

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-677-5-14>

THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION VECTOR OF UKRAINE'S POST-WAR RECOVERY

Kostiuk K. V.

*3rd year Bachelor's student,
University of Customs and Finance
Dnipro, Ukraine*

Labenska L. L.

*Candidate of Juridical Sciences (Ph. D.), Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the International Law Department,
University of Customs and Finance
Dnipro, Ukraine*

Ukraine's aspiration to join the European Union (EU) represents a strategic vision for its future, symbolizing a commitment to democratic values, economic development, and integration into the European community. However, the path to EU membership is complex and requires meeting a series of stringent benchmarks across political, economic, legal, and social dimensions. [1, p. 65] The research discussion demonstrates that the process of setting priorities for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, in the lead up to its EU membership preparation, is a challenging task. Considering economic, social, and other factors requires a comprehensive and balanced approach. It is essential to consider the best practices and experience of EU member states, but it is also necessary to preserve Ukrainian identity and uniqueness of national reconstruction. [2, p. 48] In 2022, EU accession was applied to boost the war effort of Ukraine and to enhance the potency of European common values when they are defended on the battlefield. If so, the question can then be raised whether Ukraine's further accession process will continue to be framed by the so-called "accession through war" approach,²¹ or whether it will ultimately comply with the "gradual integration" track. There is no obvious answer to this question at least till the war in Ukraine is over. Most likely, Ukraine will deal with all these tracks since it is the first and only one candidate country in history of European integration that embarked upon a meticulous accession process while an exhausting war effort threatens its existence as an independent state. It implies the reformatting of the EU accession process as not only the exercise to align candidate countries with demanding "Copenhagen criteria" but also refining it as a tool to ensure security and peace and post-war recovery of Ukraine. [3, p. 1065]. In order to ground the present study in original empirical evidence, a sociological survey was designed and administered through Google Forms in February 2026. The

survey was developed to capture public attitudes toward two interconnected questions: what principles should guide Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, and how strongly does Ukrainian society support the integration of European legal standards into that process. The data collection effort reached 111 respondents spanning 16 regions of Ukraine, reflecting a broad geographic distribution. Dnipropetrovsk region accounted for the largest share of participants (77.5%). However, the survey also included respondents from Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Sumy, Volyn, Zhytomyr, Rivne, Donetsk, Lviv, Vinnytsia, Kherson, Chernihiv, Kirovohrad, and Ternopil regions, ensuring that the sample was not limited to a single region or macro-area. The results of this independently conducted survey serve as the primary empirical basis for the analysis presented throughout this paper.

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which Ukraine's reconstruction should be grounded in European values. The results reveal strong aggregate support: 32.4% fully agreed, 31.5% largely agreed, 27.9% took a neutral position, 6.3% largely disagreed, and only 1.8% fully disagreed. In total, 63.9% of respondents positively evaluated the need for a European-oriented reconstruction strategy.

One of the central questions concerned citizens' attitudes toward the proposition that human rights should constitute the foundation of Ukraine's reconstruction. The results demonstrated an exceptionally high level of consensus: 63.1% fully agreed, 27.9% largely agreed, 7.2% were undecided, and only 0.9% each largely or fully disagreed. Altogether, 91% of respondents endorsed human rights as a priority principle for reconstruction.

The individuals taking part in the survey were also asked whether the implementation of EU human rights standards would contribute to Ukraine's successful reconstruction. The results showed: 27.0% fully agreed, 47.7% largely agreed, 22.5% were uncertain, 1.8% largely disagreed, and 0.9% fully disagreed. Thus, 74.7% positively assessed the role of EU standards in the recovery process.

The survey revealed a more nuanced picture regarding public trust in state institutions. Among respondents: 38.7% reported a medium level of trust; 27.9% – low, 15.3% – very low, 15.3% – relatively high; and only 2.7% – very high. This means that 43.2% express low or very low trust in state bodies in the domain of human rights.

Respondents were asked to identify which EU values they consider most critical for Ukraine's future. The distribution was as follows: Freedom and Security – 92.8%, Respect for Human Rights – 88.3%, Equality and Non-Discrimination – 69.4%, Democracy – 65.8%, Solidarity – 45.9%, Rule of Law – 44.1%. The primacy of freedom and security (92.8%) reflects the immediate wartime context, while the high salience of human rights (88.3%) and equality (69.4%) confirms the broad legitimacy of rights-based framing

in Ukrainian public discourse. Notably, rule of law – a formal prerequisite for EU accession – ranked last among the listed values (44.1%), suggesting a potential gap between formal EU requirements and citizens' value hierarchies that post-war civic education efforts should address.

