



**DEMOCRATIC  
GOVERNANCE**

Volume 18, No. 1

Established in 2008  
2 issues per year

Lviv  
2025

**Founder:**

Lviv Polytechnic National University

Recommended for printing and distribution  
via the Internet by the Academic Council  
of Lviv Polytechnic National University  
(Minutes No.15 of May 28, 2025)

**The scientific journal is included in category “B” of the List of scientific specialised publications of Ukraine**, in which can be published the results of dissertations for obtaining the scientific degrees of doctor and candidate of sciences in speciality 0413 – Management and administration (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 724, dated August 9, 2022)

**The journal is presented international scientometric databases, repositories and scientific systems:** Google Scholar, Polska Bibliografia Naukowa, Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, German Union Catalogue of Serials (ZDB), Leipzig University Library, University of Oslo Library, OUCI (Open Ukrainian Citation Index), Worldcat, Litmaps, Ulrichsweb Global Serials Directory, EBSCO, ERIH PLUS, Index Copernicus

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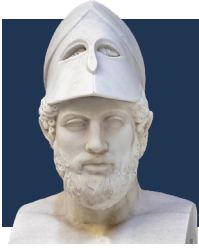
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## Human agency vs artificial intelligence and decentralised platforms: Is there a challenge for the public administration system in Ukraine and worldwide?

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■ **Abstract.** This article explores the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and platform technologies on the concept of human agency in the context of the transformation of the public administration system. The aim was to analyse the risks of delegating decision-making to algorithms and to search for ways to preserve human subjectivity in the new technological conditions. The foundation was the idea of “responsible research and innovation” and the concept of “technological mediation”. The use of AI in public administration creates risks of “algorithmic governance” and loss of human control. The opacity of AI systems calls into question the principles of democratic accountability. In response, regulatory and ethical principles for the use of AI are being developed, but doubts remain about the system’s readiness to operate under conditions of opacity. The article analysed the impact of AI and platforms on key dimensions of human agency. It explored the risks of narrowing the space for individual initiative and self-regulation due to passive reliance on the advice of AI assistants. At the same time, the potential of AI in structuring human self-reflection by identifying unconscious emotional and behavioural patterns was noted. These effects were illustrated using the hypothetical integration of AI capabilities into the work of the Ukrainian state-owned platform “Diia” under the “government as a platform” model. The analysis demonstrated that while personalised AI assistants may expand civic engagement by easing administrative burdens, they can also confine citizens’ choices by actively “nudging” them toward specific behaviours. The danger of technocratic distortion of the democratic process was noted in the case of large-scale delegation of aspects of political participation to algorithmic systems. Finally, the article concluded that AI development, combined with decentralised platform solutions, may profoundly affect multiple dimensions of human agency. Whether these changes expand or limit personal autonomy largely depends on the values and objectives that developers embed in the system’s architecture. An orientation towards the public good and the development of human potential can make such solutions emancipatory technologies. The practical value of this study lies in the development of recommendations for adapting the public governance system to the challenges posed by the implementation of artificial intelligence and platform technologies, with a focus on preserving human agency, democratic accountability, and ethical decision-making

■ **Keywords:** public administration; public policy; artificial intelligence; platforms; human agency; digital ethics; digital humanism; human-centeredness; self-regulation; personalisation

### ■ Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and platform-based organisational models challenges traditional perspectives on human agency within public administration systems. Human agency – the capacity

to make independent decisions, exercise personal choice, act purposefully, and influence one’s environment – constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for democratic governance and the effective functioning of public institutions

### **Suggested Citation:**

Dunayev, I. (2025). Human agency vs artificial intelligence and decentralised platforms: Is there a challenge for the public administration system in Ukraine and worldwide? *Democratic Governance*, 18(1), 5-17. doi: 10.56318/dg/1.2025.5.



(Kissinger *et al.*, 2024). It highlights a crucial aspect of human existence. However, in the dynamic context of the 2020s, as AI algorithms increasingly assume decision-making functions and platforms establish new decentralised coordination structures based on fractal principles (self-similarity), the very concept of human agency comes into question. AI and platforms do not merely automate specific processes – they potentially transform the very nature of administrative activity, replacing human subjectivity with algorithmic objectivity and the collective intelligence of networks. These global technological and social shifts challenge established principles of democratic governance, bureaucratic organisation, and public policy, compelling us to reconsider humanity's place in the management system and seek new models for interaction between technology and human subjectivity.

The relevance of researching this topic stems not only from the scale and pace of technological change but also from the fundamental questions it raises for public administration theory and practice. The delegation of decision-making to algorithms, automation of administrative processes, and use of predictive analytics in policy-making – all these phenomena challenge traditional notions of human agency in governance and necessitate the development of new conceptual models and practical mechanisms to preserve human agency in a technologised world. This issue extends far beyond purely technical or managerial aspects, touching upon fundamental philosophical, ethical, and political questions about the nature of human freedom, autonomy, and responsibility.

Ukraine adds a unique context to this issue, as it faces the necessity of rapid public administration modernisation and advanced technology implementation, including AI (which is already actively used by the military and certain ministries), in the context of anticipated peace and post-war recovery. On one hand, the use of AI and platform solutions could become a powerful tool and even a “wild card” for post-war economic reconstruction and socio-political relationships both within the country and with partners and citizens who have emigrated abroad. On the other hand, implementing these technologies without proper consideration of their impact on human agency might deepen the “digital divide”, dramatically strengthen technocratic tendencies (which most digital solutions known to the author guarantee) in governance, and alienate citizens from decision-making processes. Therefore, finding a balance between technological innovation and preserving human agency becomes critical. This requires not only technical or regulatory solutions but also deep reflection on the philosophical foundations and value orientations upon which a “humanistic” model of governance should be built in the AI era.

The scientific community actively investigates the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and platform models on traditional public administration systems. Analysis of key publications in this field reveals several main trends that challenge established paradigms of governance and

administration. Firstly, there is the transformation of decision-making's very nature under the influence of algorithmic systems: AI's role in shaping public policy, resource allocation, and citizen service delivery is increasingly noted. Delegating decisions to algorithms questions traditional models of human agency and accountability in the public sector. Secondly, there is the change in coordination and cooperation mechanisms between various actors under the influence of platform technologies. The platformisation of public administration creates new decentralised interaction structures that challenge hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational models. Thirdly, there is the intensification of ethical dilemmas related to preserving human autonomy and control in conditions of AI system dominance, with the general consensus being that there is an evident need to develop new regulatory and management mechanisms to ensure AI accountability and transparency in the public sphere.

Growing yet still unfocused attention in literature is being paid to the conceptual rethinking of human agency itself in the context of AI development, either with or without modern digital platforms. On one hand, algorithmic systems can significantly expand human capabilities, enabling more effective and well-founded decision-making. On the other hand (Rahwan *et al.*, 2019), delegating key functions to AI risks humans losing control over their own lives and societal processes. Works published after 2021 show a shift from techno-optimistic views of AI as a tool for enhancing human capabilities towards a more critical analysis of the ethical and philosophical consequences of ‘blurring’ human agency in the algorithmic era (Xu *et al.*, 2024; Carapinha *et al.*, 2024). Some scholars, particularly M. van Rijmenam & D. Logue (2020) and J. Shahin (2024), emphasised new concepts of agency with the growing role of non-human actors and the hybrid nature of modern management systems. The emphasis is also placed on finding a balance between AI solution efficiency and maintaining human autonomy and control.

Throughout the 2020s, discourse has also actively developed regarding the specific impact of AI on public administration across different countries and regions worldwide. Comparative studies demonstrate substantial differences in approaches to AI implementation in the public sector, driven by varying political, legal, and sociocultural contexts. Whilst developed countries actively invest in developing national AI development strategies and establish specialised regulatory bodies, developing countries face additional challenges related to the digital divide, resource scarcity, and weak institutional capacity. The works of J. Adamson *et al.* (2020) and M. de la Roche (2024) emphasise the necessity of considering local specifics when developing AI implementation policies in public administration, as well as the importance of international cooperation in addressing global challenges. Academic literature also addresses the ethical aspects of AI usage within different legal and value systems, particularly the need to develop global ethical principles and

standards that would ensure responsible and inclusive implementation of AI technologies in the public sphere, as highlighted in the research of L. Floridi *et al.* (2018) and A. Jobin *et al.* (2019).

Analysis of the situation in Ukraine shows that the issue of AI's impact on public administration is only beginning to enter the agenda of Ukrainian researchers. The 2020s have seen the emergence of several publications attempting to conceptually understand AI challenges for the state administration system in Ukraine, and here, perhaps, the trend is that almost everywhere the potential of AI is noted for greater efficiency and transparency of governance, especially under conditions of limited resources and the need for rapid reforms at the local level, particularly evident in the work of S. Kvitka *et al.* (2021). However, there are also numerous warnings about the risks of uncritical AI implementation without proper consideration of its impact on human agency and autonomy. Yet, despite numerous and genuinely interesting views on aspects of AI manifestations on power and public policy, overall, the issue of preserving human agency in the context of AI implementation in Ukraine remains understudied and requires further thorough examination. And this is normal, given the likely significant prospects and risks.

Thus, there has been an almost radical progress in the scientific understanding of AI's impact on public administration and human agency. One can be certain of the increasingly fundamental nature of transformations that AI and platform technologies bring to traditional models of governance and administration, and these changes concern the very nature of decision-making, coordination and cooperation mechanisms, as well as ethical foundations for preserving human autonomy in a technologised world, and even their cursory comparative analysis shows significant differences in approaches to AI implementation in the public sector across different countries, determined by the specifics of local contexts. Simultaneously, there is a tendency towards forming a global consensus regarding the need for responsible and inclusive AI development based on shared ethical principles and standards, and against this background, Ukraine is only beginning the conceptual understanding of AI challenges for the public administration system and requires further thorough research in this direction. This issue will gain particular relevance in the context of post-war recovery and the search for balance between technological innovations and preserving human agency in the public sphere.

The aim of the article was to conceptually and critically evaluate the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and platform technologies on human agency in the context of public administration system transformation. The research aims to explain the fundamental challenges that AI development together with platforms creates for traditional models of public governance and bureaucracy, as well as to search for possible ways of preserving human agency under new technological conditions. To achieve this aim, the following research objectives were defined:

1) analyse global trends in the impact of AI and platform models on the concept of human agency, reveal key ethical dilemmas and risks associated with delegating decision-making to algorithmic systems;

2) investigate the challenges that AI technology implementation creates for the public administration system, particularly "algorithmic governance", loss of control over decision-making processes, and readiness to work under conditions of AI systems' opacity;

3) critically evaluate the specifics of the combined use of platforms and AI in the modern public sector, using for this purpose the logical "prism" of 4 key components of human agency: intentionality, predictability, self-regulation, self-reflection (self-awareness) and project this specificity onto a conditional example of application in the Ukrainian platform "Diia".

## ■ Materials and Methods

The research is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines conceptual frameworks and analytical tools from various fields of knowledge: general theory of public administration, political science, philosophy of technology, and artificial intelligence ethics. Such methodological pluralism is necessitated by the complex nature of the studied problem, which crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries and requires multidimensional analysis. The methodology is founded on the European idea of "responsible research and innovation" (RRI), which emphasises the need to consider ethical, social, and legal aspects in the development and implementation of new technologies (GREAT, 2022), and in the context of this research, RRI serves as a normative guideline.

The theoretical and methodological basis for analysing AI's impact on human agency was the concept of "technological mediation", developed within the philosophy of technology. This concept views technologies not merely as neutral tools but as active mediators that transform human perception of the world and structure their actions and decisions. In this perspective, AI appears not only as a means of improving management efficiency but also as a factor in rethinking the very essence of human agency in the public sphere.

The empirical foundation of the research was secondary data analysis from open sources: scientific publications, analytical reports, expert discussions, etc. Special attention was paid to studying best practices and lessons from AI implementation in the public sector across different countries, based on published summaries from the OECD.

An important methodological principle was the orientation towards practical relevance and implementation of research results. Therefore, attention was paid to developing recommendations for improving public policy in the AI sphere – both at the level of normative regulation and regarding institutional mechanisms and stakeholder engagement tools. Special emphasis was placed on a human-centric approach to AI implementation, which centres on the value of human dignity, autonomy, and participation.

The logic of material presentation reflects movement from global to local, from conceptual to practical. The article begins with outlining the general context of AI development and its impact on various spheres of social life. Then, the concept of human agency is introduced, and the fundamental challenges that AI and platform models create for traditional understanding of agency and autonomy are revealed.

The next section is dedicated to analysing specific problems that AI implementation generates for the public administration system – both at the decision-making level and regarding regulatory capacity and ethical dilemmas. Then the focus shifts to the Ukrainian context, where peculiarities and risks of accelerated public sector digitalisation under conditions of post-war recovery are examined.

The article concludes with the development of practical recommendations for public policy in the AI sphere. These recommendations are structured around three key directions: normative regulation focusing on human rights and ethics, mechanisms of public control and participation, and development of digital competencies for public servants. Such practical output of the research is intended to ensure its real impact on improving public governance practice. Overall, the methodology and logic of presentation enabled an attempt at comprehensive and multilevel analysis of the human agency problem under conditions of AI development and to propose well-founded solutions for public policy.

## ■ Results

### Human agency in the era of intelligent machines: Global trends and challenges

As convincingly demonstrated by experts from the European INATBA (de la Roche, 2024), combinations of artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain solutions, particularly blockchain platforms (such as the Ukrainian-origin Bitbon System), pose an unprecedented challenge to traditional understanding of human agency and autonomy. In an era where algorithms can make decisions faster and more accurately than humans, and platforms create new decentralised forms of coordination and cooperation, the very concept of human agency – the natural ability of humans to be a source of meanings, purposes, and actions – comes into question.

Historically, agency was considered an inherent property of human consciousness, rooted in the capacity for rational thinking, free choice, and moral responsibility (Gunkel, 2020). The classical philosophical tradition, from R. Descartes to I. Kant, equated subjectivity with the autonomy of reason, capable of rising above the world of natural causality and acting based on independently formulated principles (Habermas & McCarthy, 1984). In social sciences, agency was predominantly viewed as an attribute of an individual or collective subject, realised through purposeful activity and interaction with others within certain structural constraints. However, the development of AI and platform technologies challenges these basic assumptions.

