the accountability of public authorities, among others. The war demonstrates that all of these mechanisms are directly dependent on the existence of a fundamental space for political autonomy. In other words, a democratic system loses its ability to function if an external aggressor gains the ability to use force to dictate the limits of permissible political choice. Consequently, the Ukrainian experience highlights the defensive dimension of democracy, demonstrating that, despite everything, it requires society's material capacity to defend its own right to these procedures.

In light of this, countering foreign information interference, manipulation, and disinformation has become an integral part of European policy to protect democracy. The European Commission explicitly classifies *foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)* as a threat to democratic institutions and processes, as such practices are aimed at undermining trust in institutions, polarising society, and negatively affecting citizens' ability to make informed political decisions.[176] Following the start of the full-scale invasion, this aspect of European policy took on fundamental importance, as Russia's information policy was reclassified from a form of traditional foreign propaganda to a tool for destabilising democratic societies and waging hybrid warfare. The EUvsDisinfo system, created by the European External Action Service, as well as other mechanisms to counter FIMI, demonstrates a conceptual shift from viewing information policy as a communication issue to incorporating it into the realm of democratic and security resilience[177].

At this point, one of the most complex normative contradictions of value transformation arises. Defending democracy may require restricting the activities of actors who exploit democratic freedoms to undermine it. The key problem is that an excessive expansion of such preventive or

[176] Tackling information manipulation and foreign interference // European Commission. Official Website of the European Union. URL: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/countering-information-manipulation_en

[177] EUvsDisinfo: Офіційний сайт проєкту Робочої групи з питань східних стратегічних комунікацій Європейської служби зовнішніх дій. URL: https://euvsdisinfo.eu/ua/

restrictive measures creates the risk of undermining the very principles of an open society. Measures such as banning or blocking media outlets controlled by the Russian Federation, tightening regulatory requirements for digital platforms, countering foreign funding of the political sector, and neutralising channels of informational influence are justified on the grounds of protecting the constitutional order, but they require strict adherence to the criteria of necessity, proportionality, and democratic oversight. Thus, the war poses a challenge to the liberal logic of European norms, which lies in defending freedom with tools that do not themselves become a source of its restriction.

In this context, Ukraine's experience takes on decisive importance, because Ukraine has faced the necessity of ensuring the functionality of democratic institutions under conditions of unprecedented existential pressure, when society is forced to simultaneously carry out military mobilisation and maintain the political legitimacy of public authorities. Recent empirical studies of Ukraine's wartime experience show that the impact of armed conflict on democratic attitudes is not linear, as the experience of violence can simultaneously strengthen commitment to some democratic principles while weakening support for others[178]. This conclusion has significance far beyond the Ukrainian case. It shows that war does not simply strengthen or weaken democratic values, but rather differentiates their practical weight, prompting societies to establish a complex system of priorities among freedom of speech, political competition, collective security, and the demands of national mobilisation.

Thus, the dilemma between security and civil liberties should not be viewed as a simplistic conflict between two mutually exclusive values, since in the contemporary European context it reveals a fundamental shift in the terms of their mutual relationship. While security was previously perceived primarily as an external prerequisite for the realisation of freedom, the war has shown that freedom itself, in the face of existential threats, may require certain security restrictions.

Admittedly, it would be incorrect to assert that the security imperative automatically takes precedence. On the contrary, the more a state justifies restrictions on freedoms by the need to protect the democratic order, the more important procedural safeguards, judicial oversight, and transparency regarding the criteria for such restrictions become. It is precisely in this realm that the fundamental line is drawn between the liberal securitisation of democracy and its authoritarian transformation.

[178] *Bakke K.M., Dahl M., Rickard K.* Conflict exposure and democratic values: Evidence from wartime Ukraine // Journal of Peace Research. 2025. Vol. 62. Issue 5. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433251347769

It is worth noting that the war has brought to light the internal limits of solidarity. As noted earlier, these are reflected in the differing attitudes of Member States toward the extent of military and technical assistance to Ukraine in countering Russian aggression. It is precisely this circumstance that allows us to critically reexamine the simplistic notion of war as a factor that automatically strengthens European consolidation. The armed conflict has indeed created a powerful impetus for integration; at the same time, it has formed new lines of political differentiation. This concerns not only differences among individual Member States but also divergent visions of where the line lies between moral obligation and pragmatic political responsibility, between supporting Ukraine and protecting one's own national interests, and between openness to shared values and security-minded prudence. In this sense, solidarity emerges not so much as an inherent characteristic of the political system as an institutionally supported capacity for collective action despite significant differences in costs, risks, and strategic priorities.

