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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF LAWMAKING IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINE'S INTEGRATION INTO THE EU

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Abstract. This study examines the theoretical, legal and practical aspects of international economic co-operation in the context of Ukraine's accession to the EU. This is important given Ukraine's status as a candidate for EU accession and the ongoing process of European integration, as well as the need for thorough reform of the national legal system in line with European standards. International economic co-operation is expanding beyond traditional trade and economic relations to increasingly encompass legal regulation. This is because successful economic integration hinges on proper legislative harmonisation and effective mechanisms for regulating social relations. International economic co-operation is an important means of aligning Ukrainian legislation with that of the European Union. The process of legal integration has been found to entail not only aligning national legislation with EU law, but also amending the lawmaking process and improving procedures for drafting and assessing the impact of regulations, as well as implementing advanced tools for monitoring legislation's effectiveness. The study concludes that the Association Agreement is a vital legal mechanism that paves the way for legislative harmonisation and establishes the regulatory preconditions for Ukraine's continued integration into the European legal framework. The study found that the Ukrainian lawmaking system is gradually aligning with European standards. This is evident through the introduction of new institutional instruments and the development of a regulatory framework. However, several issues were also identified, such as fragmented individual lawmaking procedures, ineffective impact assessment mechanisms, limited use of legal oversight tools and insufficient institutional capacity within government bodies. Particular attention was paid to the impact of martial law on lawmaking and the importance of adhering to relevant governance rules and making effective regulatory decisions. The *subject* of this study is international economic co-operation in lawmaking, as it relates to Ukraine's integration into the European Union. *Methodology.* The formal-legal method was applied to analyse the provisions of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, the Law of Ukraine "On Lawmaking Activity", the Treaty on European Union and other legal acts governing the process of legislative harmonisation and legislative activity. The comparative legal method made it possible to identify similarities and differences between the Ukrainian and European approaches to lawmaking, regulatory policy, impact assessment, public consultation and legal monitoring. The systemic method was employed to analyse lawmaking activity within the context of a broader legal and institutional framework of European integration. Meanwhile, the functional method was employed to evaluate the practical effectiveness of legal mechanisms designed to implement European standards within the Ukrainian legal system. The *aim of this article* is to examine the role of international economic co-operation in the development of lawmaking activities in Ukraine in the context of European integration. *Results.* The research demonstrates that international economic co-operation has become one of the main factors influencing the transformation of Ukraine's lawmaking system during its integration into the European Union. It has been established that bringing Ukrainian legislation into line with the European Union's acquis involves changes not only to the content of legal norms, but also to the way rules are made. The

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present study demonstrates that the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On Lawmaking Activity" signifies a significant step towards the institutional modernisation of the national lawmaking framework and the implementation of European regulatory standards. Concurrently, the research identifies several challenges, including the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of public authorities responsible for European integration. *Conclusion.* International economic co-operation in the field of lawmaking constitutes an essential element of Ukraine's European integration process and serves as an important mechanism for the modernisation of the national legal system. The approximation of Ukrainian legislation to European Union law necessitates not only the harmonisation of legal norms but also the transformation of lawmaking procedures and institutional practices in accordance with European standards of good governance.

Keywords: international economic co-operation, lawmaking activity, European integration, European Union, approximation of legislation, harmonisation of law, acquis Communautaire, regulatory policy, legal monitoring, better regulation, public governance.

JEL Classification: B22, E22, E24, J24, O15

1. Introduction

Ukraine's state policy is oriented towards European integration. This suggests that the country's legal system, governance mechanisms, and economic development will undergo modifications. The necessity for a substantial reform of national legislation has emerged in order to guarantee that Ukraine adheres to the standards and principles of EU law, following its designation as a candidate for accession to the European Union and the commencement of membership negotiations (Jacqué, 2024). In such circumstances, the significance of international economic co-operation in legislation has become particularly pronounced. The instrument is of critical importance in ensuring that legislation conforms to EU standards, as well as in establishing a legal framework conducive to the development of a market economy.

In contemporary integration processes, the interaction between the economic and legal spheres is becoming more acute. The rapid convergence of legal systems is imperative for the advancement of the digital economy, international trade, investment co-operation, and transport infrastructure, among other areas. Consequently, legislation is increasingly transcending national boundaries and assuming an international dimension. The legislative process represents a pivotal criterion for countries aspiring to EU membership.