Firstly, algorithmic systems demonstrate a capacity for autonomous behaviour that cannot be reduced to simply executing human-programmed rules. Modern machine learning models based on neural networks can independently identify complex patterns in data, generate new knowledge, and make decisions beyond human comprehension (Burrell, 2016). In particular, deep learning algorithms have already surpassed humans in image recognition, medical data analysis, user behaviour prediction, and more (Topol, 2019). This raises questions about the boundaries of human agency and the criteria for its attribution in a world where machines demonstrate increasing autonomy.

Secondly, platform-based models of activity organisation blur the boundaries between individual and collective agency. Digital platforms such as Facebook, Uber, or Airbnb function as infrastructures that enable and structure interaction between large numbers of users. In this context, agency is distributed between the platform, which sets the rules of the game, and individuals, whose actions are mediated and guided by algorithms. Hybrid forms of agency emerge, where human meaningful direction and conscious intention intertwine with the operational logic of technological systems (Willson, 2016). An example is the phenomenon of “crowd work”, where complex tasks are broken down into simple microtasks performed by many unconnected workers through online platforms. While each performer maintains some autonomy in task selection, their actions are coordinated by algorithms for task distribution and quality control.

The delegation of an ever-widening range of decisions to AI systems generates a whole spectrum of ethical dilemmas. Can an algorithm be considered a subject of moral responsibility if its actions cause harm? How can transparency and accountability of AI decisions be ensured if even developers cannot always explain their operational logic? How can discrimination and biases embedded in algorithms through historical data usage be avoided? A telling example is the use of AI systems in jurisprudence for assessing recidivism risks. Such systems can reproduce racial biases embedded in previous sentencing data and discriminate against certain groups of offenders. This raises a fundamental question about the limits of delegating decision-making to AI in sensitive areas where fundamental human rights are affected.

A separate complex of ethical problems relates to the use of AI technologies in public administration. Many countries are already implementing AI systems for big data analysis, policy effectiveness evaluation, resource allocation, or even administrative decision-making (Veale *et al.*, 2018; de la Roche, 2024). This creates risks of “algorithmic governance”, where decisions are made based on intelligent computations without proper public oversight and consideration of value aspects. Moreover, AI use can amplify information asymmetry between government and citizens, as the latter are often deprived of the ability to understand the logic of automated systems that directly affect their lives. The question of ensuring the right to appeal decisions made with AI participation becomes acute, as does establishing mechanisms for human control over automated processes.

The impact of AI on human agency has various dimensions and manifests in many spheres of social life. One key problem is the transformation of decision-making processes. On one hand, AI systems can process vast amounts of information and propose solutions that consider numerous factors and constraints inaccessible to the human mind. This can improve decision quality in many areas, from medical diagnostics to transport system management. However, on the other hand, there is a risk of excessive dependence on machine recommendations and loss of critical thinking capacity. For instance, experiments described in L. Floridi's work (2014) show that people tend to follow AI advice even in cases where it contradicts common sense. Additionally, the question arises about the human right to "disconnect", to refuse interaction with AI systems if they do not align with one's values and beliefs.

Another important aspect is the collision between AI autonomy and the human right to privacy. The development of machine learning algorithms requires collecting vast amounts of personal data for training models. Social networks, search engines, mobile applications, and the Internet of Things generate unprecedented volumes of information about preferences, habits, movements, and social connections. While this enables service personalisation and improves user experience, it also creates risks of involuntary personal information disclosure, loss of data control, and its use for manipulation or discrimination. This raises the issue of how far personal data can be used for AI training and whether individuals still maintain the right to informational self-determination in the era of big data.

Finally, AI development challenges human cognitive autonomy, the ability to form one's own worldview and critically perceive information. Recommendation system

algorithms and personalised news feeds help navigate the ocean of digital content but also create "information bubbles" where users only see content matching their previous preferences. This can lead to opinion polarisation, spread of fake news and conspiracy theories, and weakening of social cohesion (Vosoughi *et al.*, 2018). AI systems for generating text, voice, and images, such as GPT-o3-mini, Sora and xAI, can create content that is difficult to distinguish from human-created content, which exacerbates the problem of information verification. In the long term, AI development may lead to cognitive atrophy, loss of basic skills in memorisation, attention concentration, and critical thinking necessary for personal autonomy.

In summary, the development of AI and platform technologies generates a series of fundamental challenges for human agency and autonomy (Table 1). These challenges manifest at various levels: from individual cognitive abilities to collective forms of decision-making and social interaction. Delegating an increasingly wider range of functions to AI systems transforms the very nature of human agency, blurring the boundaries between individual free will and the determinism of technological processes. Simultaneously, these transformations also open new possibilities for expanding human capabilities, improving decision quality, personalising services, etc. The key task becomes finding a balance between AI advantages and the risks of its uncontrolled development, as well as creating control and accountability mechanisms to ensure AI systems' compatibility with values of human dignity and autonomy. This requires active interdisciplinary cooperation among technologists, philosophers, lawyers, and civil society representatives to develop new ethical principles and regulatory frameworks that meet the challenges of the digital era.

**Table 1.** AI and platform challenges for human agency

Agency dimension	Impact of AI and platforms	Key risks	Ethical dilemmas
Individual decision-making	Delegation of functions to AI, loss of critical thinking skills	Excessive dependence on AI, information bubbles, cognitive atrophy	Right to disconnect, free will vs efficiency
Data management and privacy	Collection of personal data for machine learning	Loss of data control, risks of manipulation and discrimination	Limits of data use, right to be forgotten
Collective interaction and coordination	Hybridisation of human and machine agency on platforms	Diffusion of responsibility, power asymmetry, opacity	Criteria for moral subjectivity, accountability mechanisms
Socially significant decision-making	Use of AI in public administration	Algorithmic discrimination, undemocratic nature, technocracy	Limits of automation, right of appeal, human control

**Source:** author's development

Within the current research, a hypothetical situation was examined that demonstrated how AI development combined with personal data accumulation could affect public policy and governance. According to the hypothesis, local authorities decided to implement an AI system to optimise the delivery of social services. Its primary goal is to identify the most vulnerable groups and personalise assistance based on big data analysis. To achieve this, the AI aggregates information from a range of sources, including

medical records, tax filings, social media activities, and telecom data. Initially, this appears to be an effective solution: service quality improves, and resources are used more precisely. However, problems gradually emerge.

Firstly, many people feel uncomfortable with AI "digging" into their private lives, making public and non-public conclusions based on others' sensitive information. Yet refusing to provide one's data to the system means risking loss of access to important services. Secondly, AI can

embed biases contained in historical data and discriminate against certain groups. For example, it might underestimate the needs of ethnic minorities if their issues were underrepresented in the training data. Thirdly, the centralisation of highly confidential data in one system creates significant risks to privacy and security, and data breaches or insider abuse could have devastating consequences for citizens' autonomy. Finally, people may simply have no choice in how to interact with this system – alternatives are absent, and avoiding “optimised” services becomes increasingly difficult. Thus, even good intentions to improve public services through AI can turn into unjustified interference with citizens' privacy and restriction of their freedom of choice. If such systems become ubiquitous, there is a risk of ending up in a digital “panopticon” situation, where every human step is controlled and evaluated by invisible algorithms without the possibility of objection or escape. Therefore, AI implementation in the public sphere requires a very balanced approach and reliable safeguards to protect human agency.

#### **“Black Boxes” for public policy: Challenges of AI systems' opacity for democratic control**

Previous analysis showed that the development of AI and platform technologies poses fundamental challenges to traditional concepts of human agency and privacy. These challenges are particularly acute in public administration, where AI implementation can have far-reaching consequences for state-citizen relations, management decision quality, and political institutions' legitimacy. AI implementation in the public sector opens unprecedented opportunities for process optimisation, service personalisation, and informed decision-making. From using chatbots for citizen interaction to predictive analytics for identifying potential problems – AI promises to make public administration more efficient, proactive, and people-oriented (Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020). However, these advantages are accompanied by serious administrative and regulatory challenges.

Firstly, AI implementation requires radical transformation of the very culture and decision-making processes in public organisations. Traditional bureaucratic models based on hierarchy and procedure adherence are poorly adapted to working with intelligent systems that require flexibility, experimentation, and inter-agency cooperation. Public managers must learn not just to “manage AI” but to “manage together with AI”, viewing it as a full partner in the policy-making process (Scholta *et al.*, 2019). This requires not only new skills and competencies but also a fundamental rethinking of the human role in the administrative machine.

Secondly, using AI for management decisions creates risks of “algorithmic governance” – situations where critically important decisions are de facto delegated to opaque and potentially biased systems. As practice shows, AI models can reproduce and amplify existing social biases and discrimination. For example, risk assessment systems used in US criminal justice have repeatedly demonstrated bias

against African Americans (Angwin *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, social assistance distribution algorithms may discriminate against vulnerable groups if the historical data they learn from doesn't account for their specific needs. Without proper human control and accountability mechanisms, such cases of algorithmic discrimination can seriously undermine trust in public institutions.

Thirdly, AI use can lead to loss of control over decision-making processes by public administrators and the public. Many modern AI systems, especially those based on deep learning, operate as “black boxes” – their internal logic is not understood even by developers, let alone politicians or citizens (Pasquale, 2015). On one hand, this relates to the very nature of complex algorithms that identify non-obvious patterns in data. On the other hand, commercial companies developing AI for the public sector often protect their models as intellectual property, limiting possibilities for external audit. As a result, a situation may arise where the system makes decisions that have enormous impact on people's lives, but no one can explain why or how these decisions were made. This questions fundamental democratic principles of transparency and government accountability.

In response to these challenges, many countries are developing special regulatory frameworks and ethical principles for AI use in public administration. They include such key requirements as algorithm transparency and explainability, human control over decision-making, non-discrimination, accountability, and AI system auditing (OECD, 2021). For example, in the EU in 2021, the AI Act was proposed, which establishes differentiated requirements for AI systems depending on the level of risk they pose to human rights and societal values. High-risk systems, which include many cases of AI in the public sector, are subject to particularly strict requirements regarding transparency, data quality control, human oversight, and registration in a special EU database (Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament..., 2021).

Despite these efforts, the public administration system's readiness to work under conditions of “black boxes” and AI opacity raises serious doubts. According to research (OECD, 2019) involving over 50 countries, the main obstacles to AI implementation in the public sector are lack of experience and AI skills among public servants, lack of clarity regarding ethical principles for AI use, and difficulty integrating AI systems into existing IT infrastructures and processes. And many countries still lack special strategies for AI development in public administration, haven't defined standards for machine learning data collection and quality, and haven't created specialised bodies for oversight and control of AI use in the public sector. Special attention is needed for the asymmetry problem between the public sector and large technology companies, which often act as AI solution providers for the government. Having incomparably more financial, technological, and human resources, these companies can de facto impose their conditions, standards, and values on authorities (Table 2).

**Table 2. Impact of AI development on public administration and public policy in Ukraine and Europe: Current state and near future forecast**

Dimension	Current state	Forecast for near mid-term	Key challenges and recommendations
Decision-making transformation	Initial experiments with AI implementation in specific areas (e.g., social benefits distribution, data analysis). Lack of strategic vision and effort coordination.	AI will become an integral part of policy-making at all levels. Most routine decisions will be automated. AI's role in strategic planning and forecasting will increase.	Ensure greater transparency and accountability of AI systems. Develop digital competencies of managers. Establish mechanisms for human control over AI. Develop ethical principles for AI use in the public sphere.
State-citizen interaction	Traditional communication channels with e-governance elements predominate. AI is used fragmentarily (e.g., chatbots).	AI will become the main interface for citizen-state interaction. Personalised digital assistants will accompany individuals in all interactions with public services.	Ensure greater inclusivity and accessibility of AI services. Protect privacy and security of personal data. Develop citizens' digital literacy. Implement participatory mechanisms for AI solution co-creation.
Public services transformation	Most services are provided through a "single window" principle. Individual experiments with proactive service delivery based on predictive analytics.	Development of "invisible government": most services will be provided automatically based on AI systems' analysis of citizens' needs.	Ensure fairness and non-discrimination in AI services. Implement mechanisms for possible damage compensation. Maintain possibility of receiving services in "analog" mode.
Algorithmic governance	AI is used in specific areas (e.g., resource allocation, unemployment profiling, crime prevention). Lack of transparency and accountability in algorithmic systems.	AI will take over most management functions. Hybrid forms of governance will emerge where human agency is closely intertwined with AI. Risks of algorithmic discrimination and opacity will increase.	Develop regulatory frameworks for algorithmic systems control. Implement AI audit and impact assessment mechanisms. Ensure transparency and explainability of AI decisions. Guarantee the right to appeal AI decisions.
Democratic institutions transformation	AI is mainly used for electoral data and political sentiment analysis. First cases of AI use for disinformation detection.	AI will become an integral part of the democratic process: from aggregating citizens' interests to ensuring election transparency. Risks of public opinion manipulation and undermining trust in democratic institutions using AI (deep fakes, etc.) will increase.	Develop digital infrastructure for democratic participation (e-democracy). Counter AI use for spreading disinformation and propaganda. Support quality journalism and media literacy. Research new models of democracy in the AI era (e.g., algorithmic democracy).
Political power transformation	Narrowing autonomy of national governments due to growing influence of transnational digital platforms and AI systems. Emergence of first non-state AI agents (e.g., DAOs).	Emergence of hybrid forms of governance where AI algorithms perform functions of legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Blurring of state sovereignty concept. Shift of power centres from national governments to supranational AI structures and digital corporations.	Rethink concepts of sovereignty and power legitimacy in the AI era. Develop international cooperation and global AI regulation. Implement mechanisms for democratic control over AI. Experiment with new management models (network, holacracy, etc.).
Nature of wars and conflicts change	AI is mainly used for intelligence gathering, threat analysis, and unmanned systems control. First cases of autonomous weapons under AI control (kamikaze drones).	Emergence of new generation wars where most functions are performed by autonomous AI systems (combat robots, drone swarms, etc.). States losing monopoly on violence. Shift of conflicts to digital space (cyber wars). Emergence of asymmetric forms of violence from non-state actors.	Ensure international control over military AI applications. Implement mechanisms for preventing AI conflict escalation. Research new forms of deterrence and de-escalation in the era of autonomous weapons systems. Accelerate multilateral dialogue on banning autonomous weapons.
International relations transformation	AI is mainly used for data analysis and geopolitical trend forecasting. Lack of transparency in AI application in international relations.	AI will become the main factor of geopolitical power and influence. Interstate alliances and unions around AI technologies will dominate. Technological confrontation will intensify with risks of internet segmentation and AI systems balkanisation.	Form inclusive global institutions for AI development governance. Develop mechanisms for global AI audit and certification. Strengthen the role of UN and other international organisations with emphasis on AI development security and ethics. Establish transatlantic cooperation in AI sphere.