The analysis conducted provides grounds for viewing the European Union's transformation of values not as the replacement of some values with others, but as a change in the way they are politically prioritised and put into practice. The war has not removed freedom, democracy, human rights, or solidarity from the normative core of the European project. Instead, it has altered the conditions under which these principles must operate. Whereas their political implementation previously took place largely in an environment of relative stability, since 2022 the question of their resilience in the face of coercion, violence, and strategic competition has become increasingly pressing. This change in the conditions under which fundamental principles operate places new demands on our understanding of their true meaning and practical purpose.

That is precisely why the essence of the current transformation should be sought not in the emergence of new values, but in a shift in the criteria for their effectiveness. A value is increasingly less defined by its normative proclamation alone and increasingly more by the ability of political and social institutions to ensure its preservation in times of conflict. In this sense, the war has made it clear that the normative order requires resources, institutional capacity, and political will to defend it. This circumstance brings European normativity closer to the material dimension of power, without negating its normative nature.

This convergence gives rise to a fundamental contradiction. Strengthening the capacity to defend the democratic and legal order may require restrictions, the concentration of resources, and the expansion of security instruments, whereas this order itself is based on political pluralism, human rights, institutional checks and balances, and legal constraints on

power. Thus, the defence of the normative order potentially creates the risk of transforming the conditions under which that order remains normative. This is not an argument against strengthening security capabilities, but it does point to the need for constant oversight of their scope and the means of their political legitimisation. In this context, it is worth clarifying the very concept of "*geopolitical normativity*," which should not be reduced to a mere combination of normative and geopolitical logics.

This refers to a qualitatively different relationship, in which material and strategic capabilities become a prerequisite for upholding normative claims, while normative principles, in turn, determine the goals, limits, and legitimacy of the use of these capabilities. It is important to emphasise that the EU is not abandoning normative policy in favour of geopolitics; at the same time, it cannot uphold a normative order while ignoring the balance of power, strategic dependencies, and the ability to withstand external pressure. Nevertheless, this transformation remains fundamentally incomplete. Its limits are determined both by the external environment and by the Union's internal capacity to maintain a sufficient level of political consensus on what exactly needs to be defended, by what means, and at what cost. It is here that the most significant difference between normative declarations and political practice becomes apparent. And the resilience of the new European normative framework, in turn, will depend on whether the EU can maintain common normative guidelines amid an uneven distribution of risks, resources, and political priorities among Member States.

In this context, Ukraine's experience shifts the very frame of reference for understanding European values, because the issues of freedom, democracy, sovereignty, and political autonomy are no longer merely matters of the EU's internal structure, but rather questions of the European political space's ability to defend its own normative boundaries. In light of this, Ukraine's experience undoubtedly serves as a catalyst for rethinking the relationship between a value and its protection.

In conclusion, the main outcome of this transformation of values lies in the shift from understanding European values as primarily a normative foundation of the political order to understanding them as an object of constant political protection and reproduction. This means that a hybrid construct is taking shape, in which normativity is increasingly linked to the capacity to act, and geopolitical capacity derives its legitimacy from normative goals. Its fundamental characteristic lies precisely in this interdependence, and the main risk lies in the possibility that the logic of defence will gradually begin to determine not only how to defend values, but also what they should be. Based on this, the EU's "geopolitical normativity" at the present stage should be viewed not as a settled model, but as a political process whose outcome remains open. It will be determined by the Union's

ability to combine strategic capability with normative self-restraint, security effectiveness with democratic accountability, and the defence of its own political space with the preservation of openness, which has historically been one of its fundamental characteristics. This balance, rather than a simple shift from a "*peaceful*" Europe to a "*geopolitical*" one, can be considered the most significant outcome of the EU's values-based transformation in the context of war.

5.5. The Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War on the Mental Health of Europeans (*Olesia Zvezdova*)

European countries that had only just begun recovering from the mental health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic faced a major geopolitical and psychological shock in February 2022. Because of the internet and digital media, the war in the centre of Europe became much closer to the everyday lives of people in different countries. Throughout the history of humanity, military conflicts have always had a decisive influence on the formation of regional systems of international relations, changes in the geopolitical strategies of leading actors, and the emergence or disappearance of certain states on the political map of the world. However, it is impossible to overestimate the impact of any military conflict on various aspects of people's lives, including mental health, emotional stability, social relationships, economic security, cultural identity, and overall quality of life.