The mechanisms by which Ukraine and the European Union are integrated are established by the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, as well as the European Union and its member states (European Union, 2023; European Union, 2014). This process involves the progressive convergence of Ukrainian legislation with EU law in a variety of public relations domains. In order to fulfil the obligations outlined in the Association Agreement, it is imperative to update the legal framework, enhance the processes for drafting regulatory acts, implement new methods of evaluating the impact of regulations, conduct public consultations, and monitor the effectiveness of the decisions made.

In the interim, the reform of the Ukrainian legislative system is significantly influenced by collaboration with international financial institutions, international organisations, and EU institutions. The implementation of technical assistance, expert support, and institutional development programs enables Ukraine to access contemporary regulatory methods, regulatory impact assessment methods, public participation mechanisms, and instruments for monitoring the efficacy of legislation. This collaboration not only serves to enhance the formal approximation of legislation to EU law, but also contributes to the economic and public governance of the country.

The issue previously mentioned is of significant concern in the context of Ukraine's post-war reconstruction and military governance. The efficacy of legislation is a significant factor in the government's capacity to implement reforms, establish favourable conditions for attracting foreign investment, promote economic recovery, and integrate into the single European market. In view of this, the present investigation of international economic co-operation in legislation facilitates an evaluation of the present state of Ukrainian legislation's adherence to EU standards, an identification of the primary obstacles that have arisen in this process, and a pinpointing of promising areas for future development.

2. International Economic Co-operation as a Tool for Approximating Ukrainian Legislation to European Union Law

As international economic relations develop today, legal regulation is expanding beyond the borders of a single state. Due to growing economic interdependence and efforts to create common markets, there is a need to harmonise national legal systems and establish common methods for regulating public relations. Legislation therefore becomes a means not only of achieving state sovereignty, but also of facilitating international co-operation in order to achieve common economic and political goals.

These processes are particularly significant for Ukraine as it develops a strategy for accession to the European Union. The gradual transition to a single legal space with shared regulatory standards is known as 'European integration'. It also means expanding access to the European Union's internal market and participating in its economic mechanisms. Therefore, harmonising Ukrainian laws with EU law is considered an important step in developing economic relations between the two countries (European Union, n.d.).

This process is based on the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union. This agreement stipulates that Ukrainian legislation should gradually converge with EU law. However, the agreement's purpose extends beyond establishing specific obligations for the harmonisation of legislative acts. It establishes a new model of interaction between national law and economic policy, whereby legislative reform is crucial for economic integration. In this context, legislation has two functions: it continues to implement Ukraine's internal policy and fulfil its international legal obligations (Petrov et al., 2015, pp. 2–11).

The European Union Single Market is predicated on a common regulatory framework designed to ensure the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour across Member States. Consequently, legislative approximation requires not only the formal transposition of EU legal acts but also the adoption of regulatory practices and institutional arrangements that ensure compatibility with the economic governance mechanisms of the Single Market (Raudla & Spendzharova, 2022, p. 2; Horodyskyy et al., 2021, pp. 62–63).

In academic literature, the terms harmonisation, approximation, and legal integration are often used to describe the manner in which national legislation approaches EU law. Despite the presence of certain discrepancies between these concepts, they all concentrate on a shared tendency of gradual unification of national legal systems to establish a unified regulatory environment (Ghio, 2024).

From an economic perspective, legislative approximation reduces the transaction costs associated with complying with different regulatory systems, thereby facilitating firms' participation in international markets. Harmonised regulatory standards reduce non-tariff barriers and information asymmetries while simplifying cross-border trade by establishing common technical and regulatory requirements. Empirical evidence shows that standard harmonisation stimulates trade expansion by increasing export volumes and encouraging firms to enter foreign markets. It also generates economic effects similar to reductions in tariff barriers (Schmidt & Steingress, 2022, p. 20).

The economic implications of legal harmonisation are most evident in areas related to the functioning of the EU's internal market. Key issues include competition policy, state aid for businesses, technical regulations, consumer protection, customs legislation, public procurement, financial services, and the digital economy (Pelkmans, 2002, pp. 6–8).

The economic significance of legislative approximation is evident in the growing economic integration between Ukraine and the European Union. As can be seen in *Table 1*, the EU strengthened its position as Ukraine's largest trading partner considerably during the implementation of the Association Agreement and the gradual approximation of Ukrainian legislation to EU legislation.

Table 1
Ukraine's economic integration with the European Union

Indicator	2019	2021	2024
EU share in Ukraine's total trade, %	40.1	39.5	56.8
Value of EU-Ukraine trade in goods, billion EUR	43.3	52.4	67.3
EU exports to Ukraine, billion EUR	24.1	28.1	42.8
EU imports from Ukraine, billion EUR	19.2	24.3	24.5

Source: compiled by the authors based on the (Eurostat, 2025)

As can be seen from *Table 1*, the European Union has become Ukraine's dominant trading partner. Despite the adverse effects of the full-scale war, bilateral trade in goods increased substantially between 2021 and 2024. At the same time, the EU accounted for more than half of Ukraine's total external trade. These trends suggest that progressive approximation of Ukrainian legislation to EU regulatory standards has facilitated deeper economic integration, including trade, customs co-operation and market access.

