

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESSES: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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INTRODUCTION

The modern world is characterized by the rapid development of global relationships and integration processes in various spheres of society. One of the key trends, which is reflected in political, economic and socio-cultural aspects, is European integration. The enlargement of the European Union and other forms of cooperation at the international level determine the current challenges and prospects for countries that seek to integrate into this innovative and dynamic process. In the context of constantly changing geopolitical conditions, economic instability and the transformation of socio-cultural values, the issue of European integration becomes not only topical, but also strategically important for many countries. The deepening of cooperation with European partners requires not only a thorough study of integration processes, but also an analysis of the challenges they pose and the determination of development prospects for the participants of this dynamic interaction.

The study of the general principles of European integration processes provides an opportunity for deep understanding and analysis of those aspects that affect the political, economic and socio-cultural dynamics of countries aiming for integration with the European community. This work is devoted to the study of the key challenges that arise in the context of European integration efforts, and to the definition of perspectives that are open to countries that choose the path of European integration.

1. Legal nature of European integration processes and value constants for Ukraine

State-building and law-making always have progressive tendencies and synergistic development, which involves the transformation of social processes. The modern model of Ukrainian society accumulates the aspirations of the people for European integration, the modeling of social relations by moderating them into a legal reality, which should take place by prerogative taking into account the stated aspirations and trends.

European integration processes are generally equated with a strategic course aimed at rapprochement and integration of countries into the European Union. We tend to have a broad understanding of terms; therefore, European integration processes are reflected by us through the doctrine of constitutionalism and interpreted as a set of measures and changes aimed at deepening and expanding cooperation between the countries of Europe in various spheres, in particular political, economic, social, cultural, etc., with the aim of rapprochement their

common standards and institutions. These processes are designed to contribute to the creation of a single European community, peace, stability and ensuring general well-being.

Integration processes are a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires the joint efforts of all interested parties to achieve the common goals of common well-being and development. It should be understood here that European integration is provoked and supported by the development of cause-and-effect relationships between three factors: transnational exchange, supranational organization and European Community regulation. This triad reflects the nature of social processes in various spheres.

In the political dimension, European integration means the development of democracy, the rule of law and the observance of human rights in accordance with European standards. Candidate countries or potential candidates are actively involved in work on reforms aimed at improving governance systems and ensuring guarantees of civil rights. In the economic dimension, European integration involves the creation of a single economic space, free trade, adaptation of legislation to European standards and cooperation in the field of finance. In this context, the emphasis is on sustainable economic development, competitiveness and development of small and medium-sized businesses. Social integration includes convergence of living standards, social rights and improvement of the quality of education and health care. The processes of cultural European integration contribute to mutual understanding and maintenance of cultural diversity while simultaneously developing a common European identity.

The legal nature of European integration processes consists in the formation of the legal system and the interaction of international and national norms that regulate relations between the participating countries and the European Union. The main aspects of this legal nature include the following aspects.

First, European integration processes are contractual in nature, as they are based on the conclusion of international agreements between countries and the European Union. The ideological approach to European integration is based on the ideas of cosmopolitanism, which focus on the global community and cosmopolitan solidarity. This implies an understanding of citizenship not only at the national, but also at the world level, where all people jointly participate in the construction of a global identity necessarily on a contractual basis. European lawyers prove that “the decision-making process is divided into three stages: the formation of national preferences within the country; intergovernmental negotiations; and the creation of European institutions to ensure agreements”¹. In the context of Ukraine, the most well-known is the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their member states, on the other hand, which establishes the legal foundation for cooperation.

¹ Hooghe L., Marks G. Grand theories of European integration in the twenty-first century, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2019. Vol. 26:8. P. 1113–1133. DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2019.1569711

Second is the integration of EU law. Candidate countries adopt and adapt EU law into national legal systems, which includes the implementation and enforcement of directives that ensure a level playing field for all countries. The essence of these norms can best be explained by a different combination of principles based on the theories of “neo-functionalism, intergovernmentalism, post-functionalism and federalism”².