In the context of military conflict, the issue of the population's psychological well-being becomes particularly acute, since from a long-term perspective, the mental health of society may have an extremely significant impact on the recovery of all other spheres of public life. Moreover, war is a powerful stress-inducing factor that causes a wide range of anxiety, depressive, and post-traumatic reactions[179]. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that many people living in areas affected by conflict suffer from mental disorders: "One person in five is living with some form of mental disorder, from mild depression or anxiety to psychosis. Worse, almost 1 in 10 is living with a moderate or severe mental disorder"[180].

However, not only civilians and soldiers within the targeted country can be affected during a military conflict. The psychological consequences of war may also extend far beyond the battlefield, influencing the mental health

[179] *Непомняща Д.* Вплив війни на емоційний стан та ментальне здоров'я особистості // Ментальне здоров'я. 2025. № 4. С. 133. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32782/3041-2005/2025-4.21

[180] Mental health conditions in conflict situations are much more widespread than we thought // WHO. 2019. URL: https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/mental-health-conditions-in-conflict-situations-are-much-more-widespread-than-we-thought

and emotional well-being of people across Europe and the rest of the world. The advent of digital technologies has revolutionised the ways in which information is produced, shared, and consumed[181]. In an era of widespread internet access, active engagement in social media, and the rapid dissemination of information, people around the world become witnesses to war in real time. Steve Sugden, a psychiatrist at the Huntsman Mental Health Institute (HMHI), states that people just consuming the images, videos, and audio of the war through social media apps, television, radio, and the web can develop the typical psychological profile of trauma[182]. War may exert a particularly significant impact on the mental health of populations in countries that, although not directly involved in the conflict, are located in close geographical proximity to the borders of the attacked state.

The beginning of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war in February 2022 became a turning point not only for our country, but also for the entire world. The largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War has had a huge impact on international relations in general and on human lives in particular. In contemporary mass media discourse, this conflict is frequently characterised as the first "online war", similarly to how the events of 11 September were described as the first terrorist attack broadcast live on television. The constant exposure to war-related content through digital media and social networks has intensified the emotional involvement of audiences in Europe, raising important questions about the psychological consequences of mediated war exposure.

Based on the above, the following research questions have been determined: How can constant exposure to war-related information influence levels of stress, anxiety, fear, and emotional well-being among European audiences? What is the role of different mass media in the dissemination of harmful information? The present study aims to explore the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the mental health of the European population. To achieve this, it focuses on the various examples of war-related content, contemporary studies of public opinion, and recent surveys conducted in different European countries.

The impact of war on mental health has undoubtedly received considerable attention in contemporary academic research. This work is informed by three areas of literature:

[181] *Ejaz U., Felix P.* Fake Images and Historical Revisionism in the Digital Age. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392626114_Fake_Images_and_Historical_Revisionism_in_the_Digital_Age

[182] The Mental Health Effects of War // Backed by Science. University of Utah Health. 2022. 28 March. URL: https://healthcare.utah.edu/hmhi/news/2022/03/mental-health-effects-of-war-backed-science

1. Theoretical work on psychological impacts of war, with a focus on how military conflicts affect mental health, including stress, anxiety, fear, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and overall emotional well-being.

2. Theoretical and empirical research on the Russian-Ukrainian war and its psychological consequences, including studies on mental health outcomes among different population groups,

3. Empirical research on media influence and information exposure as potential stressors for the European population.

The first group of studies primarily addresses the broader mechanisms through which different military conflicts could influence the mental health of the population[183]. Researchers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs argue that civilians exposed to war experience a wide range of stressors, including threats to life, displacement, and the loss of loved ones[184].

The main consequences for the mental health of the civilian population were outlined in a speech published on the website of the European Commission. Among the most significant effects are PTSD, chronic stress and anxiety, depression and emotional exhaustion, acute experiences of grief and loss, as well as various forms of social maladaptation:

– PTSD develops in a significant proportion of individuals who have experienced traumatic events and is commonly associated with intrusive memories and emotional distress.

– Chronic stress and anxiety may manifest through a persistent sense of danger, nervousness, and sleep disturbances.

– Depression and apathy are reflected in feelings of hopelessness, emotional burnout, and a loss of interest in everyday life.

– Experiences of grief and loss are connected to the death of loved ones, destruction of homes, and disruption of familiar routines and stability.