The growing share of the EU in Ukraine's external trade shows that legislative approximation has led to deeper economic integration. Although the full-scale war has affected trade dynamics, the EU remains Ukraine's principal trading partner, confirming the strategic importance of regulatory convergence.

Transformation concerns not only the content of laws, but also how they are developed. The traditional model of legislation, which focused primarily on the legal form of regulations, is gradually being replaced by an approach that considers the consequences of regulatory decisions, evaluates alternative regulatory options, and involves stakeholders in the decision-making process. Consequently, legislation is increasingly viewed as integral to the determination of public policy, rather than merely the final stage in the establishment of regulations (Meuwese & Radaelli, 2010, pp. 137–142).

In this regard, international economic co-operation has the greatest impact on the development of the Ukrainian judicial system. This encompasses more than just the provision of professional or financial resources for specific reforms; it also entails the gradual adoption of a new legal culture centred on good governance, transparency, openness, and evidence-based public decision-making. These approaches are directly related to the Europeanisation of legislation. Significant organisational and regulatory changes are required to align with the European Union's rules and procedures (Emerson & Movchan, 2016, pp. 2–4, 21–23).

International economic co-operation should therefore be viewed not only as a mechanism for legal harmonisation, but also as an important factor in economic development. The harmonisation of Ukrainian legislation with the EU acquis helps to reduce transaction costs, improve the quality of regulation, facilitate trade, strengthen investor confidence, and create favourable conditions for deeper integration into the Single European Market and sustainable economic growth.

3. Peculiarities of Adapting the Ukrainian Lawmaking System to EU Standards

The successful integration of Ukraine into the European Union is contingent not only on the approximation of its national legislation to the EU acquis, but also on the creation of a regulatory environment that is compatible with the functioning of the European Single Market. In this context, legislative adaptation extends beyond the formal alignment of legal norms and encompasses the transformation of lawmaking procedures, regulatory governance, and institutional practices. Such changes are imperative for the reduction of regulatory barriers, the enhancement of the business environment, and the facilitation of Ukraine's economic integration with the European Union.

Modern European lawmaking is based on a broader understanding of regulatory governance than the traditional approach of simply adopting legal acts. The quality of legal regulation now hinges on evidence-based policymaking, regulatory impact assessments, stakeholder participation and the evaluation of policy outcomes. Consequently, the European Union has developed comprehensive Better Regulation standards that aim to enhance the quality of regulation while alleviating unnecessary administrative and economic burdens (European Commission, 2025, pp. 8–10, 20–22).

The modern Ukrainian lawmaking model is based on the Ukrainian law "On Lawmaking Activity" (The Law of Ukraine "On Lawmaking Activity" of April 19, 2025, No. 3354-IX). This law establishes the fundamental principles of lawmaking and sets out the requirements for preparing draft normative legal acts. It also creates systems for legal monitoring. A significant achievement of this law was the enshrinement of the principles of the rule of law, proportionality, validity, consistency and scientific support for lawmaking. Incorporating these principles creates the institutional preconditions for improving institutional effectiveness, strengthening policy predictability and facilitating Ukraine's gradual integration into the EU's economic and regulatory space.

However, despite adopting modern lawmaking principles, Ukraine's regulatory system is still in the process of institutional development. Lawmaking procedures are still governed by multiple legislative and subordinate legal acts, which results in fragmented regulation and inconsistent application of legislative procedures (Albanesi, 2024, pp. 47–50). This increases administrative complexity, creates regulatory uncertainty for businesses and reduces the overall efficiency of public governance, thereby limiting Ukraine's ability to integrate effectively into the EU economically.

The effectiveness of legislative approximation hinges not only on the formal adoption of European legal principles, but also on their practical implementation. Legal certainty is particularly important from an economic perspective, as stable, predictable and coherent regulation enables businesses to assess regulatory risks, reduce transaction costs, and make long-term investment and production decisions (Court of Justice of the European Union, 1996, para. 20; Court of Justice of the European Union, 2005, para. 29). Consequently, legal certainty is an important economic prerequisite for competitive markets to function and for Ukraine to integrate into the EU Single Market.