The survey findings collectively indicate a strong and coherent pro-European normative orientation among Ukrainian citizens across 16 regions. Three dominant conclusions emerge:

First, there is substantial public support (63.9%) for grounding Ukraine's reconstruction in European values, and near-unanimous consensus (91%) that human rights should be its foundational principle.

Second, a substantial majority (74.7%) endorses the implementation of EU human rights standards as a pathway to successful reconstruction – a finding that justifies the conditionality-based approach embedded in EU support instruments such as the Ukraine Facility.

Third, the moderate-to-low trust in state institutions (43.2% report low or very low trust in the human rights domain) represents a significant implementation gap. Without meaningful institutional reform, citizens' normative aspirations risk remaining unmet.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. It is imperative that human rights criteria form an explicit component of every national rebuilding strategy, supported by autonomous oversight bodies from civil society to guarantee adherence and responsibility.

2. To bridge the divide between what citizens value and the formal criteria for joining the EU, civic outreach efforts ought to connect the abstract principles of the Union, with a strong emphasis on the rule of law (cited by 44.1% as important), directly to tangible experiences stemming from the post-war period.

3. Achieving public confidence in governmental bodies necessitates fundamental judicial and anti-graft overhauls, which must serve as foundational necessities rather than later outcomes of the rebuilding process.

4. Data gathered from the survey points to a dominant public sentiment: the call for transformation must extend past mere tweaks to organizational frameworks, fostering an environment where inhabitants can attain an adequate quality of life holds parallel significance. Consequently, these revitalization initiatives necessitate extensive involvement from the populace and the establishment of avenues for individuals to articulate their perspectives. These ways for involvement must yield genuine authority to the community, encompassing those who became internally displaced persons, granting them the capacity to shape how European Union tenets are actually put into practice, which in turn fortifies the core compact between state authorities and the citizenry amidst the ongoing hostilities.

Bibliography:

1. Soloviova A., Fomin A. Ukraine and the EU: Prospects and Challenges on the Road to Integration. *Acta de Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI*. 2025. P. 58-68. DOI: 10.26693/ahpsxxi2025.09.058. URL: <https://ahpsxxi.org/index.php/journal/article/view/133/116> (accessed: 31.03.2026).
2. Leshchenko K., Leshchenko S. Determining Priorities for Ukraine's Post-War Reconstruction in the Conditions of Preparation for EU Membership. *Economics of Development*. 2023. Vol. 22, No. 3. P. 42-50. DOI: 10.57111/econ/3.2023.42. URL: <https://ecdev.com.ua/en/journals/t-22-3-2023> (accessed: 31.03.2026).
3. Petrov R. Bumpy Road of Ukraine Towards the EU Membership in Time of War: “Accession Through War” v “Gradual Integration”. *European Papers*. 2023. Vol. 8, No. 3. P. 1057-1065. DOI: 10.15166/2499-8249/701. URL: <https://www.europeanpapers.eu/europeanforum/bumpy-road-ukraine-towards-eu-membership-time-war> (accessed: 31.01.2026).

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-677-5-15>

**COMBATING FORCED LABOR IN THE EU:
REGULATORY INSTRUMENTS AND THE APPLICABILITY
OF THE “BRUSSELS EFFECT”**

**БОРОТЬБА З ПРИМУСОВОЮ ПРАЦЕЮ В ЄС: РЕГУЛЯТОРНІ
ІНСТРУМЕНТИ ТА ЗАСТОСОВНІСТЬ «ЕФЕКТУ БРЮССЕЛЯ»**

Lutsenko O. Ye.

*PhD, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department
of Labor Law
Yaroslav Mudryi National Law
University
Kharkiv, Ukraine*

Луценко О. Є.

*кандидат юридичних наук,
доцентка,
доцентка кафедри трудового права
Національного юридичного
університету імені Ярослава
Мудрого
м. Харків, Україна*

У вересні 2022 року Європейська Комісія схвалила проект Регламенту, що має на меті заборону продукції, виготовленої за допомогою примусової праці, на ринку ЄС [1]. У цьому контексті варто наголосити, що ЄС не єдиний суб'єкт, який прагне вирішити цю проблему: США уже давно мають акти, які обмежують імпорт товарів,