– In addition, prolonged exposure to wartime stressors may lead to social maladaptation, including difficulties in communication, increased aggression, and social withdrawal[185].

Existing research demonstrates high rates of mental and psychological disorders among war-affected civilians, with such mental health problems being prevalent in both refugee and non-refugee populations.

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[183] *Amsalem D., Haim-Nachum S., Lazarov A., Levi-Belz Y., Markowitz J.C., Bergman M., Rafaeli A.K., Brenner L.A., Nacasch N., Wainberg M.L., Mendlovic S., Neria Y.* The effects of war-related experiences on mental health symptoms of individuals living in conflict zones: A longitudinal study // Scientific Reports. 2025. Vol. 15 (1). C. 2.

[184] Mental Health Aspects of Prolonged Combat Stress in Civilians // Veterans Affairs. 2025. URL: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/specific/combat_stress_civilian.asp

[185] Вплив війни на психічне здоров'я населення // European Comission. 2023. 22 February. URL: https://cutt.ly/WtVGhuhg

The second group of studies addresses the impact of the war in Ukraine on the mental health of the population. Ukrainian scholars focus both on the population in general[186] and on various population groups that are particularly vulnerable to the psychological effects caused by military actions on the territory of the state. In this context, particular attention is devoted to children and young people, including, for example, students in higher education[187]. An important source of information for the present analysis is the material collected within the framework of the Museum of War Childhood, an international initiative focused on documenting and preserving the experiences of individuals whose childhoods have been affected by war. In addition to its archival and educational functions, the initiative aims to support children in coping with the psychological consequences of war by providing them with an opportunity to share their experiences. The Ukrainian archive currently contains more than 500 personal testimonies and over 700 related artefacts, constituting the largest collection of children's wartime experiences in Ukraine and an important source for future academic research on war, trauma, memory, and childhood[188]. A separate group of studies focuses on the psychological health of refugees and internally displaced persons[189]. A considerable number of studies are also devoted to the psychotraumatization of military personnel and strategies for overcoming its consequences[190].

While most of the literature concentrates on the impact of war on the mental health of military personnel and the civilian population of Ukraine, including internally displaced persons and refugees, far less attention has

[186] *Утюж І., Спиця Н.* Ментальне здоров'я сучасного українського суспільства: соціально-філософський погляд на проблему // Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка. Філософські науки. 2024. № 1 (95). С. 140-152. DOI: https://doi.org/10.35433/PhilosophicalSciences

[187] *Мотозюк Л.М., Блохіна І.О., Москаленко О.В.* Особливості впливу війни на стан психологічного здоров'я здобувачів вищої освіти: До питання вибору діагностичного інструментарію (український кейс) // ГАБІТУС. 2023. Вип. 46. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-5208.2023.46.15; *Tamilina L., Hohol O., Ihnatenko Y.* Exploring the Impact of Military Conflicts on Mental Health of Students: The Case of Ukraine // MPRA Paper. 2023. 1 December. URL: https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/119435/

[188] Про музей // War Childhood Museum Ukraine. URL: https://warchildhood.org/ua/about/

[189] *Василівна З., Краєва О.* Психологічний стан біженців та чинники їх самовідновлення // Всеукраїнський науковий семінар з міжнародною участю «Національно-визвольний формат ціннісної трансформації суспільних відносин в Україні», 21 квітня 2023 року. С. 32-37; *Шиліна Н.Є.* Проблема емоційного стану біженців та переселенців за умов військового конфлікту в Україні на прикладі студентів 5 курсу // Вчені записки Таврійського національного університету імені В.І. Вернадського. Серія: Психологія. 2023. Т. 34 (73). № 2. С. 30-36.

[190] *Кокун О.М., Мороз В.М., Лозінська Н.С., Пішко І.О.* Психологічна профілактика психотравматизації військовослужбовців Збройних Сил України. НДЦ ГП ЗС України. 2021. URL: https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/id/eprint/723954/

been devoted to the consequences of the military conflict for the mental well-being of populations in European countries that are not directly involved in the war but nevertheless become constant witnesses to it in real time through contemporary media and digital technologies. This is the main gap that this study aims to address.

Traditionally, war-related trauma has been most commonly observed among individuals directly involved in armed conflict or those located in close proximity to combat zones. However, the distinctive context of the war in Ukraine suggests that these patterns may be evolving: "…the current conflicts occur against the backdrop in which advanced information and communication technologies are becoming ever-more prevalent. The speed, scale, and scope at which people could be exposed to the near-time happenings of the war mean that the battleground of the war is expanding via the Internet to people's living rooms and workplaces fast"[191].