Third is cooperation and interaction mechanisms. The legal nature determines the mechanisms of cooperation and interaction between the participating countries and the European Union, such as joint committees, councils, agencies that ensure the implementation of agreements and common interests, while maintaining national priorities, but “supranational institutions play a central and autonomous role”³. For example, let us indicate the position of experts who prove that the European Commission and the European Central Bank have “both the autonomy and the resources to preserve and expand supranational integration”⁴. The ECtHR also occupies a prominent place in this mechanism.

The European space promotes liberal ideas, in particular, the creation of global institutions that promote the development of democracy, human rights and a market economy, which defines an attempt to create a single global order based on universally accepted values and coordinated institutional mechanisms.

Fourth, representation occurs through the negotiation of political and legal consent. The luminaries of legal science define the above by positioning the process as a “constitutional compromise”^{5 6}. Accession to the European Union implies the political and legal consent of all member countries and their citizens to accept the rules and obligations determined by EU agreements and standards.

The legal nature of the European integration processes determines their systematicity, order of interaction and legal foundations on which relations between states and the European Union are based.

The indicated complex nature of the representation of European integration processes has praxeological significance for Ukraine, since joining the European community involves the implementation of democratic reforms, strengthening of the rule of law and political stability. In addition, participation in European

² Börzel T. A., Risse, T. Identity politics, core state powers and regional integration: Europe and beyond. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2020 Vol. 58(1), P. 21–40. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12982

³ Ferrara F. M., Kriesi H. Crisis pressures and European integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2022 Vol. 29:9, P. 1351–1373, DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2021.1966079

⁴ Schimmelfennig F. European integration (theory) in times of crisis. A comparison of the euro and Schengen crises. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2018. Vol. 25(7) P. 969–989. DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2017.1421252

⁵ Hooghe L., Marks G. Grand theories of European integration in the twenty-first century. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2019 Vol. 26(8). P. 1113–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1569711>

⁶ Moravcsik A. The European constitutional compromise and the neofunctionalist legacy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2005 Vol. 12(2), P. 349–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760500044215>

integration opens up new economic opportunities, increasing trade and investment volumes. European standards ensure the improvement of the life quality, providing high social and environmental benchmarks. Participation in European integration processes allows Ukraine to interact with other European countries, helping to exchange cultural paradigms and axiological and legal ideas.

In the context of the war, European integration is important for Ukraine. In addition to contributing to international security by establishing common concepts, ideological benchmarks and practical models in the field of security and defense, European integration can also serve as a mechanism for consolidating efforts and resources in the fight against internal and external threats. Accession to the European Community can provide Ukraine with additional support in managing crisis situations and maintaining stability in the region.

The expansion of opportunities for young people in the international environment caused by European integration opens up new perspectives for youth policy and education. This trend is determined by positive dynamics, as it provides this age group with unique opportunities for active participation in the international exchange of knowledge, cultural values and innovative ideas. Encouraging young people to interact and cooperate at the international level, this trend helps to create an open and diverse educational environment, develop youth initiatives, active civic participation and increase the level of educational quality in the context of European standards. In general, European integration processes contribute to the general progress and strengthening of international partnership for Ukraine.

2. System of principles of European integration processes

The principles act as the main guidelines for reforms and adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to European standards through harmonization and mutual understanding between countries, and their implementation is aimed at ensuring the consistency and compliance of legal systems, which is a key factor in successful European integration. Consideration of these principles allows us to understand the legal foundation on which Ukraine's European integration path is based, so let us stop at the analysis of the main principles.

Since we did not find a comprehensive description of the principles in the scientific literature, we consider it necessary to represent the author's approach to the system of principles of European integration.