**Source:** author's development based on B.W. Wirtz et al. (2018), M. Kuziemski & G. Misuraca (2020), A. Barrinha & G. Christou (2022), H. Kissinger et al. (2023); F.G. Blancato & M. Carr (2024)

On one hand, Table 2 serves as a somewhat simplified tool for better understanding the impact of artificial intelligence development on public administration. Methodologically, it is structured around 8 key dimensions that encompass various aspects of AI and public sphere interaction: from the transformation of decision-making processes to changes in the nature of political power and international relations. This approach clarifies how these issues evolve over time, helps

gauge the magnitude of upcoming changes, and pinpoints key policy priorities. However, it is crucial to understand that AI development, especially in combination with blockchain platforms, is not merely a powerful technological trend but a fundamental factor transforming the very essence of public administration and society, much like the internet or steam engine once were. Why? Because AI implementation will have far-reaching and even difficult-to-predict consequences

for all key state functions: from providing services to citizens to ensuring security and sovereignty, and in this process, AI creates both new opportunities (for example, for service personalisation and meeting citizen needs) and new risks (particularly regarding algorithmic discrimination, decision-making opacity, undermining of democratic institutions, etc.).

From another, more conceptual perspective, AI implementation in the public administration system challenges the very idea of citizenship and democratic participation (Kud, 2021; Dunayev *et al.*, 2023a). Traditionally, public administration is based on the concept of representative democracy, and despite its shortcomings, this model still presupposes fundamental government accountability and citizens' ability to influence political decisions through electoral mechanisms. However, with AI development (currently without major blockchain platform involvement: they operate differently), power may increasingly shift from elected representatives to algorithms and intelligent systems, and this questions the very idea of popular sovereignty, as algorithms lack democratic legitimacy, and their operational logic is often opaque even to developers, let alone ordinary citizens. In essence, society faces the threat of "sovereignty privatisation" and a kind of "democracy distortion", but through a new technological (rather than representative) method.

Furthermore, conceptually, AI implementation transforms the very nature of the political. If traditionally politics is viewed as a sphere of reconciling social interests through discussion and seeking compromises, then AI logic is based on optimisation, guided by principles of efficiency. These reflections should either compel people to accelerate their "technologisation" or force them to contemplate "why go this way, and how to proceed further?" and pause slightly.

### **How does the combined use of AI and digital platforms affect different dimensions of human agency?**

The main question of this article: how does the combined use of AI and digital platforms affect different dimensions of human agency? To examine this question systematically, one must trace how these technologies transform each key component of agency: intentionality, predictability, self-regulation, and self-reflection. For this analysis, another unique and little-known "variable" was added – the idea of neuro-symbolic artificial intelligence. As of December 2024, this was the most advanced and "human-centric" AI model among all conceivable ones. The absolute uniqueness (and perhaps advantage) of this AI model was its emphasis on "human-in-the-loop" systems, allowing people to interact with AI and better understand (compared to other models) the decision-making process. Such AI was not publicly available at that time, but at least two American institutes, "IBM Research" (IBM Neuro-Symbolic AI) and "Centaur" (Centaur AI Institute, 2024), were very actively working on this in 2024.

Neuro-symbolic AI (NS AI) is a hybrid approach that combines the strengths of neural networks (ability to learn from large volumes of unstructured data) and classical

symbolic systems (capability for logical inference and causal modelling). Through this combination, it can potentially provide more human-understandable explanations, more effectively transfer knowledge between domains, and work with less training data. This makes neuro-symbolic AI more "human-centric" than purely neural network models, which are already widespread globally. It's particularly important to note a special "disclaimer": the author of this article is not an explicit or hidden agent or advocate of this particular AI model or the aforementioned American developers. This model is presented exclusively for scientific and educational purposes, to show a new example of AI manifestation, guided solely by the technical characteristics and operating principles listed above for this AI model.

This research attempts to model the consequences of implementing such systems based on digital platforms, which may affect individual dimensions of human agency, particularly intentionality, predictability, self-regulation, and self-reflection.

1. Intentionality – the human ability to form one's own goals and intentions. On one hand, AI can expand the field of human intentionality by offering new possibilities and insights based on data analysis. For example, such a model might suggest interesting directions for self-development based on behavioural patterns, or recommend a promising business niche based on trend analysis. However, on the other hand, it can subtly distort intentions through content personalisation. For instance, if the algorithm detects increased emotional sensitivity to certain topics, it might more frequently present related content, gradually shifting the person's focus of attention and goal-setting. Eventually, there's a risk of ending up in an "intentional bubble" (Pariser, 2011), without even realising it.

Here it's appropriate to mention special consequences from, for example, NS AI: having a symbolic component, it potentially can track its own biases and explain the logic of personalisation to humans. For example: "I am suggesting more publications on topic X to you because I detected your increased emotional response to keywords A, B, C in previous materials". This can make the distortion more apparent and give people a chance to adjust the algorithm. However, much depends on the developers' goals: whether they will configure the system for maximum transparency or maximum user engagement.

2. Regarding predictability, that is, the ability to understand the consequences of one's actions. As mentioned earlier, traditional AI systems, especially those based on deep neural networks, often work as "black boxes". They produce results, but people don't understand how they arrived at them. This makes the consequences of interacting with such systems less predictable: it's unknown how personal data will influence the algorithm's decisions about an individual. In contrast, NS AI, having a symbolic component, can potentially provide more understandable explanations: "I classified you in risk category X because you meet criteria A, B, C according to this logic". Of course, this doesn't make the result more pleasant, but at least

it allows understanding the causal relationships between one's actions and system decisions. Thus, neuro-symbolic AI potentially offers a chance to correct behaviour or contest decisions. However, how this possibility will be used depends on the developers' values. Oversimplified explanations ("you're in the risk group because AI decided so") under conditions of power asymmetry might, conversely, intensify feelings of helplessness and life unpredictability. And although technically NS AI has more capabilities for generating explanations than pure neural networks, the social consequences will depend on how these capabilities are implemented in practice.

3. Self-regulation. As with traditional platforms, NS AI can subtly transform users into passive recipients of advice, narrowing the space for personal initiative. But there's an important difference. While classical recommendation systems adapt to personal patterns, NS AI can potentially offer a broader perspective. For example: "I see you're interested in topics X, Y, Z. But have you considered topic A? According to my knowledge base, it could help you develop skills B, C, D, which are important for your long-term goal". This adds a mentoring element, shifting focus from satisfying immediate needs to long-term self-development. Of course, much depends on what goal developers will embed in the system and how it will align with the platform's business model. The attempt to retain user attention at any cost might outweigh considerations of their long-term well-being.

4. Finally – self-reflection. In this area, NS AI opens interesting possibilities. Having an advanced knowledge base and ability to think logically, it can potentially help people structure self-reflection. For example, after analysing a person's history of posts, interactions, and reactions, the system might ask: "I've noticed you often react strongly to topics A and B. At the same time, you rarely comment on posts with opposing views. Do you think this might lead to a one-sided perspective? What arguments might supporters of the other viewpoint offer?" Or: "Lately, angry and anxious emotions have dominated your posts. Have you considered how this affects your well-being and relationships with people? What activities might help you restore emotional balance?" Such unobtrusive "mirrors" can encourage looking at one's behaviour from the outside, thinking about one's own biases and emotional patterns. This potentially promotes self-understanding and escape from "information bubbles".

The question remains open about the ethics and social acceptability of such interventions, at least at the current stage of our coexistence with AI. Are people ready to entrust reflection about the most intimate aspects of their "self" to algorithms, even such "human-centric" ones? And will developers act in the interests of human self-actualisation if it contradicts the goals of maximum engagement? After all, historically, the first popular American platforms haven't always demonstrated high ethical standards in this area.

These AI manifestations can be explained, based on the publicly known capabilities of the most human-centric

neuro-symbolic AI model, using the hypothetical example of the Ukrainian state platform "Diia" and its classic concept of "Government as a Platform" (GaaP). Ukrainian "Diia" enables citizens to obtain certificates, submit applications, pay taxes online – without needing to visit various institutions or collect paper documents. On one hand, this should expand citizen intentionality, as it frees them from routine and allows focus on more meaningful goals. But on the other hand, there are obvious potential risks to autonomy, especially in the case of integrating this platform with neuro-symbolic AI.

For example, a citizen wanted to start their own business and visited "Diia" for consultation. NS AI analyses their entire history of interaction with the state (from tax payments to received subsidies) and suddenly outputs: "Based on your profile, I don't recommend you start your own business. Statistically, people with your background have high chances of failure and falling into debt. Why not instead take retraining courses under program X"? And although the algorithm's recommendation might be based on 'objective' data, it still somewhat limits this person's field of intentionality. The question is whether society is ready to delegate such existential choices to AI?

Another example: a person applies for social assistance. NS AI processes the request instantly, but instead of the expected "yes" or "no" provides a detailed explanation: "You don't meet the assistance criteria because: a) you have additional income A that exceeds the threshold; b) last year you made purchase C, which indicates no urgent need; c) you haven't utilised opportunities B for independently improving your financial situation". While such explanation makes the decision more predictable, it simultaneously may create a sense of hidden state control over the citizen's personal life.

It's also worth examining the impact of GaaP with NS AI on citizens' self-regulation. On one hand, algorithms can nudge them toward more responsible decisions: "I notice you frequently miss tax payment deadlines. Let me recommend a financial literacy course from the Ministry of Finance". Or: "According to my analysis, your habit of delaying declaration submissions until the last moment creates additional risks. Why not try submitting them early – it will save you lots of stress". Such personalised prompts encourage a more attentive and strategic approach to interaction with the state.

On the other hand, excessive AI guardianship can transform citizens from active policy-making participants into passive service users. For example, before local elections, a personalised message appears in the "Diia" news feed: "Hello! I've analysed your preferences and selected parties that best align with your values. Here are their programmes. And here's a list of the nearest polling stations with instructions on how to get there. Vote – it's important"! Although such personalisation supposedly should activate one's participation in community life, it actually somewhat devalues the very essence of democratic choice, reducing it to just another "recommendation for you".

## ■ Discussion

Thus, NS AI application in public administration has an ambiguous impact on different dimensions of human agency. At best, it can expand intentionality, directing it toward achieving socially significant goals and self-development. Thanks to its symbolic component, it can better explain algorithmic decision logic, making personal action consequences more predictable. This reduces feelings of frustration and powerlessness when interacting with the bureaucratic machine. NS AI can also support citizens' self-regulation through personalised “nudges” toward more mature and responsible civic behaviour. And its causal modelling capability opens space for deeper self-reflection – for example, through visualising systemic effects of human actions and decisions.

Despite these advantages, there are significant risks. Having access to an extremely broad citizen database (from purchase details to social media preferences), NS AI can adjust its recommendations to subtly narrow the space of choice, imposing certain values and behavioural models. If these values are determined by a narrow group of developers without broad social dialogue, there's a risk of technocratic usurpation of democratic processes. After all, the more routine aspects of civic and political participation are delegated to algorithms, the more public space loses the “necessary friction” of live interaction and meaningful debates.

The results of this research are at the centre of contemporary discussions about the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and decentralised platforms in public administration, allowing comparison with concepts proposed by leading scholars. For example, M. Veale *et al.* (2018) emphasised the importance of fairness and accountability in algorithmic governance, especially under high-stakes societal conditions. While their cited work focuses on regulatory mechanism needs, this research expands the perspective by offering an additional level of transparency and adaptability through blockchain platform integration. Similar to German J. Habermas & T. McCarthy's (1984) conclusions about communicative action's role in democratic systems, neuro-symbolic AI can serve as a new and important tool for strengthening democratic accountability through inclusive access to data analysis and algorithmic decision explanation. Meanwhile, critics like J. Burrell (2016) emphasise the problem of “algorithmic opacity” that might complicate practical application of such ideas in complex social contexts.

T. Sun & R. Medaglia's (2019) research highlighted challenges in AI implementation in the public sector, particularly in healthcare, emphasising the importance of balance between innovation and ethical principles. This research makes a similar emphasis but expands to general public policy, including recommendations for using value-oriented platforms to preserve human agency. I. Rahwan *et al.* (2019) emphasised AI's potential as a social actor capable of changing human behavioural patterns. This approach resonates with this research's

conclusions, but makes an additional emphasis on long-term goals that include not only behavioural changes but also human intentionality evolution through AI integration with blockchain-based decentralised platforms. Finally, F. Pasquale's (2015) conclusions about risks of AI becoming a “black box” emphasised the importance of transparent decision-making models. This research proposes an alternative perspective: integrating decentralised platforms to increase algorithm transparency and build trust in their public sphere use.

In conclusion, neuro-symbolic AI combined with multi-service decentralised (blockchain-based) information platforms (such as the Ukrainian-origin Bitbon System) has significant potential to impact human agency right now. It can expand horizons of human intentionality by suggesting new development directions based on data analysis. It can make human action consequences more predictable through explaining algorithm “logic”. It can support self-regulation by reorienting individuals from short-term impulses to long-term goals. Finally, it can provide necessary “mirrors” for deeper self-reflection and escape from bubbles. However, practical realisation of this potential will depend on values and goals embedded by developers in specific system architectures. Perhaps only now are more value-oriented platforms beginning to appear in the world (Ukrainian example “Bitbon System” (Bitbon System, 2021), described in works by I. Dunayev *et al.* (2023b), A. Kud (2024), of Ukrainian origin from Kharkiv). Orientation toward public good and human potential development can make neuro-symbolic solutions truly breakthrough technology for public policy. But constant economic pressure toward maximum engagement and attention monetisation (in private commercial platforms) can equally transform them into even more sophisticated tools for manipulating and narrowing human agency.

## ■ Conclusions

The rapid development of artificial intelligence and platform technologies poses an unprecedented challenge to established philosophical, ethical, and legal concepts of human agency and autonomy. Delegating an ever-wider spectrum of functions to AI systems creates risks of decision-making process opacity, reproduction and amplification of social biases, narrowing of human intellectual horizons, and subtle distortion of judgments. This problem has deep methodological roots, as it touches upon the very nature of human subjectivity as a source of meanings, goals, and actions. Preserving personal dignity and freedom in the AI era requires a fundamental rethinking of the ontological and value foundations of human-machine interaction, as well as developing fundamentally new ethical, legal, and management models for AI control based on human priority.