The populations of European countries, which are experiencing a shocking new reality, may also be exposed to considerable psychological distress. Individuals who continuously consume images, videos, and audio related to the war through social media platforms, television, radio, and online news sources may suffer from significant levels of psychological trauma. It could be suggested that constant mediated exposure to violent events, combined with limited opportunities to immediately discuss and emotionally process these experiences within one's social network, can reduce psychological resilience and intensify feelings of fear, anxiety, and helplessness. Therefore, it is important to emphasise the need for a comprehensive investigation of this issue. In this regard, empirical studies and surveys examining levels of stress, depression, anxiety, and other psychological disorders in different European countries before and after 24 February 2022 may provide valuable insights into the broader mental health consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war and allow for the identification of general patterns and trends. For the purposes of this study, surveys conducted across different regions of Europe and among diverse population groups were selected, enabling a comprehensive assessment of Europeans' mental health under the psychological pressure associated with the war occurring in close proximity to the borders of the European Union.

For instance, a study by a Czech university aimed to assess anxiety and depression levels among students, exploring the correlation between war news exposure and mental health outcomes. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey design, employing a bilingual questionnaire to evaluate the

[191] *Su Z., McDonnell D., Cheshmehzangi A., Bentley B.L., Ahmad J., Šegalo S., da Veiga C., Xiang Y.* Media-Induced War Trauma Amid Conflicts in Ukraine // Perspectives on Psychological Science. 2023. № 18 (4). P. 908-911. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916221109609

mental health burden of the war on this population. The results appear highly convincing: over one-third of participants exhibited moderate to severe anxiety, and more than two-fifths exhibited moderate to severe depression. Female and older students reported higher levels of concern, and those following news frequently, especially on social media, also exhibited higher levels of concern[192].

The Russian invasion of Ukraine negatively impacted the mental health and well-being of Italian citizens. One of the studies[193] focused on both negative psychological effects (anxiety, depression, stress) and potential positive changes (posttraumatic growth). It hypothesized that concern about the war would negatively impact stress and anxiety/depression levels, with variations based on demographics, resilience, and prior traumatic experiences. The study involved 755 participants, including healthcare professionals, and utilized a cross-sectional online survey conducted in September–October 2022. The results prove that the impact was more pronounced in individuals with chronic illnesses, those who were not healthcare professionals, and those who experienced less positive change after traumatic events. The study highlights the importance of considering individual differences and coping mechanisms when assessing the psychological impact of war.

The next study[194] investigated the psychological impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on individuals in Romania, focusing on those who interacted with refugees and those who did not. It found that individuals who interacted with refugees used rumination as an adaptive mechanism and experienced a greater fear of war. It also explored how exposure to traumatic events affects psychological features like resilience, general health, perceived stress, coping strategies, and fear of war. Additionally, it explored how interaction with war refugees affects perceived stress, fear of war, resilience, and coping strategies.

A distinctive feature of this study lies in its focus not only on traditional stress-inducing factors affecting the European population, such as the widespread dissemination of photographs, videos, stories of eyewitnesses, and other forms of sensitive content. Particular attention is

[192] *Riad A., Drobov A., Krobot M., Antalová N., Alkasaby M.A., Peřina A., Koščík M.* Mental Health Burden of the Russian–Ukrainian War 2022 (RUW-22): Anxiety and Depression Levels among Young Adults in Central Europe // International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2022. № 19 (14). P. 84-88. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19148418

[193] *Mottola F., Gnisci A., Kalaitzaki A., Vintilă M., Sergi I.* The impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the mental health of Italian people after 2 years of the pandemic: Risk and protective factors as moderators // Frontiers in Psychology. 2023. № 14. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1154502

[194] Ibidem.

also devoted to the impact of misinformation, fake news, and other forms of Russian propaganda materials, which undoubtedly have a negative influence on mental well-being.

Using various scales, including the Fear of War Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale, the researchers found that information strain moderates the effect of information overload on fake news sharing. Specifically, high information strain amplifies the likelihood of spreading fake news when individuals are exposed to high information overload. The study also highlighted the importance of understanding the reasons behind the spread of fake news during crises and the need for psychological support for those providing aid to victims.