The principle of the priority of democracy and universal human values. An important aspect of European integration is the obligation of countries to adhere to democratic principles, the rule of law and common European values. Even the "father of Europe" J. Monnet determined that "Europe must be truly created, open to itself and to public opinion"⁷. Society has priority in the European dimension. Democracy and common values are key aspects of the

⁷ Цит за: Троицько D. R. Jean Monnet: Neofunctionalism at Work in the European Integration. *The European Union and its Political Leaders*, 2022. ISBN : 978-3-030-96661-4

European integration process, determining not only the form of government, but also the target orientations of society and its relations with European partners.

We emphasize that democracy, as an integral part of the European vector, involves not only holding elections, but also ensuring citizen participation in decision-making, freedom of speech and human rights, which is determined by a developed civil society, active participation of citizens in decision-making and constant attention to democratic institutions. Common values on which European integration is based include the principles of the rule of law, human rights, and humanitarian values, as countries seeking European integration must actively promote the protection of citizens' rights and freedoms, develop a strong legal system, and adhere to ethical standards.

This approach is a guarantee of sustainable and harmonious development of countries seeking to join Europe, ensuring their integration into the community of democratic, civilized and legal countries.

The principle of economic convergence and deepening of interaction in the economic sphere is a key standard that provides for the harmonization of legislation, prescriptions and the deepening of financial, credit and trade relations.

Economic integration, which is an important stage of the European integration process, includes a wide range of measures aimed at bringing the economic systems and policies of candidate countries closer to the standards of the European Union. The main aspect of economic integration is economic convergence, which involves the harmonization of legislation and standards through the leveling of the legal field to ensure mutually acceptable conditions for activities on the European market. In addition, economic integration is represented by the deepening of trade relations, which becomes a catalyst for the effective exchange of goods and services between countries.

An important component of the European integration process is cooperation in the field of substantive law, countries striving for European integration are obliged to take into account and adapt their legislation to European norms and standards, thereby contributing to effective economic integration into the European community.

The principle provides for the liberalization of foreign trade, and also leads to significant changes in the level of competitiveness. Numerous authors have investigated changes in foreign trade in the global or regional market using the index of comparative advantage. For example, authors B. Matkovski and others⁸ analyzed the export competitiveness of agri-food products on international markets for 23 major countries, which account for 60% of global agri-food trade, and concluded that most of them have comparative advantages from European integration. A similar analysis was also carried out for the Balkan countries, and researchers (A. Torok, A. Jambor) also point to the positive effect of joining the EU, especially due to the intensification of trade of the "new" member states⁹.

⁸ Matkovski, B.; Lovre, K.; Zekić, S. The foreign trade liberalization and export of agri-food products of Serbia. *Agric. Econ. Czech* 2017, Vol. 63. P. 331–345.

⁹ Torok, A.; Jambor, A. Agri-food trade of the new member states since EU accession. *Agric. Econ. Czech* 2013, Vol. 59. P. 101–112.

The principle of harmonization of security policy, which provides for mandatory cooperation in the field of security and defense. This principle embodies the idea of a joint effort to achieve security and stability in the region, ensuring effective exchange of information, coordination of activities and a joint approach to solving global challenges. Representatives of the Polish school of law argue that “the common security and defense policy is an institutional attempt by the member states of the European Union to respond to the security challenges they face”¹⁰.

Cooperation in the field of security and defense is an important aspect of the European integration process aimed at creating a single security system that unites the participating countries and promotes a common response to challenges and threats. On the way to European integration, countries interact in a number of security aspects, including the fight against transnational crime, terrorism and cyber threats. Joint efforts in these directions provide for the creation of a unified security system that has a high degree of efficiency and readiness to respond to the challenges of the modern world.

In particular, participation in joint peacekeeping missions is a manifestation of active cooperation in the field of security. Countries aspiring to European integration demonstrate their readiness to participate in international operations to ensure peace and security, helping stability in conflict regions. This provides for the formation of a unified defense and security policy, which is one of the key components of the common security space.