AI integration will have a transformative and comprehensive impact on all aspects of public administration, challenging established concepts of state sovereignty,

power legitimacy, bureaucratic hierarchy, and more. Methodological priorities for Ukraine and Europe in this field should be: developing ethically grounded and legally binding regulatory frameworks for AI control in the public sector; ensuring multi-level transparency and accountability of AI systems to democratic institutions and the public; implementing inclusive mechanisms for public participation and democratic deliberation regarding key AI decisions; deepening international cooperation with emphasis on ensuring security, human rights, and preserving human dignity in the AI era.

The combined use of AI and platforms in the public sphere creates systemic risks of power and information asymmetry, where control over algorithmic systems concentrates in the hands of a narrow circle of corporate and political players. This leads to the “theft” of citizens’ digital sovereignty, where they lose real ability to influence key decisions that determine their lives. At the methodological level, this requires developing a new paradigm for AI integration into public administration that places humans and their agency at the centre of every decision. Realising AI’s potential for expanding human cognitive and instrumental capabilities while avoiding its totalising influence is possible only under conditions of genuine democratisation of the AI development and implementation process itself through maximum broad involvement of the expert community, civil society, and all stakeholders, but only with the use of other breakthrough digital technologies.

A key methodological and ethical principle of AI development and implementation must be preserving human subjectivity and dignity at the centre of any technological transformations. The goals, values, and limitations initially embedded in AI system architecture should reflect not narrow corporate interests but broad social consensus developed through inclusive interdisciplinary and public dialogue. It’s important to actively experiment now with new models of participatory AI solution design using latest achievements in collaborative platforms, crowdsourcing data collection methods, blockchain-based distributed

consensus mechanisms, etc. Very significant potential is seen in the direction of full management of personal (identity capital) and social capital, which accumulates and is accounted for within the blockchain platform. In this case, access to personal data is provided through an encrypted digital “key” stored on the user’s personal device (smartphone), rather than on the service provider’s side: platform developer or state.

The implementation of new and more human-centric artificial intelligence models combined with multi-service digital platforms and especially digital ecosystems will have a very significant impact on various dimensions of human subjectivity both in Ukraine and globally in the short and medium term. Therefore, it’s important to understand the vector, value basis, and purpose of these changes. On one hand, AI, and especially its modern models beyond traditional neural networks, can expand horizons of human participation by offering personalised opportunities for self-development. It can make interaction with automated systems more predictable and transparent through understandable explanations of its “logic”. On the other hand, without proper regulation and ethical safeguards, these same technologies can subtly narrow personal autonomy, for example, through opaque content personalisation or excessive interference in the inner world. Therefore, at this stage, it’s extremely important that Ukrainian society – scientists, digital service developers, civil society – work together on developing principles for responsible AI use focusing on supporting human dignity.

### ■ Acknowledgements

None.

### ■ Funding

The study was not funded.

### ■ Conflict of Interests

None.

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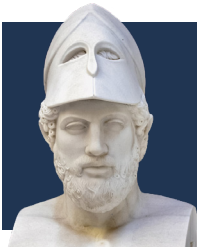
## Людська агентність vs штучний інтелект та децентралізовані платформи: у чому виклик для системи публічного управління у світі та в Україні?

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■ **Анотація.** У статті досліджено вплив штучного інтелекту (ШІ) та платформних технологій на концепцію людської агентності в контексті трансформації системи публічного управління. Метою був аналіз ризиків делегування прийняття рішень алгоритмам, пошук шляхів збереження людської суб'єктності в нових технологічних умовах. Основою була ідея «відповідального дослідження та інновацій» і концепція «технологічної медіації». Використання ШІ у публічному управлінні створює ризики «алгоритмічного управління» і втрати контролю з боку людини. Непрозорість ШІ-систем ставить під сумнів принципи демократичної підзвітності. У відповідь розробляються регуляторні й етичні принципи використання ШІ, але готовність системи працювати в умовах непрозорості викликає сумніви. У статті проаналізовано вплив ШІ та централізованих і децентралізованих платформ на ключові виміри людської агентності. Досліджено ризики звуження простору індивідуальної ініціативи та саморегуляції внаслідок пасивного покладання на поради ШІ-асистентів. Водночас відзначено потенціал ШІ в структуруванні людської саморефлексії через виявлення неусвідомлених емоційних та поведінкових патернів. Ці ефекти проілюстровано на прикладі гіпотетичної інтеграції можливостей ШІ в роботу української державної платформи «Дія» за моделлю «уряд як платформа». Показано, як впровадження персоналізованих ШІ-асистентів може, з одного боку, розширювати громадянську інтенціональність через вивільнення від адміністративної рутини, але з іншого – обмежувати поле вибору через активне «підштовхування» до певних поведінкових моделей. Відзначено небезпеку технократичного викривлення демократичного процесу за умови масштабного делегування аспектів політичної участі алгоритмічним системам. У підсумку констатовано, що розвиток ШІ та його інтеграція з платформними рішеннями несе значний потенціал впливу на різні виміри людської агентності. Реалізація цього потенціалу в бік розширення чи звуження автономії критично буде залежати від нормативних установок та цілей, закладених розробниками в архітектуру відповідних систем. Орієнтація на суспільне благо та розкриття людського потенціалу може зробити такі рішення емансипативними технологіями. Практична цінність цієї роботи полягає в розробці рекомендацій для адаптації системи публічного управління до викликів, спричинених впровадженням штучного інтелекту та платформних технологій, з акцентом на збереженні людської суб'єктності, демократичної підзвітності та етичності прийняття рішень

■ **Ключові слова:** публічна політика; людська агентність; цифрова етика; цифровий гуманізм; людиноцентричність; саморегуляція; персоналізація



## Competency-based approach to building human resources for public administration in the security and defence sector

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**Abstract.** The article examined the competency-based approach to developing human resources in the security and defence sector in the context of global challenges and threats. The aim of the study was to outline a competency-based model for public administration in the defence and security sector, capable of adapting to an unpredictable, dynamic, and complex security environment. Methodologically, the research relied on a qualitative descriptive approach using content analysis of academic and practical sources from 2000-2025, which enabled the systematisation of key categories and the identification of leading trends in the selection, training, and development of personnel. It was substantiated that human resource management in the defence sphere went beyond a purely administrative function, becoming a key factor in ensuring national security, operational efficiency, and strategic development. The publication highlighted the role of the competency-based approach in personnel recruitment, training, and development within the public administration system of the defence sector. It identified the uniqueness of competencies required in the defence sector, in particular the need to combine technical, managerial, and soft skills, as well as the importance of a co-creation paradigm in talent management. The study emphasised the significance of strategic workforce planning, bridging gaps between existing and required competencies, and introducing innovative approaches to personnel policy. It analysed international experience from the USA, EU countries, and Australia in building competency frameworks, recruitment mechanisms, training, and

### Suggested Citation:

Kirianova, O., Andrusiak, M., Akimova, L., Rusetskyi, R., & Akimov, O. (2025). Competency-based approach to building human resources for public administration in the security and defence sector. *Democratic Governance*, 18(1), 18-27. doi: 10.56318/dg/1.2025.18.



retention systems in the field of national security. The practical value of the study lay in formulating recommendations for improving HRM processes in Ukraine's security and defence sector, taking into account international standards and national specifics, thereby enhancing the flexibility, resilience, and effectiveness of personnel structures

■ **Keywords:** human capital; national security; personnel management; competencies; skills; risks

## ■ Introduction

In light of the continuous transformations, inherent complexity, and pronounced dynamism characterising the contemporary landscape of national security and defence, there is a growing imperative to critically examine the discourse and strategic approaches to human resource management within organisations operating in these sectors. Strengthening the role of human resources in the defence sector requires a coordinated and systemic approach to the territorial governance of defence zones, the strategic allocation of national resources, and the institutional empowerment of defence infrastructures. The capacity of human capital to design, implement, and manage both human and material assets is a pivotal dimension of effective public administration in the field of national defence (Kurnia *et al.*, 2023).

The management and reorganisation of organisational systems and strategies in response to rapidly changing strategic environments involve collecting and utilising information so that it can be transformed into opportunities to improve performance through competitive activities and adaptive responses to environmental shifts. H. Liwang (2022) put emphasis on the role of co-creation in filling the gap between policy-makers and technology development. The author claimed that there is a gap between policymakers and technological advancement. This mismatch creates dangers for nontechnical system aspects and poor interactions between technical and social components. In this vein, the issue of competencies and HRM in security and defence sector acquires special attention. Ph. Sinaga *et al.* (2023), within Indonesian context, claimed that human resources are critical in the implementation of national security efforts since they serve as planners, implementers, developers, and resource managers. To be ready for any risks that may come up, it is crucial to build human resources' resilience and well-being. K. Kioskli *et al.* (2025) demonstrated a lack of research in the intersecting fields of risk management and HRM; the authors showed that managing risks associated with human resource management requires effective performance and compensation that is in line with corporate strategy and objectives. T. den Buijs & P. Olsthoorn (2024) examined the challenges military organisations face in terms of their HRM policies and the effect of the institutional environment and strategy on these policies. The authors believed that in order to keep up with new HR efforts in government and military organisations, the government needs modify its legislation on HRM systems.

Some scholars (Baporikar, 2021; Gillberg *et al.*, 2025) pay special attention to retention in the defence sector, claiming it to be critical, given the high stakes involved in maintaining operational readiness and expertise. According to the author, HRM practices in the military industry must

be flexible enough to adjust to quickly shifting conditions brought on by threats, geopolitical upheavals, or technical breakthroughs. Effective HRM in such a dynamic area is characterized by the capacity to change course and adapt.

N. Poliova *et al.* (2024) wrote that, given global changes, the development of human potential, and chances for personal development, managing human resources may be the most significant task facing the security industry in the years to come. Responsibilities in the national security sector range from operating highly advanced and lethal missile systems to commanding large naval assets and ensuring the safety of public spaces in urban centres. This diversity underscores the breadth of competencies required across military and civilian security domains. One of the biggest challenges of the twenty-first century will be recruiting, educating, inspiring, and rewarding the workforce. Therefore, an integrated human resource development policy is urgently needed in order to improve talent utilisation through incentive and enable the usage of lateral skills across the three domains of defence, paramilitary, police, and private security.

Naturally, HRM in the defence and national security sector is based on a competency approach and is not separate from the science of HRM in general. The term "competency" has evolved over time and been linked to other concepts in the general management literature, such as leadership competency, communication competency (Materac & Knecht, 2020), cross-cultural competency (Kubinyi, 2021), emotional and interpersonal competency (McDermott *et al.*, 2020), and emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence competencies. Over time, this set of ideas has been reframed in management studies, where competency has been increasingly important, particularly in relation to social skills, emotional intelligence, and performance metrics in many contexts, as explained by M. Salman *et al.* (2020). As a result, competency is understood as a collection of traits based on an individual's personality and intelligence that are shown through knowledge, attitudes, and abilities that support excellent performance. Competencies are also resources that people might mobilise to relate to certain situations that are limited by their roles and the organisational environment. Nonetheless, the intricate defence environment highlights the significance of a thorough and coordinated effort in terms of competency development and suggests a particular, distinct matrix of competencies that ought to be used in the hiring procedures. At the same time, the complex defence environment highlights the need for coordinated efforts in competency development and calls for a specialised competency matrix to be applied in personnel selection processes within the

security and defence sector. The study aimed to outline the model of competency-based approach for security and defence sector, within today's security environment, which is very unpredictable, dynamic and complex.

### ■ Materials and Methods

The method used in this study was a descriptive qualitative approach employing an iterative research design. The main tool for practical implementation was content analysis, preceded by inductive category development based on the grounded theory principles. This approach involved identifying key thematic categories through iterative examination of preliminary sources, which were then used to guide targeted searches in scientific databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and Wiley. The empirical basis for the authors' assessments consists of the generalised results of secondary research. The inclusion criteria covered the years 2000-2025. The selected search categories included: "defence sector staffing", "HRM in security and defence", "competencies in security and defence", "organisational behaviour in security and defence", and "national security and defence challenges". Content analysis was performed manually by thematically coding materials using deductive categories. The study did not use quantitative coding software, but analytical frameworks were formed inductively to highlight recurring themes in HRM and competency modelling.

The theoretical foundation of the study integrated several frameworks relevant to public sector management. The methodological basis of the research was the theory of professional managers in the public sphere, which was developed by M. Weber, as well as the theory of political and public administration, formed by the complex scientific discipline "general theory of public service". The provisions of these theories became a basis for researching competencies in security and defence agencies within organisational behaviour patterns. The structural-functional approach is also applied, for analysis and synthesis of the elements within competency-based approach to building human resources. The choice of Weber's bureaucracy theory was determined by the specifics of defence and security sector organisations, with their predominantly bureaucratic organisational structures and HRM processes. However, it is the environment of Bureaucracy 2.0 – a new layer of regulations, actions, and processes that were previously under the complete discretion of the professional but are now being handed to management or the process owners. This shift in the location and ownership of professional information is a novel bureaucratic feature that is regarded as a component of bureaucracy 2.0. The analysis is made namely within the plane of this concept. The today's general theory of public service implies that the extent to which public service innovations contribute to the realisation of the publicness of public service provision can often be hard to determine in practice. But this gap was filled by drawing on practice theory and practice-theory-informed service management research in doing so, public services are conceptualised in terms of public value co-creation practices.

## ■ Results and Discussion

### Staffing in defence and security domain:

#### Concepts and vision

Staffing is vital in the defence sector due to the special requirements of national security. Maintaining a competent and capable workforce is critical for innovation, operational readiness, and timely reaction to changing threats. A strong staffing plan, including recruitment, training, and retention, is critical to the defence industry's success and the nation's security. A robust staffing strategy is more than just a human resources function in the defence industry; it is essential for national security, operational success, and technical innovation. Defence organisations may guarantee they have the staff needed to handle 21<sup>st</sup>-century problems by emphasising recruitment, training, and retention. The crucial importance of staffing in defence sector is determined, in particular, by the nature of defence management cycle (Fig. 1).