The Russian invasion also negatively impacted the mental health of the German population, particularly increasing anxiety and depressive symptoms. This effect was more pronounced than during the COVID-19 pandemic, with fear of the war's impact being a significant contributing factor. The study[195] utilized data from the DigiHero cohort, comparing mental health measures before and after the war's onset. During the early weeks of the Russian-Ukrainian war, mental health in the German population worsened. Fear of the war's impact was significantly higher than fears of individual adverse events or health-related events, and those with stronger fear also experienced worse mental health outcomes, particularly anxiety and emotional distress. A stronger association between fear and mental health outcomes in women compared to men was also described. The study highlights the need to understand the mental health effects of war on populations not directly involved in the conflict.

Another study of the general adult population in Germany[196] examined the association between fear of war (conventional and nuclear) after 2022 and mental health (depression and anxiety). The study utilized data from a nationally representative online survey of 3091 individuals aged 18–74, conducted in March 2022. This association remained significant even after adjusting for various covariates, including sociodemographic, lifestyle-related, and health-related factors. The study highlights the importance of fear of war for mental health and underscores the need for further research, particularly longitudinal studies, to explore this relationship.

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[195] *Gottschick C., Diexer S., Massag J., Klee B., Broda A., Purschke O., Binder M., Sedding D., Frese T., Girndt M., Hoell J.I., Michl P., Gekle M., Mikolajczyk R.* Mental health in Germany in the first weeks of the Russo-Ukrainian war // BJPsych Open. 2023. № 9 (3). С. 1-7. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2023.21

[196] *Hajek A., Kretzler B., König H.* Fear of war and mental health in Germany // Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology. 2023. Vol. 58 (7). P. 1049-1054. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-022-02394-9

An interesting international study, which examined the mental health impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on populations in Ukraine, Poland, and Taiwan, identified risk factors associated with developing mental health issues, including female gender, self-rated health status, past psychiatric history, and avoidance coping strategies[197]. It concludes that Ukrainian participants reported significantly higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress compared to Polish and Taiwanese participants (but at the same time over half of Ukrainian participants would not seek psychological help). More unexpectedly, despite not being directly affected by the war, Polish participants also experienced high levels of distress due to media exposure. The study also found that female gender, self-rated health status, past psychiatric history, and avoidant coping are risk factors for mental disorders. The study highlights the need for increased mental health services, including online interventions and trauma-focused therapies, to address the mental health impact of the war.

Particularly illustrative in this context is the international study investigating the impact of the war on resilience and coping indicators in Ukraine and five countries in the region: Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Estonia[198]. The research aims to understand similarities and differences in social resilience (community and societal) and positive and negative coping indicators among these populations during the second half of the first year of the war. The study examined hope, morale, well-being, sense of danger, distress symptoms, and perceived threats among participants (around 1000 from each country). Results showed that Ukrainians reported the highest levels of community and societal resilience and hope, despite experiencing high levels of distress and a sense of danger. This may be explained by strong support within the community. The study also highlights the importance of hope as a positive coping indicator and emphasizes the need for ongoing support and monitoring of resilience levels in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

The findings from the five countries located near Ukraine may reflect differences in the history of their territorial conflicts, political spheres, geopolitical backgrounds, and sociocultural aspects of the society of each country. For example, Estonia reported the lowest sense of danger, while

[197] *Chudzicka-Czupała A., Hapon N., Chiang SK.* Depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress during the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian war, a comparison between populations in Poland, Ukraine, and Taiwan // Sci Rep. 2023. № 13. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-28729-3

[198] *Kimhi S., Kaim A., Bankauskaite D., Baran M., Baran T., Eshel Y., Dumbadze S., Gabashvili M., Kaniasty K., Koubova A., Marciano H., Matkeviciene R., Teperik D., Adini B.* A full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022: Resilience and coping within and beyond Ukraine // Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being. 2024. № 16 (3), P. 1005-1023. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12466

Lithuania reported the lowest levels of perceived threats, potentially resulting from their NATO membership. At the same time, Poland reported the highest levels compared with the other countries.

A global experience-sampling study tracked well-being of the population of 11 European countries before, during, and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (63-day period): "We focused on European countries because the outbreak of war has had the most direct consequences and was likely to be monitored most closely by the public in these countries"[199]. The study also explored the role of personality traits, sociodemographic factors, and the salience of the war (measured by Ukraine-related tweets) in shaping well-being changes. The authors emphasize that levels of mental well-being were at their lowest on the day of the invasion, followed by a slow recovery over the following weeks.