The cultural sphere has become an arena of war between “cultural purists, who defend the use of static and homogeneous concepts of identity, and cultural innovators, who celebrate hybridity and cultural fusion”¹¹. *The principle of socio-cultural interculturalism*, which is aimed at supporting the diversity and mutual influence of different cultures on the formation of a common cultural and social identity and is designed to expand the horizons of understanding and promote cultural integration, the rapprochement of nations through socio-cultural exchanges and interaction, which will create a bridgehead for the formation of a single European identity. European interculturalism is the principle of integration and interaction of different cultures in the European space, which does not involve the selection of individual elements or features, but, on the contrary, promotes their interpenetration and unification. This approach reveals the wealth of cultural diversity, forms common values and helps mutual understanding between nations, building a single European community.

An important element of interculturalism is sociocultural contact, which is aimed at supporting rapprochement and mutual understanding between different nationalities and cultures. This aspect involves active interaction and exchange in the field of socio-cultural values, traditions, languages and identity.

¹⁰ Piechowicz M., Szpak A. Evolution of the CSDP in the setting of European integration and international relations theory, *Comparative Strategy*, 2022 Vol. 41:1 P. 60–77. DOI: 10.1080/01495933.2021.2017746

¹¹ Johansson T. In defence of multiculturalism – theoretical challenges, *International Review of Sociology*, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/03906701.2022.2045141

The participation of countries in socio-cultural exchanges and programs helps to form a common European identity, which is based on mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity. In the praxeological dimension, the implementation of the principle includes holding joint cultural events and initiatives aimed at deepening ties between citizens of different countries, since the issue of multiculturalism contributed to the deconstruction of the liberal-constitutional state and the idea of a homogeneous society. The state must recognize the growing cultural diversity of its citizens and recognize both the rights of groups and the rights of the individual and must find a balance between “cultural pluralism and liberal notions of the subject individuality”¹².

By supporting socio-cultural contact, the countries participating in the European integration process help mutual discovery, exchange of experience and moderate the growth of cultural wealth, which becomes an important factor for the formation of a common European community. Experts emphasize that “an international network of friendship and cross-border spatial mobility”¹³ ensures the EU integration process.

The principle of comprehensiveness of ensuring regional law and order, which involves strengthening cooperation in migration, fighting crime and terrorism to ensure sustainable security. This includes a comprehensive approach to issues of external and internal security, the implementation of an integrated and systemic approach to the implementation of measures aimed at ensuring security and order in the region. This principle takes into account the interaction of various aspects and spheres, contributing to the permanent security of the region. At the external level, this involves cooperation in the field of migration, joint resolution of problems related to external borders, and improvement of cooperation mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. In the field of internal security, the member states of European integration jointly strengthen their measures to combat crime and terrorism. This includes sharing information, coordinating law enforcement and special services, and implementing joint strategies for public safety.

Sustainable provision of law and order issues in the context of European integration is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of measures aimed at countering threats of an external and internal nature, and is defined as a key element of strengthening cooperation between countries within the framework of the integration process.

The principle of the institutional system development, which includes strengthening and modernization of the institutional system to meet European standards and norms. The main provisions of the European integration processes provide for deep transformations and improvements of existing institutions, as

¹² Sohrabi H. A Durkheimian critique of contemporary multiculturalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2019. Vol. 42(8) P. 1288–1304. P.1289

¹³ Lamour C, Lorentz N. If I were to do it all over again, should I begin with culture? The European integration from a cultural perspective in a multi-national Grand Duchy, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 2019. Vol. 27:3, P. 357–374. DOI: 10.1080/14782804.2019.1636772

well as the introduction of new approaches to ensure compliance with European standards and norms. This principle covers a wide range of measures aimed at strengthening the authorities, the legal system, administrative structures and state management mechanisms.

In the context of the institutional system development, it is important to consider not only organizational aspects, but also to develop and implement effective management strategies that will contribute to increasing transparency, accountability and democracy in the management of the country. It is also necessary to focus attention on the development of the legal system to ensure compliance with human rights, to ensure effective protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens. Strengthening the institutional system involves the creation of mechanisms to fight corruption, improve the business climate and stimulate economic development. One of the key aspects is the implementation of modern administrative and management practices adapted to European standards.