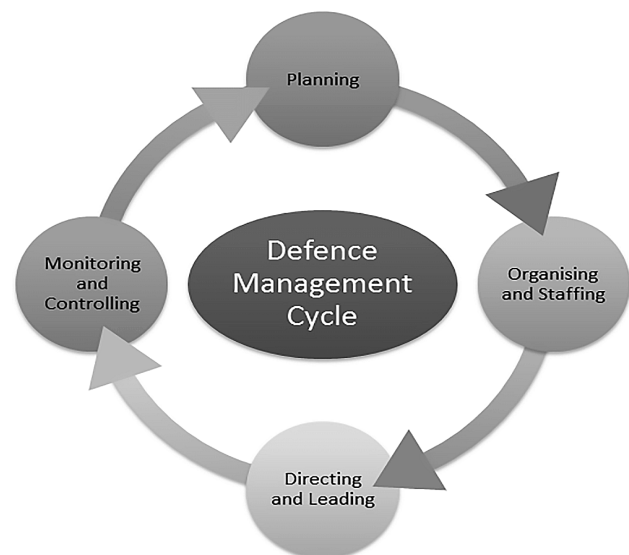


Figure 1. Defence management cycle

Source: K. Akman (2020)

Staffing is integral element of the cycle, and its effectiveness, naturally, contributes to overall performance within the cycle. Accordingly, the competency approach to employment in the defence and security sectors becomes particular significance. Like other military or management leaders, defence managers must be able to think strategically, manage strategic problems, grasp complexity, envision the future, lead change, reach consensus, negotiate, provide the best military advice, and work well in multinational, interagency, and joint settings. The idea that defence management is essentially one form of applied strategic leadership may be supported by these factors. Context, not function, is the primary distinction between defence managers and principles on flag officer staffs. One might also add that defence managers will constantly need to use certain analytical techniques to comprehend the contextual reality because of the situations they are facing and handling.



Choosing the best candidates for a large-scale project is similar to recruitment in the defence industry. It is a tough process intended to find people who possess the character and resilience required for demanding circumstances in addition to the necessary talents. The military's hiring procedure, which frequently includes thorough tests and psychological exams, guarantees that only the most competent and flexible people are enlisted. According to T. den Buijs & P. Olsthoorn (2024), this translates into the need of a careful and sophisticated hiring procedure for civilian companies. Assessing technical proficiency is only one aspect of effective hiring; other factors to consider include long-term potential and alignment with company values. Businesses can develop a workforce that is not just competent but also resilient and in line with company objectives by taking a more comprehensive approach to hiring.

### Training and skills development: Critical capabilities

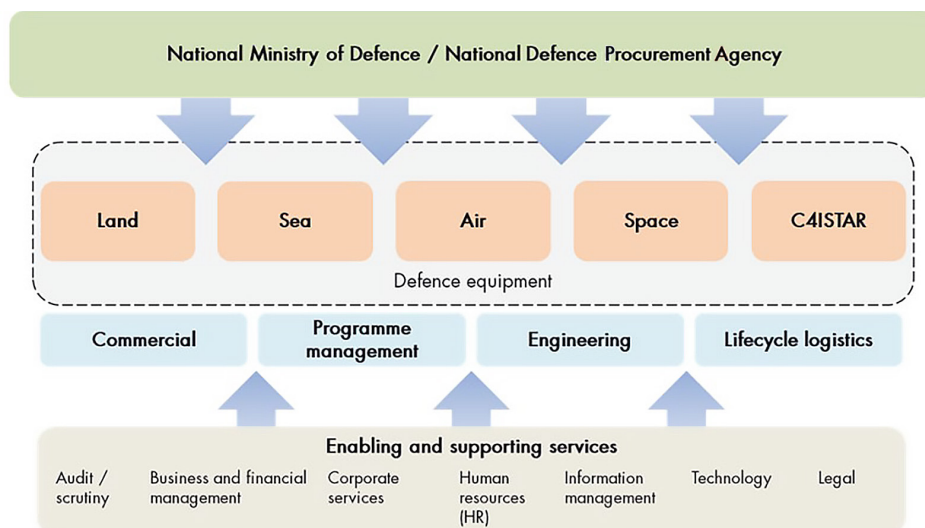
Training in the military industry is a never-ending process meant to refine abilities and establish discipline. In addition to improving technical proficiency, military training programs aim to develop psychological toughness and leadership skills. The demanding nature of military training emphasises how crucial it is to prepare people for leadership responsibilities in the future as well as for unforeseen obstacles. Corporate education programs should put special emphasis on thorough training. In addition to updating technical skills, organisations should invest in opportunities for continuous learning to foster leadership and problem-solving skills. Instead of being a one-time event, training should be seen as a continuous process that is essential to both professional and personal development.

Furthermore, considering the high stakes associated with preserving operational readiness and expertise, retention in the defence industry is crucial. The military uses a variety of tactics, including as opportunities for career advancement, specialised tasks, and a strong feeling of purpose

and belonging, to keep its members motivated and dedicated. The retention principles apply equally to civilian groups. A diversified strategy that incorporates career growth, acknowledgment, and cultivating a favourable corporate culture is needed to retain top staff. Maintaining a motivated and competent staff requires establishing an atmosphere where workers feel appreciated and have clear career paths.

The RAND report highlighted critical defensive capabilities in the public sector and offers suggestions for maintaining them. This study aimed to identify skills gaps, establish Key Skills and Competencies (KSC) for defence in the governmental domain, and offer suggestions for skill maintenance. According to C. Bond *et al.* (2021), it consists of four primary parts: 1) creating a taxonomy of government-required talents for defence procurement and determining essential skills; 2) charting the supply and demand for these fundamental talents at the moment and the effects of any future changes; 3) creating a summary of current efforts to increase the availability of essential skills; 4) formulating evidence-based suggestions on how to maintain KSC for defence in the governmental sphere going forward.

The study team has created a taxonomy of skills and competencies, specifically for the governmental domain's defence requirements in relation to defence procurement. Three decreasing layers make up the structure of the taxonomy: 1) functional competency group: the broad professional field or overall function carried out by employees; 2) the technical, managerial, and engineering professions that comprise each functional competency group; 3) specialisation: the level of expertise in the defence industry as determined by a panel of experts. The taxonomy presumes the existence of multiple functional competence groups that are not specifically related to defence but that facilitate and assist defence acquisition overall. Major functional competence groups are indicated in the Figure 2 below and multiple functional competence groups are shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 2.** Overview of enabling, supporting and key functional groups in defence procurement

Source: M. Brooks (2023)



**Figure 3.** Key to the assessment of the uniqueness of skills and competences in defence sector

Source: M. Brooks (2023)

Thus, the defence sector necessitates a distinct set of skills and capabilities, owing to its distinctive operational environment, technological demands, and the requirement for national security. While some talents are transferable from other businesses, the defence sector frequently demands deeper experience, new applications, and a greater level of specialisation to meet its stringent criteria. Defence projects take place within a distinct framework of national security, international relations, and geopolitical considerations. This setting shapes the skills needed for strategic thinking, policy knowledge, and international collaboration. While some abilities, such as project management, leadership, and problem-solving, are useful across industries, they are applied and tailored to the special needs of the military industry. For example, project management in military may involve larger, more complicated, and frequently transnational projects that necessitate particular abilities in stakeholder management and regulatory framework navigation.

Bureaucracy 2.0 unites these skills and competencies in the HRM of new type within tough organisational hierarchy of security and defence organisations. These organisations, naturally, cannot adopt flat structures, Agile team work or, all the more so, holacracy. But they can provide shaping of such a set of staff competencies which is typical for holacracy – integrative knowledge, interchangeability of employees, “Lego” teams, proactive vision, and the like. While the professional was able to escape the machine or “iron cage” aspects of bureaucracy 1.0, now one can see that with bureaucracy 2.0 he or she is now embedded within these control systems. Holacracy represents the finest landscape for value co-creation in talent management.

It is a strategic approach in which employees, managers, and the company work together to create and implement talent management processes, ultimately increasing value for all stakeholders (Lin & Royston, 2022). This collaborative strategy shifts away from traditional top-down HR procedures and toward a more inclusive and participatory model, acknowledging that employee participation and shared ownership result in more successful and impactful personnel management.

**Technological advances and new content of competence**

The word “competence” is applicable in a variety of different research domains with a wide range of disciplinary origins, it should be noted. Because competence is sometimes mistaken with “skill”, defining it presents a challenge. Furthermore, competence is a relational term that is recognised as a relationship between people’s abilities or capacities and their successful completion of tasks that have been allocated to them (Ma *et al.*, 2023). Still up for debate, though, is the issue of “whether competence should be measured as separate or combined with skills, knowledge, and attitudes”. Classifying competence into specific components has the benefit of being helpful for a particular work type, even though competence in general has the clear advantage of being applicable to various occupational situations.

According to L. De Rezende *et al.* (2021), managing complex defence projects requires key competencies. The priority and focus placed on competences are influenced by hierarchy, discipline, power, authority, and technology, according to the study. Furthermore, the results show that when one progresses from simple to complicated project management environments in the defence sector, 27 abilities are required. The defence industry is competing more and more with huge tech businesses for the best talent as it becomes more involved in creating new technologies and utilising big data, advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and other technologies. According to experts, the need for new skill sets will unavoidably grow as technology advances, and some of these abilities may not be readily available in the market at the moment (Parker & Momeny, 2021). Given the nature of the aerospace and defence industries, geopolitical factors also influence hiring and selection. Large corporations find it “impossible” to hire people from nations with highly skilled labour but lacking political and strategic partnerships (Pasichnyi *et al.*, 2024). To address the issue, firms are investing in internal talent development, junior professional training, ongoing mentoring programs, and hands-on experience, to mention a few solutions. In particular, in EU countries, several recruitment tactics are being investigated, such as luring people from other EU countries willing to relocate and developing local teams in other regions with the requisite capabilities to support international initiatives.

Even the United States has hindered public officials by neglecting to provide opportunities for hands-on experience with new and developing technology. This inhibits the government's capacity to react to and capitalise on new technology while also making it more difficult to lure top technical talent into government. The first issue is a lack of opportunities for current national security officials to get additional expertise in emerging technology. Rotations and educational opportunities away from headquarters, while providing valuable experiences for well-rounded officers, frequently delay promotions. As a result, the incentive system discourages present government officials from taking time away to learn. However, in the USA, there are measures that can alter this dynamic (Liggans *et al.*, 2019; den Buijs & Olsthoorn, 2024):

1. Establishing information exchange between the United States government and the private sector in critical industries. It refers to formal externships, rotational opportunities, and other short-term learning experiences that enable civil servants to work directly in the private sector and gain hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies like blockchain, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. The national security community's entrepreneurial and innovation arms, such as In-Q-Tel, DIU, and AFWERX, can help with this effort by selecting promising US companies to embed government personnel. These opportunities may also help address civil service attrition by allowing more fluidity between the public and private sectors, rather than forcing people to "go private" if they want to gain outside experience.

2. Establishing advisory councils and encouraging working-level employees to meet with them on a regular basis to address policy concerns. It comprises giving agencies and departments the authority to organise advisory councils made up of industry stakeholders and empowering both senior officials and career staff to interact with these councils in order to inform and shape policy on emerging technology.

3. Increased interconnectedness between agencies and departments focused on defence and national security (the intelligence community and Department of Defence) and economy and trade (the Departments of Commerce, Treasury, and so on). Although the Office of the National Cyber Director advises the President on US cybersecurity policy and strategy, knowledge on a larger range of emerging technology concerns is spread among a number of government departments and agencies in many fields. Establishing informal and formal channels, such as working groups or a single umbrella organisation, would promote greater cross-pollination among interagency parties. The last thing the government needs is more bureaucracy, but other countries, such as Israel, Singapore, Ukraine, and the United Arab Emirates, have established dedicated bodies to coordinate policy on certain emergent technological trends, an approach that has paid off in a variety of ways.

According to K. Kuzminski *et al.* (2023), U.S. federal departments and agencies can enhance their talent

acquisition strategies by upskilling current personnel, forecasting future workforce needs with the help of agency-wide dashboards, improving career path management to nurture future leaders, and promoting awareness of federal service opportunities. The federal government must seek out, hire, and retain educated, experienced people with national security-specific skills, such as proficiency in foreign languages, local knowledge, legal expertise, or a background in engineering, computer science, or data analytics, in order to meet the challenge of safeguarding the nation and its national interests. Additionally, it requires leaders, managers, and communicators. However, obstacles including ambiguous hiring procedures, drawn-out clearance procedures, and restricted access to professional networks make it difficult for people to find job with the federal government. Because of this, the government is unable to fill important national security positions, and those who have the requisite skill sets and a strong desire to serve are excluded from federal employment. Departments and agencies must comprehend the incentives of the next generation and the obstacles they encounter while pursuing government employment in national security in order to draw in, hire, and keep people with the necessary skills and interests. In order to determine the reasons, priorities, and skill sets of people interested in government service, as well as the difficulties, obstacles, and opportunities associated with pursuing this career path, CNAS researchers arranged focus groups and administered a survey as part of this project. It was determined that better access to talent outside of Washington, D.C., extension of initial paths into government service, and enhancements to the federal recruiting process and clearance timeframe could guarantee that the federal government has the workforce it needs to secure the nation. Congress and the executive branch must take action to achieve these changes.

### **Strategic planning in security and defence HR**

Strategic workforce planning, as an important component of human capital management, assists businesses in having adequate workers with the appropriate skills and competences to fulfill strategic goals in defence planning. However, when competency mismatch comes into play, it can make the process difficult for many defence organisations. As the global strategic environment becomes more complicated, ambiguous, and uncertain, talent management is widely acknowledged as vital. Despite the growing strategic importance of people management, transformative reform has met with strong opposition from both internal and external parties. Furthermore, competence mismatches demand extra reinforcing change mechanisms (Liggans *et al.*, 2019). Each defence domain has its own set of abilities, and RAND Corporation produced an outstanding study that highlights the ranking of relevant talents for each defence domain (Bond *et al.*, 2021). Table 1 shows an example rating of management for air defence.

**Table 1.** Key skills and competences for air defence – management

Functional competence group	Occupation	Skills coverage	Specialisation to defence
Program management	Project manager	Performance management, risk management, contract management, cost management, requirements management, technical management, supply chain management	Low
	Planning and production support engineer	Strategic planning, work flow management	Low
	Cost estimator	Cost modelling, learner rates, three point estimating	Low
	Procurement officer	Market research, financial management, market assessment	Medium

Source: C. Bond et al. (2021)

Thus, critical skills and competencies for air defence management include strong leadership, situational awareness, communication, technical understanding in detection and weapon systems, and the ability to coordinate complicated operations. Adaptability, decision-making under pressure, and interoperability with joint forces are all important. To ensure mission success, air defence managers must be able to lead and encourage teams while under extreme pressure. This includes allocating duties, giving clear instructions, and encouraging collaboration. Maintaining a full grasp of the battlespace, including the locations and statuses of friendly and enemy units, is critical. This necessitates the capacity to rapidly evaluate and comprehend data from a variety of sources. Effective communication is vital for coordinating actions among many units, military branches, and potentially allied forces. Clear and unambiguous communication is critical to ensuring that everyone knows the issue and their part.