Thus, the findings of the eight surveys conducted among populations of European countries, including Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, clearly demonstrate that the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 not only became a serious threat to the mental health and well-being of Ukrainians but also significantly reduced levels of psychological well-being across European societies. Based on the main findings of these studies, several key trends can be identified:

1. The main consequences of the war in Ukraine for the mental health of Europeans may include increased levels of stress, depression, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic symptoms. It is also important to note the growing fear of war, heightened anxiety for relatives and loved ones, and a general deterioration in psychological well-being.

2. The most vulnerable population groups appear to be those working directly with Ukrainian refugees and receiving information about the war from eyewitnesses. Anxiety disorders are more frequently identified among women, depression is more commonly observed among adolescents and students, while older individuals demonstrate particularly high levels of fear related to the war.

3. The most significant decline in the mental well-being of Europeans was observed during the first months of the war. However, no complete psychological recovery has been observed to date, although the human psyche undoubtedly demonstrates a tendency to gradually adapt to shocking and traumatic events.

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[199] *Scharbert J., Humberg S., Kroencke L., Reiter T., Sakel S., Ter Horst J., Utesch K., Harari G., Matz S., Schoedel R., Stachl C., Aguilar N.M.A., Amante D., Aquino S.D., Bastias F., Bornamanesh A., Bracegirdle C.* Psychological well-being in Europe after the outbreak of war in Ukraine // Nature Communications. 2024. № 15 (1). P. 1202. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-44693-6

4. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that Ukrainians themselves appear to demonstrate the highest levels of resilience and psychological recovery despite living under the direct conditions of war. A particularly concerning tendency is that Ukrainians also appear to be less likely than Europeans to seek professional psychological or mental health support.

5. An important factor is also geography: populations of countries located closer to the borders with Ukraine (such as Romania and Poland) tend to show higher levels of anxiety disorders and increased stress. Historical factors also play a significant role; for example, in Germany, fear of a broader European war is considerably more pronounced.

6. The main factors influencing Europeans' mental health include war-related narratives, as well as photographs and videos depicting the consequences of the war, news from the front line and from sites of attacks on civilian infrastructure, and eyewitness accounts shared through personal blogs or mass media. At the same time, special attention should be given to the harmful psychological effects of fake news, propaganda narratives, deliberate panic amplification, and the distortion of reality disseminated through pro-Russian channels.

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates that the psychological consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war extend far beyond the territory of Ukraine and affect the mental well-being of populations across Europe. Contemporary digital technologies and the rapid dissemination of information through social media, online platforms, and traditional mass media have transformed the war into a constant presence in the everyday lives of millions of Europeans. As a result, even populations that are not directly involved in the conflict may experience increased levels of anxiety, stress, fear, emotional exhaustion, and other psychological difficulties.

The reviewed empirical studies conducted in different European countries confirm that constant exposure to war-related information may negatively influence mental health outcomes among various social groups. At the same time, the findings suggest that the intensity of these effects may depend on demographic factors, coping strategies, resilience, previous traumatic experiences, and the degree of media exposure.

Particular attention should also be devoted to the role of misinformation, fake news, and propaganda content, which contribute to information overload, intensify psychological distress, and may further undermine emotional stability and social resilience. In this regard, the study highlights the importance of responsible media consumption, the development of media literacy, and the implementation of psychological support mechanisms aimed at reducing the negative mental health consequences of mediated war exposure.

Despite this, the research has some limitations. In different countries, different population groups participated in the surveys, which inevitably affects the comparability of the results. In addition, the surveys were conducted at different times and using different methodologies and data collection strategies. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as differences in sampling and research design may have influenced the comparability and consistency of the results across countries and studies.

Overall, the findings indicate the necessity for further interdisciplinary and longitudinal research on the psychological effects of contemporary military conflicts on populations beyond direct combat zones. Understanding these processes is essential for the development of effective mental health policies, preventive strategies, and support systems capable of strengthening psychological resilience within European societies in the context of the on-going Russian-Ukrainian war.

CONCLUSIONS

The research undertaken in this collective monograph provides grounds for viewing the European Union as a multidimensional political, economic, and security project whose evolution is closely linked to transformations in the European and international order. European integration, initially conceived as a mechanism for overcoming the continent's conflict-ridden past and ensuring lasting peace, has gradually developed into a complex system of institutions, common policies, legal norms, and mechanisms of cooperation. At the same time, contemporary geopolitical developments are driving further transformation of this model and strengthening the security dimension of European integration.