Taking into account all these aspects, the principle of the institutional system development is an important factor in the process of European integration aimed at creating a modern, transparent and effective management environment in the country.

The principle of preserving sustainable development, which includes the standard of implementing effective development strategies and responsibility towards nature and society.

European integration is a continuous and complex process in which certain principles act as guiding principles for realizing common goals and overcoming challenges facing European countries. Preservation of sustainable development in the context of European integration includes the implementation of effective strategies aimed at preserving natural resources and responsible use of their potential. Participating countries interact in the field of ecology, the development of environmentally friendly technologies and stimulate environmental protection measures. In this aspect, let us recall the key role of the Green Deal of the European Union of 2019, which aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy¹⁴.

Ensuring sustainable development also involves social responsibility and encouraging the development of society. European integration processes support the implementation of initiatives aimed at social justice, improving the quality of life and the harmonious development of society as a whole.

3. Challenges of European integration processes for Ukraine

The implementation of European legal standards poses a number of challenges for Ukraine, therefore the concept of synergy provides for a thorough analysis of them with the aim of the readiness of individual spheres and institutions, as well as society in general, for a new model of social relations. The challenges of European integration for Ukraine require the implementation

¹⁴ The European Green Deal URL: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

of political, economic, socio-cultural and systemic reforms. Within this study, we will focus on the key ones.

1. Political adaptation. The transition to European standards requires significant political and legislative changes, which can be a challenging task for candidate countries. Cypriot jurists (Georgios Maris, Pantelis Sklias) emphasize that “over the years, EU members have developed significant dependent relationships, where asymmetric power plays a decisive role; in fact, asymmetry and asymmetric power have become the unifying glue for economic integration”¹⁵. Scientists who studied the nature of the European integration processes of Bosnia and Herzegovina prove that “the lack of political will of the power structures primarily inhibits the integration processes”¹⁶.

The transition to European standards requires a strategic rethinking of the political system, legislation and civil society, this involves defining a clear vision and implementing reforms aimed at ensuring effective governance and democratic values.

2. Economic restructuring. Integration into European economic systems may pose the task of restructuring and modernization of national economies, which is permanently determined by the processes taking place in the European Union itself, as scientists indicate that “the issue of the social dimension of European integration still remains unresolved”¹⁷.

However, here we should talk about the peculiarities of the economic sphere and the peculiarities of the territorial location. A group of European experts prove that, in general, European integration has significant advantages for business, but at the same time point out that in certain areas for countries that strive for European integration, technological adaptation is necessary, for example in animal husbandry to achieve a higher level of production efficiency, which will lead to a higher level of competitiveness on the international market. Considering the comparative advantages of agri-food products of the countries of the Western Balkans, scientists prove that all countries have comparative advantages in the world market, except for Albania. At the same time, Serbia has the highest level of comparative advantages in this sector, followed by North Macedonia. Therefore, this kind of analysis indicates possible advantages or threats in the context of Ukraine’s European integration aspirations. The monitoring of each sphere necessitates a separate economic analysis of the spheres of the national economy, the labor market, territorial challenges, tax and credit policy.

¹⁵ Maris G., Sklias P. European integration and asymmetric power: dynamics and change in the EMU, *European Politics and Society*, 2020 Vol. 21:5. P. 634–649, DOI: 10.1080/23745118.2019.1710998

¹⁶ Imamović-Čizmić K., Sabljica S. Legal and Political Aspects of Competition in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Paradigm of the European Integration Process *European Integration Studies*, 2020. Vol. 14 (1) P. 55–68.