An example of a country where the issue of the effectiveness of the application of the competency-based approach in personnel management in the security and defence sector is relevant is Ukraine. As Ukrainian researchers S. Popov et al. (2023) pointed out, in the context of growing security challenges and the need to integrate with international standards, especially taking into account cooperation with NATO, it is a particularly important task for Ukraine to identify the key areas and challenges that the country faces in developing an effective personnel policy in this area. Researchers emphasised the need to improve the personnel management system so that it meets the requirements of the modern military environment. In their opinion, to improve the personnel management system, it is necessary to take the following measures: develop and implement a new concept of personnel management that would meet the requirements of the contemporary military environment, that is, determine the main goals and objectives of personnel management, as well as mechanisms for achieving them; introduce modern technologies and methods into the personnel management system, in particular, make the personnel management system more effective and productive. Also K. Kusainov et al. (2023) emphasised the expediency of ensuring transparency in personnel decisions in order to avoid corruption and abuse, for which the following measures should be taken: introduce a system of open competitions for vacant positions, which will ensure equal access to vacant positions

for all interested parties; publish information on the requirements for candidates for vacant positions, which will allow candidates to understand what requirements are made of them; create a system of monitoring and control over the implementation of personnel decisions, which will enable identifying possible corruption schemes and preventing them.

While all these steps suggested by Ukrainian scientists are in fact expedient, they are of declarative nature, which is characteristic also for the majority of studies and developed concepts and strategies. This situation necessitates thorough investigation, adaptation, and adoption of experience and best practices of the USA and EU, some of which were described above. Moreover, it seems expedient to pay special attention to the Australian experience. In the country, it is considered that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) needs new approaches to recruitment and retention (Kustiawan & Ghazalie, 2025). It should look at sharing people with industry and consider reducing induction training, while also getting people into limited service before their long security clearances are complete. As things are, slow processes, an inability to retain experienced personnel, and difficulty attracting essential technical skill sets are impeding the ADF's capacity to prepare for a more serious strategic threat scenario. Industry analysts believe that previous conflicts abroad can teach a lot about rapidly increasing military personnel and harnessing specialised industry skill sets for adaptive campaigns. Critical technologies, including as cyber, artificial intelligence, and autonomous systems, have proven transformative in the modern adaptive warfare, as demonstrated by the Russo-Ukraine conflict. Applying those lessons to new developing technologies like quantum computing, robots, and space-domain, geographic long-range strike and influence campaigns will be critical for ADF transformation and deterrence. A shift in thinking is required to attract and keep those skill sets in the ADF without competing with the organisations where they were developed. Personnel working on ADF projects not only contribute to their businesses' continued defence connections, but they also carry those experiences and learning back into their main organisational job. This impact can be amplified by ADF possibilities for courses, upskilling, and cross-discipline collaboration across technologies. The intangible benefits of opportunities to use vital skill sets in new domains and up-skill in areas outside the scope of their civilian organisations will entice those individuals and garner the support of their

employers. Established entry paths for recruits between industry and the ADF can provide additional prospects for individuals who participate. For example, a cybersecurity company that provides prospective employees the opportunity to work in the private sector while simultaneously providing access to unique and exclusive ADF initiatives. Potential members can next investigate a type of national service in their skill area that is unlikely to fall into the traditional definition of a military career or require lengthy days in the field. Such creative interaction with industry can be made possible by utilising the ADF Total Workforce System. To guarantee that important skill sets are maintained wherever possible, whether through regular service patterns, short-notice calls for duty, irregular service, or full-time service for limited periods, the current service category system (SERCAT) must be used for optimum flexibility.

Although the scope of the current article did not imply formulating detailed recommendations for building human resources for public administration in the security and defence sector based on a competency approach, still one can emphasise that there is an evident need for broader borrowing of talent management best practices in this field and, in particular, co-creation paradigm introduction, since the current staffing policy in defence and security sector of Ukraine is carried out either in methods of common-sense management and merits paradigm, or based on NATO standards of predominantly US patterns, without proper consideration of national specifics.

### ■ Conclusions

The defence and national security industries' HRM methods, which were developed in extremely demanding and high-stakes settings, provide valuable insights for civilian businesses. Businesses can improve organisational efficacy and resilience by taking a strict and comprehensive approach to hiring, training, retention, and morale. The tenets of military human resource management emphasise the value of strategic vision, flexibility, and a dedication to quality qualities that are essential for negotiating the modern corporate environment. At the same time, as the

conducted study demonstrates, even highly developed nations with strong defence paradigms, well-equipped and experienced armed forces, today face challenges in shaping effective staffing in security and defence sectors, due to reliance on old approaches of narrow specialisation, lack of soft and technical skills combination and constant renewing of knowledge. The roots of this, in turn, lie in linking of HRM and competence management to rigid bureaucratic structures of bureaucracy 1.0 type.

Analysis of approaches to competency in defence and security sector in different countries allowed claiming that a growing skills gap is a challenge facing the military industry, which is essential to both national security and international stability. The gap is especially evident within co-creation paradigm, since the lack of technological or social competence impede implementation of co-creation, which, at the same time, represents a foundation of high organisation performance, capability, agility, and resilience of security and defence bodies, their abilities to react quickly and function effectively in today ever-changing dynamic security landscape. A highly qualified, flexible workforce is becoming more and more important as geopolitical conditions change and technology breakthroughs quicken. Innovative approaches are needed to address this talent gap in order to draw in, nurture, and keep elite experts. Within co-creation organisational paradigm, key functional groups of tasks should be aligned with uniqueness of skills and competences in defence. The prospects of further research should include investigations in the domain of new KPIs for defence and security sector employees, with taking into account today' realities, roughly considered in this article.

### ■ Acknowledgements

None.

### ■ Funding

The study was not funded.

### ■ Conflict of Interest

None.

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## Компетентнісний підхід у формуванні кадрового потенціалу для публічного управління в секторі безпеки і оборони

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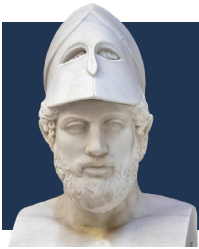
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■ **Анотація.** У статті розглянуто компетентнісний підхід до формування кадрового потенціалу в секторі безпеки й оборони в умовах сучасних глобальних викликів і загроз. Метою дослідження було окреслення моделі компетентнісного підходу для публічного управління в секторі оборони та безпеки, здатної адаптуватися до непередбачуваного, динамічного й складного безпекового середовища. Методично дослідження спиралося на якісний описовий підхід із використанням контент-аналізу наукових і практичних джерел за 2000–2025 рр., що дало змогу систематизувати ключові категорії та виявити провідні тенденції у відборі, підготовці та розвитку персоналу. Обґрунтовано, що управління людськими ресурсами в оборонній сфері виходить за межі суто адміністративної функції, перетворюючись на ключовий чинник забезпечення національної безпеки, операційної ефективності та стратегічного розвитку. У публікації висвітлено роль компетентнісного підходу у відборі, навчанні та розвитку персоналу в системі державного управління оборонним сектором. Визначено унікальність компетенцій для оборонного сектору, зокрема потребу поєднання технічних, управлінських і «м'яких» навичок, а також важливість ко-креаційної парадигми управління талантами. Підкреслено значення стратегічного планування персоналу, подолання розриву між наявними та потрібними компетенціями й впровадження інноваційних підходів до кадрової політики. Проаналізовано досвід США, країн ЄС та Австралії щодо побудови системи компетенцій, механізмів рекрутингу, навчання та утримання кадрів у сфері національної безпеки. Практична цінність роботи полягає у формуванні рекомендацій щодо удосконалення HRM-процесів у секторі безпеки та оборони України з урахуванням міжнародних стандартів і національної специфіки, що сприятиме підвищенню гнучкості, стійкості та ефективності кадрових структур

■ **Ключові слова:** людський капітал; національна безпека; управління персоналом; компетенції; навички; ризики



## Impact of global trends on Ukrainian fiscal policy under martial law

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■ **Abstract.** Analysis of the impact of global trends, such as the decline in international trade, armed conflicts, political changes in other countries and the introduction of new technologies, is necessary for adapting Ukraine's fiscal policy, ensuring effective public finance management and maintaining economic stability under martial law. The study aimed to examine the impact of global trends on Ukraine's fiscal policy and to develop and substantiate recommendations for overcoming their negative effects and using new opportunities to ensure economic stability under martial law. The study analysed the adaptation strategies of the Ukrainian government, such as increasing tax revenues, optimising public spending, attracting international assistance and using innovative technologies in the tax sphere. The impact of these measures on economic stability, budget deficit and long-term prospects for economic recovery was assessed. The study examined the impact of inflationary pressures on public finances, as well as the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for combating inflation and their role in stabilising the economy. The study also considered the consequences of the decline in international trade for Ukraine's economy, including lower export revenues and changes in the conditions of international economic cooperation. The analysis also covered the impact of geopolitical instability, in particular the outbreak of armed conflicts around the world, on defence financing needs, which requires adjustments to budget priorities. The analysis of electoral processes in other countries and their possible impact on Ukraine's fiscal policy due to changes in international economic conditions was conducted. In addition, the study analysed the introduction of artificial intelligence in the field of entrepreneurship, which can have both a positive and negative impact on the tax system and the budget, particularly in the context of changes in tax revenues and employment structure. The results of the study can be useful for developing effective policy solutions aimed to maintain economic stability and financial sustainability of the country in times of crisis

■ **Keywords:** global economic trends; elections; conflicts; artificial intelligence; economic stability; international assistance

### Suggested Citation:

Vagonova, O., Lola, V., Terkhanov, F., & Bushtruk, Ye. (2025). Impact of global trends on Ukrainian fiscal policy under martial law. *Democratic Governance*, 18(1), 28-47. doi: 10.56318/dg/1.2025.28.



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## ■ Introduction

In the context of martial law, Ukraine faces numerous challenges that require the adaptation of fiscal policy to new realities. These impacts are key to effective public financial management and ensuring the country's economic stability. Global economic trends, such as global inflation, a decline in international trade, as well as changes in the international political context due to armed conflicts and elections in other countries, and technical innovations related to the rapid development of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), have an impact on Ukraine's financial system and budgetary policy. These factors pose serious economic challenges that require further study of these processes, their implications for the Ukrainian economy, identification of the main challenges and threats in this area, as well as opportunities and prospects for overcoming them.

One of the main challenges is the decline in local budget revenues due to the fall in business activity, population displacement and the government's anti-crisis fiscal measures as a result of Russia's full-scale invasion. This is stated in the study by T.H. Bondaruk (2022). The study addressed territorial disproportions: the largest losses were recorded in communities located in the areas of hostilities and temporary occupation. The study included the diversification of the community economy, improvement of budget planning, risk assessment and regional needs, as well as expenditure cuts to minimise local budget deficits for maintaining financial sustainability.

T.V. Stetsenko & D.I. Ryadnov (2024) studied the transformation of the structure of the state budget of Ukraine under martial law. The study demonstrated a shift in the emphasis in Ukraine's spending policy: a reduction in the share of spending on the social sphere and economy in favour of financing the defence and security sectors, which caused an imbalance in the financial system. In their opinion, the key task of the state is to strike a balance between financing critical needs and preserving the potential for economic growth in the future.

V. Krasko (2024) identified the key challenges faced by the tax system of Ukraine in the context of martial law and intensified European integration. In particular, the author highlighted the destabilisation of budget revenues due to a decline in economic activity, simplification of taxation during the crisis, growth of tax debt and uneven distribution of the tax burden. Institutional challenges include imperfect tax administration, insufficient digitalisation, and fragmented changes in tax legislation. In addition, European integration commitments require harmonisation of the national tax framework with EU law, which puts an additional burden on the system. The formation of a stable tax environment will be facilitated by the implementation of a comprehensive reform strategy, modernisation of administration, and strengthening of the institutional capacity of fiscal authorities.

V.P. Goryn *et al.* (2024) viewed tax innovations of the first stage of the full-scale as a tool to reduce the tax burden, aimed to support taxpayers, preserving business

liquidity and mitigating economic shocks. The key measures included simplification of administration procedures, reduction of rates, expansion of the simplified taxation system, and moratoriums on audits. The second half of 2022 and 2023 saw a gradual withdrawal from anti-crisis easing and a return to stricter fiscal discipline, accompanied by the restoration of tax control, the cancellation of certain privileges, and an increase in the fiscal burden. According to the study, such a transformation was a natural response to the need to restore budget revenues and finance the defence sector but requires increased predictability and flexibility of tax policy in a highly uncertain environment.

Tax trends in crisis conditions were the subject of a study by O. Grin *et al.* (2024), analysing in detail the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic instability due to the war on the tax systems of Ukraine and the EU countries. The study examines the implemented response mechanisms, such as the introduction of tax holidays, reduction of tax rates for certain sectors of the economy and the introduction of new tax benefits for businesses affected by the pandemic and war. In addition, the study analysed the optimisation of tax revenues in Ukraine by reducing the tax burden on businesses during the crisis. The article draws analogies with EU countries, where similar measures have been implemented to support economic activity, by increasing public spending to support small and medium-sized businesses, as well as by introducing new digital tax initiatives.

Among the studies on fiscal policy in times of instability, it is worth highlighting the study by O. Blanchard *et al.* (2021) on the role of fiscal rules and public borrowing limits in advanced economies. The study discussed the limits of fiscal sustainability in the context of rising public debt after the pandemic crisis and in the context of new geopolitical threats. The study argued that high debt levels are not critical, if interest rates are low and public institutions are trusted. They also emphasised the importance of moving away from tight fiscal constraints to more flexible rules focused on sustainable growth.

The global economic consequences of the war in Ukraine, in particular the impact on international trade, inflation and economic growth, are analysed in S. Galiani (2023). The study noted that the war has disrupted supply chains and reduced trade, due to restrictions on energy exports from Russia, which has led to price increases and inflationary pressures in many countries. A substantial aspect of the current fiscal discourse is the need to reorient Ukraine's fiscal policy in line with the transformed economic environment caused by growing security, social and financial risks. Such a transformation should be based on economic diversification, active attraction of international financial support, and reform of the tax system to stimulate economic growth and ensure macrofinancial stability.

The macroeconomic consequences of the war in Ukraine were the subject of a study by P.K. Ozili (2024). The study emphasised that the full-scale war triggered profound economic changes, including inflationary pressures,

price shocks in energy and food markets, a decline in trade activity, and increased geo-economic instability. The study stressed that countries with high levels of external borrowing are particularly vulnerable to the effects of war, which necessitate flexible budgetary decisions, more efficient public debt management, and adaptation of budget priorities to new threats. It is strategically necessary to use international financial support to ensure macro-financial stability in the face of a protracted crisis.