According to the European Union (2012), another fundamental principle of the EU regulatory framework is proportionality, whereby regulatory intervention should not impose unnecessary restrictions on economic activity. From an economic perspective, proportionality helps to strike a balance between public regulation and market freedom. It prevents businesses from being burdened with excessive administration while ensuring that public policy objectives are achieved. Therefore, the gradual incorporation of this principle into Ukrainian lawmaking supports the development of a more efficient, business-oriented regulatory environment.

These principles underpin the European Union's Better Regulation agenda, which incorporates lawmaking into the wider public policy process. Unlike the traditional legislative approach, which focuses primarily on the adoption of legal acts, the

Better Regulation agenda emphasises evidence-based decision-making. This includes identifying problems, assessing policy alternatives and evaluating the expected economic and social consequences of regulatory interventions (Meyers, 2024, pp. 3–5).

The European Commission therefore requires a regulatory impact assessment to be carried out as part of the legislative process. Systematically evaluating the economic, social and environmental impacts of new legislation improves its quality, reduces unnecessary market failures and enhances the efficiency of its implementation (Meyers, 2024, pp. 8–11).

Ukraine has gradually incorporated similar mechanisms into its national legislative framework. The Law of Ukraine "On Lawmaking Activity" introduces a regulatory impact assessment that covers economic, financial, social, and environmental dimensions. However, according to the OECD/SIGMA assessment, these instruments are not yet being applied consistently in practice, and regulatory impact assessments are not yet being used systematically as an evidence-based tool for policy decision-making (OECD/SIGMA, 2023, pp. 12–17). Consequently, the economic benefits of high-quality regulatory assessment have not yet been fully realised. These benefits include lower transaction costs, improved regulatory predictability, and more efficient public administration.

Table 2 shows that Ukraine has formally adopted the key Better Regulation tools used in the European Union. However, according to OECD/SIGMA assessments, their practical implementation remains uneven, particularly with regard to regulatory impact assessment and ex post evaluation. Consequently, the expected economic benefits of evidence-based regulation have yet to be realised in full, highlighting the need for further institutional development. *Figure 1* illustrates the relationship between Better Regulation instruments and their expected economic effects in the context of Ukraine's European integration.

As illustrated in *Figure 1*, Better Regulation instruments generate economic benefits indirectly, by improving regulatory quality. Higher regulatory quality leads to lower transaction costs, greater policy predictability and improved market access. This creates a more favourable environment for business activity and investment (de Lucio & Mora-Sanguinetti, 2022, pp. 164–165). Together, these effects strengthen Ukraine's capacity for sustainable economic integration into the European Union.

The European model of Better Regulation places considerable emphasis on stakeholder participation throughout the regulatory decision-making process (Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union). Not only is public consultation regarded as an element of democratic governance, but it also reduces information asymmetry between regulators and market participants (Zhang et al., 2024), improves the quality of regulatory decisions, and lowers the likelihood of unintended economic consequences.

Ukrainian legislation provides several mechanisms for involving citizens in the development of regulations. These include public consultations, the publication of draft legal acts, and the collection of comments and proposals. These mechanisms generally align with European approaches to transparent governance. However, improvements to consultation procedures are still needed, as are stronger feedback mechanisms and a wider use of digital participation tools. According to Pyroha et al. (2022), more effective stakeholder engagement contributes to greater public trust, better-informed regulatory decisions, lower implementation costs and higher regulatory efficiency.

Digital transformation has become an important part of how the European Union governs its regulations. According to Martins & Veiga (2022, pp. 6–8), digital consultation platforms, electronic legislative procedures and online stakeholder engagement improve the accessibility and transparency of lawmaking, while reducing administrative costs and increasing the efficiency of regulatory processes.

Accordingly, the further digitalisation of Ukraine's lawmaking system is important not only for institutional modernisation, but also for improving the

Table 2
Comparative characteristics of Better Regulation instruments in the European Union and Ukraine

Better Regulation instrument	European Union	Ukraine	Expected economic effect
Regulatory Impact Assessment	Mandatory and systematically applied before adopting legislation	Implemented, but practical application remains inconsistent	Reduces regulatory uncertainty and compliance costs
Stakeholder consultation	Mandatory consultations throughout the legislative cycle	Public consultations established; feedback mechanisms require improvement	Improves regulatory quality and reduces information asymmetry
Ex post evaluation	Institutionalised and regularly conducted	Legal monitoring introduced; ex post evaluation remains limited	Eliminates inefficient regulation and improves policy effectiveness
Digital lawmaking	Extensive use of digital consultation and legislative platforms	Digital tools developing	Reduces administrative costs and increases accessibility