¹⁷ Nachtwey O., Seeliger M. The transformation of Industrial Citizenship in the course of European integration. *The British Journal of Sociology*. 2020. Vol. 71, Is. 5. P. 852–866. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12792>

Today, the manifestation of the crisis in the supply of agro-industrial products and trade with Europe is an urgent issue. Since 6 November 2023, Polish carriers have blocked the border with Ukraine, later farmers joined them, and since 21 November of the same year, the Slovak border with our country has been periodically blocked. In fact, the crisis was brewing earlier and, in the spring of 2023, the European Commission had already established protective measures, limiting the export of certain Ukrainian agricultural products to Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. This caused legal disputes in the context of the fact that the decision of the European Commission can be interpreted as violating the principles of the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their member states, on the other hand, where one among the goals, it is defined “to introduce conditions for strengthened economic and trade relations, which will lead to the gradual integration of Ukraine into the internal market of the EU, including through the creation of an in-depth and comprehensive free trade zone”¹⁸ (article 1 d).

This has a destructive effect on the economy of Ukraine, its international obligations, but also, what is particularly important, opens up new theses for discussion regarding new challenges of an and financial nature for Ukraine as a candidate for EU membership and the need to defend its own national interests. Today, an essential policy factor is ensuring the competitiveness of Ukrainian-made goods and services and their compliance with European standards.

3. Socio-cultural transformation, which includes challenges associated with changing the socio-cultural landscape, in particular the sphere of education, mass media and intercultural interaction. The authors we have already cited (Christian Lamour, Nathalie Lorentz) motivate that the process of European integration is currently going through difficult times. The lack of a European cultural strategy to ensure better interaction between static and limited national communities is considered one of the sources of the problem¹⁹.

In such a paradigm, one should talk about the informational readiness of Ukrainian society, in particular, regarding the coverage of key aspects of European integration, so that citizens are well acquainted with the advantages and challenges of this process. The activation of the civic position requires the creation of conditions for the active participation of citizens in decision-making regarding European integration, in particular through civic forums and consultations. It is important to develop civil society as a significant factor influencing the political process and the formation of public opinion. In addition, increasing intercultural interaction and citizenship education contribute to the

¹⁸ Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their member states, on the other hand: international document dated 27.06.2014. Official Gazette of Ukraine. 2014, № 75, V. 1. P. 83.

¹⁹ Lamour C., Lorentz N. ‘If I were to do it all over again, should I begin with culture?’ The European integration from a cultural perspective in a multi-national Grand Duchy, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 2019 Vol. 27:3. P. 357–374. DOI: 10.1080/14782804.2019.1636772

improvement of perception and mutual understanding between citizens of Ukraine and European partners. The development of programs on gender equality, zero tolerance to discrimination is also defined as an important aspect in the context of European integration.

These aspects constitute a complete picture of the challenges and tasks facing the public regarding the processes of European integration in Ukraine.

4. Fight against corruption. Within the framework of European integration, priority is given to the fight against corruption in Ukraine, this challenge involves a wide range of measures and reforms to ensure an effective fight against a negative systemic phenomenon. Changes in legislation are a key element aimed at creating an effective legal mechanism for combating corruption, in addition, the creation and optimization of the work of anti-corruption bodies that meet high European standards is being implemented.

An important stage is the introduction of electronic declaration systems for officials aimed at ensuring transparency and openness. Civil society is included in the process of monitoring and controlling the fight against corruption, which is an important factor in ensuring the success of this task. International cooperation with anti-corruption organizations and partners is also an essential paradigm for sharing experience and obtaining technical support.

And finally, we note that the implementation of ethical standards and educational programs is aimed at the formation of an anti-corruption culture. Ensuring transparency in the activities of state institutions and making effective decisions are important steps in the fight against this phenomenon. All these measures are aimed at creating an effective system that meets European standards and contributes to the development of Ukraine, but the effective implementation of the above is a significant challenge for the legal and management-administrative system.

5. The call for global solidarity, which is activated during crises and military threats. The Commission's communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states that "greater solidarity will hold Europe together. This provides the necessary unity to overcome current and future crises while maintaining a strong moral foundation"²⁰. However, such calls for solidarity in the EU sound futile if the concept is not put into practice, and, unlike the frequent references to the value of solidarity in political declarations and debates, the principle of solidarity is not always a priority in the actual settlement of EU policies.