Among the fundamental studies that analyse fiscal policy in the face of shocks, it is worth mentioning the study by A.J. Auerbach & W.G. Gale (2020), which focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the US federal budget. The study demonstrated that the pandemic has significantly changed budget forecasts due to a significant increase in expenditures and a decrease in revenues, which together led to an increase in the budget deficit. At the same time, an increase in the debt burden is not automatically a destructive factor, given the flexible monetary policy and confidence in the financial system.

Despite the existence of a significant number of studies, Ukraine's fiscal policy under martial law requires further study in terms of the impact of global trends, adaptation to new global challenges in the context of European integration, and assessment of the effectiveness of measures aimed to ensure economic stability and recovery of the national economy after the war. The study aimed to analyse the impact of global trends on Ukraine's fiscal policy under martial law, to assess the effectiveness of current fiscal measures, and to develop recommendations for adapting fiscal policy to new global realities. Correlating with this goal, the objectives of the study were to identify global trends that influence the formation of Ukraine's fiscal policy in the context of current challenges; analyse the nature and extent of this influence; and develop sound recommendations for adapting fiscal approaches to strengthen financial sustainability and improve the efficiency of public financial management under martial law.

## ■ Materials and Methods

The research methodology was based on a comprehensive approach that includes a combination of theoretical analysis, empirical research and comparative analysis. The study was conducted in six stages. At the first stage, the theoretical basis of the study was formed by analysing scientific literature, analytical reports of international organisations (IMF, World Bank, OECD, SIPRI), as well as official documents (laws of Ukraine, documents of the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU), and the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine). The purpose of this stage was to identify key global trends that affect Ukraine's fiscal policy. The content analysis method and the deduction method were used to form the theoretical framework of the study.

The following criteria were used to select the sources: relevance (publications from 2019 onwards were addressed), scientific validity (peer-reviewed articles, analytical reviews of leading international organisations, studies

published in scientific journals or international publications were included), relevance to the research topic (the selection was based on the keywords "fiscal policy", "global trends", "economic crisis", "institutional capacity in times of war", etc.), geopolitical relevance (sources related to both Ukraine and partner countries, in particular, the United States, EU countries, etc.) The main sources for the study were reports, reviews and other materials of the International Monetary Fund (2022; 2023), the European Central Bank (Checherita-Westphal *et al.*, 2022), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (Davis, 2023), the National Bank of Ukraine (2023; 2024), official data of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (2023; 2025), the National Institute for Strategic Studies (2023a; 2023b; 2023c; 2024a; 2024b), covering the period of 2022-2025. In addition, the study analysed data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Ukraine's foreign trade in goods..., 2025), the State Tax Service of Ukraine (2024) and the Main Department of the State Tax Service in Rivne region (2025). This approach ensured the representativeness and relevance of the data on the impact of global trends on Ukraine's fiscal policy. These materials became part of the source base for analysing external factors, assessing the budgetary burden, fiscal sustainability, and the scope of international assistance.

As part of the legal framework for the study, several official documents of Ukraine regulating fiscal policy under martial law were analysed. The selection covered the period from 2022. These include information documents of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (2024), State and government debt of Ukraine (2025), Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine (Roadmap for regulating..., 2024). In addition, the study used certain provisions of the laws on the State Budget of Ukraine for 2023 and 2024 (Law of Ukraine No. 2710-IX, 2022; Law of Ukraine No. 3460-IX, 2023), which served as a source of factual data and a basis for analytical conclusions. This tracked the dynamics of fiscal changes, identified adaptation solutions in the budgetary sphere, assessed the amount of international support, and responded to key institutional challenges in public finance management.

At the second stage, the study identified the factors of global influence, in particular, structures global trends into four blocks: economic, political, geopolitical and technological. For this purpose, the method of analysis and a systematic approach were applied. The characteristics of each factor (inflation, armed conflicts, elections, digitalisation, etc.) were clarified, and their potential impact on fiscal policy was indicated. The third stage involved assessing the national context. The dynamics of GDP, exports and imports, budget deficit, public debt, and foreign aid were analysed. The goal was to identify changes in Ukraine's fiscal policy in response to global challenges.

The next step was to forecast possible scenarios. A predictive model was built that addresses the impact of changes in the political situation in Ukraine's partner countries (including elections in the US, Poland, Germany, etc.) on

the volume of foreign aid. Elements of scenario analysis were used to determine possible fiscal consequences. The final stage is the stage of drawing conclusions and recommendations. The synthesis of the results obtained formulated recommendations for adapting Ukraine's fiscal policy to current global challenges. The generalisation is based on the integration of the results of the previous stages using the inductive method.

Thus, in the process of conducting the study, a set of interrelated general scientific and special methods was used, which ensured the objectivity, reliability and representativeness of the results obtained. This ensured a comprehensive approach to the study of the problem, provided results, and formulated and substantiated conclusions.

## ■ Results and Discussion

### General characteristics of Ukraine's fiscal policy in the language of war

Russia's full-scale invasion has had a significant impact on the economic order in Ukraine, causing several negative processes in the fiscal sphere, which in turn have led to serious problems that need to be addressed. The war caused significant damage to Ukraine's energy, industrial and transport infrastructure, which reduced economic activity in many regions. Many businesses have ceased operations, and traditional sources of budget revenues have significantly decreased due to the hostilities and disruption of supply chains. Thus, one of the critical components of the Ukrainian budget revenue is export taxes. According to the National Bank of Ukraine (2023), the blockade of the Black Sea ports has had a significant impact on exports, especially of grain, metals, and oil. In 2022, exports decreased by 42.4% compared to the previous year. This was a result of the destruction of production facilities of export-oriented enterprises and logistical difficulties due to the closure of the Black Sea ports by Russia. While the launch of the grain corridor and the development of alternative routes partially compensated for these losses, they were unable to fully restore exports to pre-war levels, resulting in a decline in foreign exchange earnings and pressure on the state budget (Poharska, 2023).

At the same time, the government was forced to implement several measures to redistribute state budget expenditures in favour of ensuring Ukraine's defence capability: increased funding for the defence sector in general and for the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), defence industry enterprises, and measures to further ensure national security and defence capability, which has become an absolute priority in the context of new challenges. The war requires huge financial injections: for armaments, military equipment, support for the military and social protection of the population. These expenditures, along with a decline in revenues, created a significant state budget deficit, which required a review of the basic principles of fiscal policy, the search for internal reserves to increase budget revenues, and the attraction of external assistance. According to the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (2023), in 2022, the security

and defence sector's expenditures under the general and special funds of the state budget amounted to 1,536.6 billion UAH, or 32.5% of gross domestic product.

The National Institute for Strategic Studies (2024a) estimates that Ukraine's direct losses from the war as of 2024 exceeded 152 billion USD, and that economic recovery will require long-term investment. Economic growth in 2023 reached 5.3%, but GDP remained at around 75% of pre-war levels. The results of 2024 showed a gradual recovery: state budget revenues amounted to approximately 3,122.7 billion UAH (up 16.9%, or 451 billion UAH, compared to 2023). At the same time, general fund expenditures on the security and defence sector alone amounted to 2,975.0 billion UAH, which was about 38.9% of GDP (National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, 2025). Such a concentration of defence spending, while the GDP remained at only 75% of the pre-war level, indicates a critical burden on the budget. In addition, according to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (State and government debt of Ukraine, 2025), in 2024, the state budget deficit remained high at over 1,300 billion UAH, which necessitated large-scale external financing. Thus, despite the growth in revenues, the persistence of high expenditures and a low GDP base is causing significant fiscal pressure.

According to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (Minfin, 2025), the first year of the full-scale war saw a significant increase in public debt, which stood at 4,071.68 billion UAH (52.4% of GDP) as of 31 December 2022. In total, in 2022, the public debt increased by 1,399.86 billion UAH (52.4% of GDP), or 1,399.86 billion UAH, compared to the previous year. During 2024, the public debt continued to grow: as of 31 December 2024, it reached 6,980.9 billion UAH (166.1 billion UAH), an increase of 1,461 billion UAH (26.5% in UAH equivalent or 14.3% in USD) compared to the beginning of the year (Minfin, 2025). This indicates a significant increase in the burden on Ukraine's economy in times of war. The almost twofold increase in the public debt indicates the need for active external support and reform of fiscal and budgetary policies to ensure the sustainability of public finances. Faced with challenges such as attacks on infrastructure and migration flows, Ukraine was forced to make large public expenditures to ensure economic stability and provide assistance to the victims, while maintaining financial stability in the crisis. This required adapting fiscal policy by attracting international assistance and introducing measures to control defence and infrastructure spending.

The energy crisis was one of the key factors that influenced Ukraine's fiscal policy, especially in 2022-2023, after the massive attacks on energy infrastructure. In particular, as a result of the destruction of generation and distribution facilities, fiscal policy was adapted by allocating additional budget funds for the purchase of equipment for the energy sector, compensation mechanisms for the population, subsidies and reserves for critical infrastructure. This is confirmed by the data of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2024) and the conclusions of the International

Monetary Fund (2022). The main measures taken to stabilise the situation in this sector of the economy include temporary exemption from import duties and VAT benefits for energy equipment, gas subsidies for a wide range of consumers, and lending for energy purchases, including through loans from international partners. These measures significantly eased the energy crisis in 2022-2024, meeting critical social needs and reducing budgetary pressure within the state budget, which was key to maintaining financial stability. At the same time, the state implemented measures to control defence spending and infrastructure restoration, as reflected in the main provisions of the State Budget of Ukraine for 2024 (Law of Ukraine No. 3460-IX, 2023), including energy, to ensure a mitigation of the crisis, which can be defined as multi-level. This, in particular, is emphasised in the study by T. Bogdan (2024).

As fiscal policy cannot act in isolation in the context of a full-scale war, monetary policy, in particular, the anti-crisis measures of the National Bank of Ukraine, are special in stabilising the economy. The coordination between budgetary instruments and currency regulation measures helped to maintain macrofinancial stability and prevent deeper economic destabilisation. Particular attention was paid not only to budgetary instruments but also to banking instruments, in particular to the measures taken by the NBU to support the financial system and ensure macrofinancial stability. According to C. Checherita-Westphal *et al.* (2022), the introduction of anti-crisis measures, such as a fixed exchange rate and measures to preserve the banking system maintained Ukrainian economic functionality even in the context of aggression. Since the beginning of 2022, the NBU has introduced several measures to support the economy and the stability of the banking system in times of war, including restrictions on the foreign exchange market, ensuring liquidity for financial institutions. On 24 February 2022, Resolution of the National Bank of Ukraine No. 18 (2022) fixed the official hryvnia exchange rate and introduced strict currency restrictions, which stabilised the foreign exchange market and reduced the risk of capital outflows. This step was necessary to ensure national economic security and protect the domestic market from destabilising external factors. Thus, under martial law, fiscal and monetary policies, including currency control, demonstrate flexibility and adaptability to new crisis challenges. As national security is a priority, fiscal policy should consider not only economic but also military and social needs, striking a balance between supporting the economy and the financial stability of the state. The measures implemented were substantial for economic recovery and stabilisation of the national currency and remain relevant to this day.

All of these internal factors, which are mostly caused by the war, are exacerbated by external trends in the financial sector and are further complicated by the impact of global economic trends. Global inflation, rising energy prices, disruptions in supply chains and a general slowdown in economic development limit access to international markets and constrain Ukraine's ability to support its

economy in a crisis through exports. In addition, financial support from international partners, although substantial, is accompanied by requirements for reforms and budget balance, which also affect the state's fiscal policy. In particular, in March 2023, the International Monetary Fund approved a new 48-month programme for Ukraine to support Ukraine's macroeconomic stability under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) worth approximately 15.6 billion USD. The programme required Ukraine to reduce inflation, stabilise the UAH exchange rate and achieve fiscal sustainability. The programme also included a gradual transition to a revenue management strategy and investment activities necessary for the post-war economic recovery.

### **Functional principles of fiscal policy in the context of war and post-war reconstruction**

Given the above-mentioned set of domestic and global factors affecting the financial system of Ukraine, there is a need to clearly define what exactly the concept of fiscal policy includes and what its key functions are in the context of the crisis. Most scholarly works interpret the concept of fiscal policy as a set of government measures aimed to regulate the economy through the state budget, taxes and public spending to ensure macroeconomic stability, stimulate economic growth and ensure social justice. Thus, A. Zolkover *et al.* (2024) noted that fiscal policy is, first, a strategy for managing the financial resources of the state to ensure the proper performance of its functions and tasks. It is implemented by regulating taxes, expenditures, social transfers and subsidies. Each country sets its priorities for socio-economic development and, accordingly, these priorities are reflected in the choice of fiscal policy instruments. In a broad sense, fiscal policy includes the process of generating budget revenues and expenditures, managing public debt, defining fiscal rules and instruments to influence the economy through tax and budget policy.

The main functions of fiscal policy are stabilisation, distribution, resource allocation, and strategic planning. The stabilisation function is to ensure macroeconomic equilibrium by counteracting cyclical fluctuations, curbing inflation, and stimulating economic activity in a recession. In times of war, this function is of paramount importance, as the instability of the external environment and internal risks (inflation, budget deficit, and falling GDP) require a tightly controlled and predictable fiscal policy to avoid a macro-financial crisis. In turn, the distributional function is implemented through the system of taxation and transfers, which ensures the redistribution of resources between different social groups to reduce inequality and support socially vulnerable groups. In wartime, this function is critical to maintaining social stability, as poverty levels rise and the need for state support, for internally displaced persons, pensioners, military personnel and healthcare workers, becomes a dominant fiscal burden. The resource function is primarily related to the mobilisation of financial resources to fulfil the state's obligations. Tax collection, borrowing on the domestic and foreign markets, and receiving grant

aid are all channels to meet the needs of the state. In times of war, the focus shifts to ensuring defence capability, which requires a significant increase in budget expenditures on the Armed Forces, military equipment, logistics, medical services, especially for combatants and those who suffered from shelling, and medical and psychosocial rehabilitation. In such circumstances, the resource function balances between attracting internal sources of financing (primarily tax revenues, domestic borrowing) and external resources of international assistance and loans.