European integration has demonstrated that political and economic interdependence, institutional dialogue, common rules, and mechanisms for resolving disputes can provide a foundation for long-term stability. At the same time, contemporary threats have highlighted the need to complement this model with effective defence capabilities, crisis-response mechanisms, and strategic resilience. In this context, the EU is gradually moving from a predominantly normative and economic model of influence towards a more comprehensive approach that combines political, diplomatic, economic, sanctions-based, humanitarian, and security instruments.

The analysis of the EU's institutional architecture demonstrates that its multi-level nature simultaneously enables the reconciliation of diverse interests among Member States and creates certain constraints on the timely adoption of decisions, particularly in the areas of foreign policy and security. The effectiveness of common policies depends to a significant extent on the political will of Member States, the coherence of their strategic priorities, and the capacity of EU institutions to ensure timely and coordinated responses to crises.

An important finding of the study is that the European Union operates as part of a multi-level collective security system, interacting with the United Nations, NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and other international organizations. The EU does not replace these institutions but complements them through its own political, economic, diplomatic, humanitarian, and civilian crisis-management instruments. The development of the Common Security and Defence Policy demonstrates the gradual expansion of the EU's capacity to respond to crises, although its further effectiveness will depend on closer

coordination among Member States and the development of appropriate resources and decision-making mechanisms.

The analysis of the EU's responses to contemporary conflicts demonstrates the diversification of its policy instruments. Sanctions, diplomatic mediation, humanitarian assistance, civil protection, financial support, and other mechanisms are increasingly employed in combination. At the same time, the experience of different crises demonstrates that the effectiveness of such instruments depends on the specific characteristics of each conflict, the level of international coordination, political cohesion, and the EU's capacity to maintain policy consistency over the long term.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has become a central driver of the transformation of the European security environment. It has demonstrated the interdependence between Ukraine's security and that of the European Union and has constituted a major test for European institutions and Member States. The EU's response has encompassed political, diplomatic, financial, humanitarian, economic, and military support for Ukraine, as well as the implementation of a comprehensive set of sanctions against the Russian Federation. This demonstrates a significant expansion of the EU's practical role in responding to large-scale international crises.

At the same time, the Russian-Ukrainian war has become a factor in the internal transformation of the European Union itself. Questions of defence capabilities, strategic resilience, energy and economic security, critical infrastructure protection, and countering hybrid threats have acquired substantially greater importance. The war has demonstrated the interdependence between the EU's external and internal security and the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing both dimensions.

The economic and energy dimensions of security have acquired particular significance. Dependence on external energy resources has revealed the potential vulnerability of European economies to geopolitical risks, contributing to intensified efforts to diversify energy supplies, develop alternative energy sources, and strengthen strategic resilience. Consequently, energy and economic security are becoming increasingly integrated into the broader European security framework.

The war also has a significant social and humanitarian dimension. The large-scale displacement of Ukrainians to EU Member States has represented an important manifestation of European solidarity while simultaneously creating long-term challenges in the areas of social adaptation, employment, education, and integration. At the same time, the war is affecting public perceptions of security, solidarity, responsibility, and shared values, while its psychological consequences have brought the issue of societal resilience increasingly to the forefront.

The synthesis of the research findings makes it possible to identify several interrelated trends in the transformation of the European Union: the strengthening of the security and defence dimension of integration; the growing importance of strategic resilience; the expansion of the EU's foreign and security policy instruments; deeper interaction with NATO and other international organizations; and the increasing interdependence between the EU's internal stability and the security of its eastern neighbourhood.

The findings of the study are of particular significance for Ukraine, as the Russian-Ukrainian war has demonstrated that Ukraine's security is an integral component of contemporary European security. Ukraine is simultaneously a recipient of European support and an important participant in shaping a new security architecture on the continent. Further deepening of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the political, security, defence, and other spheres may contribute to the development of a more resilient European security environment.

Thus, the contemporary European Union is undergoing a profound transformation driven by changes in the international environment and, above all, by the Russian-Ukrainian war. The EU is gradually strengthening its capacity to act in the field of security by combining economic, political, diplomatic, sanctions-based, humanitarian, and defence instruments. The further effectiveness of this process will depend on the European Union's ability to maintain political cohesion, develop its own capabilities, deepen cooperation with international partners, and ensure consistency between fundamental European values and the practical mechanisms for safeguarding them.

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Колективна монографія

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