The lack of solidarity when it comes to solving problems not only makes solidarity a weak principle in the political structure of the EU, but also prevents more effective crisis management. European scholars argue that "despite the diverse use of solidarity during the EU crisis, it is interesting to see how this strategic appeal to solidarity by EU member states and institutions has not

²⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions on a European Solidarity Corps. COM(2016) 942, Brussels, 7.12.2016. P. 2.

actually supported the concept, but rather made it a weak point of reference and a floating label which, seems to be interpreted by political actors on a case-by-case basis depending on the interests of member states, rather than serving as a value and principle guiding joint action. In other words, the simple increase in the use of the word “solidarity” in the current crisis discourses cannot be equated with the growth of solidarity in EU politics, but raises the question why the rhetorical pressure of the EU does not translate into more important practices of solidarity²¹.

The solidarity of Europe during the war is important because it determines the joint approach of the countries and citizens of the European Union to the situation of the conflict and its consequences. For Ukraine as a belligerent state, the above is particularly relevant, therefore it should be stated that, in general, the crisis of European solidarity causes a crisis in European integration processes and significant, even life-threatening problems for Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

European integration processes are represented as a complex of measures and changes aimed at deepening and expanding cooperation between the countries of Europe in various spheres, in particular political, economic, social, cultural, etc., with the aim of bringing their common standards and institutions closer together, which are designed to contribute to the creation of a single European community, peace, stability and ensuring general well-being.

The legal nature of European integration processes consists in the formation of the legal system and the interaction of international and national norms that regulate relations between the participating countries and the European Union. The main aspects of this legal nature include the following factors: European integration processes are contractual in nature, as they are based on the conclusion of international agreements between countries and the European Union; integration of EU law through the adaptation of EU law into national legal systems, including the implementation and enforcement of directives that ensure a level playing field for all countries; cooperation and interaction mechanisms that ensure the implementation of agreements and common interests, while preserving national priorities; systematic coordination of political and legal agreement.

The author’s model of the system of principles of European integration processes is presented, which includes: the principle of the priority of democracy and universal human values; the principle of economic convergence and deepening of interaction in the economic sphere; the principle of harmonization of security policy; the principle of comprehensiveness of regional law enforcement; the principle of development of the institutional system and the principle of preservation of sustainable development.

The challenges of European integration for Ukraine require the implementation of political, economic, socio-cultural and systemic reforms.

²¹ Grimm A. “Le Grand absent Européen”: solidarity in the politics of European integration. *Acta Polit* Vol. 56, P. 242–260 (2021). DOI:10.1057/s41269-020-00171-7

Political transformations require the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, economic reforms require adaptation to European standards and strengthening of financial stability, the fight against corruption is a key aspect for improving the business climate, and socio-cultural transformations require the modernization of the educational system and the improvement of the quality of life. Also, the challenge of global solidarity is intensified during crises and military threats, international relations are related to resolving conflicts and strengthening diplomatic efforts, geopolitical instability requires the development of strategic alliances and ensuring national security. These challenges define a difficult situation for Ukraine and set the path for significant improvement in various aspects of society.

ABSTRACT

The study of the general principles of European integration processes provides an opportunity for deep understanding and analysis of those aspects that affect the political, economic and socio-cultural dynamics of countries aiming for integration with the European community. The essence and legal nature of European integration processes are presented. It is proven that European integration processes should be positioned as a set of measures and changes aimed at deepening and expanding cooperation between the countries of Europe in various spheres, in particular political, economic, social, cultural, etc., with the aim of bringing their common standards and institutions closer together, which are designed to contribute to the creation of a single European community, peace, stability and ensuring general well-being. The author's model of the system of principles of European integration processes is considered, which includes: the principle of the priority of democracy and universal values; the principle of economic convergence and deepening of interaction in the economic sphere; the principle of harmonization of security policy; the principle of comprehensiveness of regional law enforcement; the principle of development of the institutional system and the principle of preservation of sustainable development. The challenges of European integration for Ukraine are characterized. Attention was drawn to the need for political, economic, socio-cultural and systemic reforms in our country.

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