Source: compiled by the authors based on the European Commission (2025); OECD (2021); OECD/SIGMA (2023)

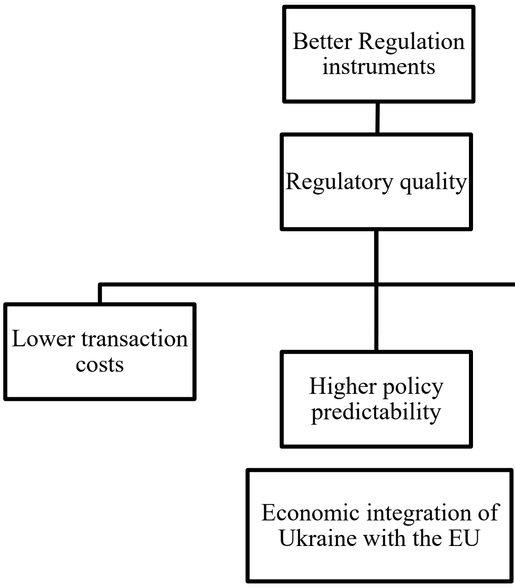

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the economic effects of Better Regulation in Ukraine's European integration

quality of the regulatory environment and supporting economic development (Digital State UA, 2026).

Monitoring the effectiveness of adopted legislation requires special attention. In the European Union, for example, the legislative process includes not only the adoption of legal acts, but also the systematic evaluation of implementation outcomes, the assessment of policy effectiveness, and the revision of existing regulations where necessary (OECD, 2021). This ex-post evaluation improves regulatory performance, reduces the persistence of inefficient regulations and makes the regulatory framework more adaptable to changing economic conditions.

Such mechanisms have only recently begun to develop in Ukraine. The Law of Ukraine "On Lawmaking Activity" introduced legal monitoring as a systematic tool for assessing the effectiveness of legislation. However, establishing an effective monitoring system requires the further development of common evaluation methodologies, institutional coordination and analytical capacity. Strengthening these elements would improve evidence-based policymaking and increase the efficiency of regulatory governance.

The successful approximation of Ukrainian legislation to the EU acquis also hinges on the institutional capacity of the public authorities responsible for the European integration process. Effective coordination between policymakers, a systematic analysis of EU legislation and robust analytical expertise are all vital for the consistent implementation of regulatory reforms. From an economic perspective, stronger institutional capacity leads to higher regulatory quality, greater policy consistency and a more predictable environment for economic activity.

One of the main challenges for Ukraine's legislative system is to balance the requirements of European regulatory standards with the need for swift decision-making under martial law. Accelerated legislative procedures may necessitate shorter consultation periods and more streamlined rule-making processes. While such measures are justified in exceptional circumstances, prolonged use may result in weaker regulation, less predictable policy and additional uncertainty for economic actors.

Overall, Ukraine's adoption of EU legal standards should be seen not just as a legal process, but as a transformation of its regulatory environment. This transformation is intended to improve market efficiency, strengthen institutional quality and create favourable conditions for Ukraine's sustainable economic integration into the EU.

4. Conclusions

The study showed that international economic co-operation in the field of regulation not only facilitates the legal harmonisation of Ukrainian legislation with EU law, but is also an important factor in economic integration. Legislative harmonisation creates a unified regulatory environment, reducing transaction costs and eliminating non-tariff barriers, thereby making economic activity more predictable. The growing presence of the EU in Ukraine's foreign trade confirms that legislative approximation is accompanied by deeper economic integration.

The study found that the EU's current regulatory model is based on the principles of 'better regulation', including regulatory impact assessments, stakeholder consultation, the digitalisation of regulatory processes, and the systematic monitoring of regulatory effectiveness. Introducing these tools improves the quality of government regulation, reduces the administrative burden on businesses, makes public policy more predictable and creates more favourable investment conditions.

It was determined that Ukraine had already established the basic regulatory and institutional prerequisites for implementing European regulatory standards, particularly following the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On Lawmaking Activity". However, the consistent application of tools designed to improve regulation, such as regulatory impact assessments, continuous monitoring of legislation's effectiveness and the digitalisation of regulatory procedures, remains insufficient. This limits the expected economic benefits of regulatory reforms.

Promising areas for further development include strengthening the institutional capacity of government bodies, improving regulatory impact assessment mechanisms, expanding the use of digital tools to facilitate stakeholder participation, and implementing a process for systematically evaluating legislation. Implementing these measures will improve the regulatory environment, strengthen investor confidence, boost the competitiveness of the Ukrainian economy and accelerate its integration into the European Union's single market.

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