Emphasising the importance of the internal component of fiscal policy in times of crisis, O. Dobrovolska et al. (2024) noted that under martial law, a substantial element of activating internal factors of economic growth is tax policy, which is focused not only on fiscal goals but also on stimulating entrepreneurial activity and job preservation. The experience of the European Union shows that in crisis conditions, institutional flexibility of tax systems, adaptation of tax rates, deferral of tax payments for affected businesses, and targeted support for certain sectors of the economy are of particular importance. For Ukraine, these approaches may become relevant in terms of developing compensatory mechanisms for the recovery period, by introducing preferential taxation for small businesses operating in areas of reduced economic potential or supporting businesses integrating into the supply chain of dual-use goods.

Thus, the resource and distributional functions of fiscal policy should interact to create an adaptive but fair system of financial support in an environment of high uncertainty. In turn, the strategic function of fiscal policy involves creating the preconditions for long-term economic development by supporting capital investment, infrastructure development, education, science and innovation. Post-war Ukraine will need this function to ensure economic transformation and growth. Therefore, it is necessary to lay the financial foundation for such processes, through effective planning of public investments, interaction with international donors and investors, and ensuring transparency of financial flows. Thus, the functions of fiscal policy in times of war not only remain relevant but are also transformed according to the circumstances. Their interconnection is

becoming closer: economic stabilisation requires resource support; social equilibrium requires efficient distribution; and strategic vision requires flexible financial management in the face of uncertainty.

In the context of crisis conditions, such as war or global shocks, institutional trust, defined as the degree of public confidence in the ability of state institutions to effectively perform their functions, including in public finance, becomes especially relevant. As A. Krysovaty (2023) emphasises, the lack of trust of citizens and businesses in the government forces them to provide funds to volunteers rather than pay taxes, which makes public finances vulnerable and overly dependent on international financial assistance. Thus, a high level of institutional trust is a prerequisite for the voluntary fulfilment of tax obligations, the legitimacy of fiscal measures and the effective attraction of external financial resources.

Thus, in the current conditions of war and deep economic instability, the functional basis of Ukraine's fiscal policy is undergoing a significant transformation, reflecting the need for flexible management of state revenues and expenditures. The interaction of stabilisation, distribution, resource and strategic functions is of particular importance, as it ensures macro-financial stability, maintains social equilibrium and creates the basis for post-war development. Increasing institutional trust is becoming a key condition for the effective implementation of fiscal decisions in wartime and post-war periods.

#### Mechanisms of global influence on national fiscal policy

Given the multi-vector nature of fiscal policy functions and the growing demands on its effectiveness in times of war, the analysis of external factors that influence the processes of fiscal regulation in Ukraine is noteworthy. The external environment shapes not only the overall macroeconomic situation but also directly or indirectly determines the adaptation of public policy to changes in the global order. In this context, it is advisable to consider the mechanisms of global influence on the fiscal policy of the state, which actualise the need to revise the priorities of the national fiscal policy (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Mechanisms of global influence on national fiscal policy

Category of mechanisms	Description of the mechanisms
Financial and economic	Transmission of global inflationary waves, fluctuations in energy prices, changes in international investment, and the impact of global economic crises on the macroeconomic stability of developing countries.
Institutional and regulatory	Requirements of international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank) to fiscal discipline, transparency, public debt management and tax administration.
Geopolitical	Wars, sanctions, regional conflicts, and political instability in partner countries change the volume of international aid, lending and access to foreign markets.
Technological	The introduction of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in tax administration has changed approaches to tax control, anti-evasion and risk assessment.

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on V.P. Goryn et al. (2024), P.K. Ozili (2024)

These mechanisms have both a direct and indirect impact on national fiscal policy, causing it to adapt to changes in the global environment, especially in conditions

of high volatility, such as the war in Ukraine. The analysis of the table shows that financial, economic, institutional, and regulatory factors are dominant, requiring a

systemic restructuring of budget planning and increased fiscal transparency. In turn, geopolitical risks and technological changes create new requirements for the responsiveness of the fiscal system and the integration of innovative management tools.

The globalisation of economic processes and geopolitical changes have significantly affected fiscal policies, posing new challenges to governments in the area of public finance management. This is especially relevant for countries experiencing crises or military conflicts, where the impact of economic trends is particularly relevant. Ukraine, in the context of Russian aggression and the introduction of martial law, has witnessed unprecedented changes that necessitate a deep rethinking of the state's economic policy. The main global trends in 2025 include inflationary pressures, a decline in international trade, an increase in the number of armed conflicts in the world, political processes, including elections, in other countries, and the introduction of the latest technologies, including artificial intelligence. These factors create new conditions for the formation and implementation of Ukraine's fiscal policy under martial law.

H.S. Hryhoriev (2024) noted that in the context of globalisation, inflation has become a significant factor affecting the economies of many countries. Rising prices for energy, raw materials, and food products have led to an increase in inflationary pressures, which in turn leads to a deterioration in the economic situation. In response, countries are pursuing policies aimed to curb inflation, which, however, may harm investment processes. In addition, the decline in international trade due to economic sanctions, trade barriers and supply chain disruptions is harming the global economy, slowing the recovery of global economic growth.

Several factors, not only economic, but also political and geopolitical, have a significant impact on the stability and efficiency of national economic systems. The SIPRI Yearbook 2023 (Davis, 2023) provides a comprehensive analysis of armed conflicts that occurred in 2022, with a focus on global and regional trends and their impact on international stability. According to the report, in 2022, the number of armed conflicts in the world increased, and existing conflicts gained new momentum, which led to an aggravation of the international situation. Thus, as of 2022, Ukraine was only one of 56 countries with ongoing armed conflicts, which is five more than in 2021. At the same time, three of these armed conflicts (in Ukraine, Myanmar, and Nigeria) were classified as major conflicts with more than 10,000 deaths. The war in Ukraine is notable as it has not only become a key element of global geopolitical tension but has also created numerous economic and humanitarian problems. The report also highlights other significant conflicts, particularly in regions such as the Sahel, the Middle East and Africa, where wars have caused numerous civilian casualties and large numbers of refugees. A substantial aspect, according to the SIPRI report, is the impact of these conflicts on international stability. Armed

conflicts lead to political and economic changes that are often global in nature. For example, conflicts in Ukraine and other parts of the world have led to the imposition of international sanctions, which in turn have led to a decline in international trade, disruption of supply chains and a reduction in investment.

The impact of global factors on the economies of countries was studied by N. Reznikova & V. Panchenko (2023). They conducted an in-depth analysis of socio-economic and political transformations, including the growing energy crisis, disruptions in global supply chains, changes in the structure of international trade, and a slowdown in economic growth in Europe. Thus, the study emphasised that the Russian Ukrainian war poses a powerful threat to the global economy, causing de-globalisation, recession, inflation, payment imbalances, budget deficits, supply chain disruptions, humanitarian and migration crises, energy and food crises, as well as secondary effects of political decisions. They examined the delays in economic policy responses to these effects and analysed the impact of the war on the exacerbation of humanitarian crises, the disruption of global production and supply chains, the growing imbalance between supply and demand, and capital outflows from emerging and developing countries. At the same time, the study emphasised the need to adapt policies and strategies to overcome current challenges and ensure economic stability in the context of globalisation. In addition, the analysis of the current political process in the global and regional contexts contributed to the above political factors that have a significant impact on the economy, such as elections in countries that are world or regional leaders.

The importance of the influence of geopolitical and political factors on the global world order in general and current trends in the global economy, in particular, was confirmed by the fact that the 54<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum (2024) called the current stage of human development the era of "Global Uncertainty". One of the key catalysts for this transformation was the full-scale war in Ukraine, which became a factor of geopolitical destabilisation, caused shifts in security systems, disrupted supply chains and had profound economic and humanitarian consequences on a global scale. At the same time, the rapid development of AI, which is transforming economic models and changing approaches to work, productivity, data management, and decision-making, was identified as another determining factor of the new era. Both phenomena, war as an example of global instability and AI as an example of a technological breakthrough, symbolise polar but interconnected vectors of modern global development that create new challenges, including for national fiscal systems.

The impact of modern scientific and technological progress on the global and national economies is highlighted in the collective monograph by A.V. Lisovyi *et al.* (2024), the authors of which consider the possibilities of introducing artificial intelligence into the activities of tax authorities as an effective tool for analysis and

control. The study emphasised that AI can be used for automating the processes of identifying and assessing risks associated with tax evasion and customs violations. AI can analyse large amounts of data, detect anomalies and potential violations, which significantly increases the efficiency of control and reduces the human factor in the inspection process.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the main global factors affecting the current global and national economies directly or indirectly shape Ukraine's fiscal policy in terms of both revenues and expenditures. For example, rising prices on global markets put pressure on domestic consumer prices, which requires adaptation of tax policy. A decline in trade and logistical gaps reduces revenues from foreign economic activity. At the same time, the need to finance the defence sector in times of war creates a steady and high level of public spending, which necessitates the search for new sources of budget revenues. In the context of technological changes, the active introduction of artificial intelligence not only changes the structure of the labour market but also opens new opportunities for the digitalisation of fiscal administration (in particular, automation of tax control, identification of tax evasion risks). Thus, these are crucial for the development of an adaptive and sustainable fiscal policy capable of responding to both global challenges and the domestic needs of the national economy. Given the crucial role of these factors in the transformation of Ukraine's fiscal policy, it is necessary to analyse each in detail, addressing both the internal and external contexts of their influence.

### Inflationary pressures as a global challenge to fiscal policy

Inflationary pressure is a macroeconomic phenomenon that manifests itself in an increase in the general level of prices for goods and services, which in turn reduces the purchasing power of the national currency. From a fiscal policy perspective, inflation affects both budget revenues and expenditures. On the one hand, nominal price increases can temporarily increase budget revenues through value-added taxes (e.g., VAT). On the other hand, budget expenditures, especially fixed social payments, lose their real value, requiring their indexation or revision of funding.

Traditional instruments to combat inflation in the fiscal sphere include: 1) fiscal consolidation to reduce the budget deficit by cutting expenditures or increasing revenues; 2) targeting expenditures and prioritising financing of strategically relevant areas (defence, social protection); 3) indexation of social transfers to protect vulnerable groups; 4) revenue mobilisation by improving tax administration, combating evasion, and introducing new sources of revenue; 5) reforming subsidy policy to reduce inefficient subsidies.

The impact of inflationary pressures on fiscal policy is a substantial aspect, especially in times of war and economic instability. In the context of high inflation, governments are forced to adapt their fiscal policy to prevent excessive financial losses and ensure the stability of public finances. To stabilise its fiscal policy in the face of inflationary pressures exacerbated by war and economic instability, Ukraine has implemented several strategies, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Strategies for stabilising fiscal policy in the context of inflationary pressures in Ukraine (2022-2025)

Direction	Period	Content of the events	Aim (expected effect)	Challenges	Overall score
Optimisation of budget expenditure	2024-2025	Increased defence spending to 45%-55% of the budget; reduced funding for capital investment, culture, and sports.	Concentrating resources on critical areas of defence, humanitarian aid, and infrastructure.	Increased budgetary pressure on social sectors and limited investment potential of the economy.	Ensured fiscal mobilisation in critical sectors but exacerbated the structural imbalance in spending.
Containment of budget demand	2022-2025	Maintaining existing transfers (pensions, subsidies, IDP assistance) without expanding new payments.	Maintaining social stability without stimulating inflation.	The need to balance inflationary risks with social expectations of the population.	Negates excessive growth in budget demand but reduces the flexibility of social policy.
Refusal to monetise the deficit	2023	Reduction of the NBU's repurchase of domestic government bonds; switching to domestic and external borrowing.	Reduction of inflationary pressure and ensuring stable financing.	The need to boost the domestic debt market and maintain the trust of international partners.	Significantly reduced inflationary pressures but also increased the cost of debt servicing.
Control over budget procurement	2023-2024	Restrictions on imports in public procurement; incentives for domestic suppliers.	Reduced foreign currency demand and support for the national economy.	Potential cost increases due to limited competition and local product shortages.	Reduced foreign exchange demand and supported domestic production but highlighted the need for greater transparency of procedures.
Enterprise support	2022-2025	The eRobota programme: microgrants up to 250 thousand UAH, grants for processing, gardening, IT, and greenhouses.	Preserving entrepreneurship, creating new jobs, and supporting SMEs.	Uneven access to resources, difficulties in administering and controlling the targeted use of funds.	Maintained business activity during the war and created new jobs, especially at the local level.

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on eRobota program portal (2022), National Bank of Ukraine (2024), S. Matuszak (2024),

In other words, in the face of heightened inflationary pressures caused by the war and general economic instability, Ukraine's fiscal policy has undergone several adaptive changes. One of the key areas was the reorientation of budget expenditures. During the 2024-2025 years, the share of defence expenditures increased to 45%-55% of the total budget, which necessitated cuts in capital investment, as well as in spending on culture and sports. Such a concentration of resources on priority areas, including defence, infrastructure and humanitarian aid, ensured a quick government response to critical wartime challenges, according to the OSW Centre for Eastern Studies (Matuszak, 2024). However, the implementation of this strategy was accompanied by the risks of structural imbalances in the budget system and limited investment potential in the medium term.

At the same time, the NBU implemented a strategy to curb budget demand, which involved maintaining existing social transfers (pensions, subsidies, and assistance to internally displaced persons) without significantly expanding new payments. This maintained social stability without additional inflationary pressure on the consumer sector. At the same time, keeping expenditures at the same level posed a risk of reducing the state's ability to respond promptly to new social challenges, which is relevant in the context of population displacement, demographic changes, and the growing social vulnerability of certain categories of citizens.

A significant step was the abandonment of the practice of monetising the budget deficit. In 2022, the NBU repurchased government bonds worth about 15 billion USD, which significantly boosted inflation. In the second half of 2023, the NBU significantly reduced the volume of such operations, which significantly boosted inflation. The budget deficit was mainly financed by domestic and external borrowing, which helped to contain inflationary pressures (National Bank of Ukraine, 2023). However, at the same time, this increased the debt burden on the state, creating new risks in terms of servicing borrowings and maintaining confidence in macrofinancial stability.

Control over public procurement has also gained strategic importance. Restrictions were imposed on imports in the public sector, while domestic producers were encouraged to participate. This approach reduced foreign exchange demand while supporting domestic suppliers. At the same time, the increased localisation could have been accompanied by risks of reduced competition and thus the efficiency of budget spending.

In the context of ensuring economic resilience, support for entrepreneurship has become particularly relevant. The government's eRobota programme (eRobota programme portal, 2022), which provides microgrants for business start-up and development, has been implemented since 2022 and will continue to operate in 2025. The programme provides funding on a competitive basis for projects in the areas of processing, horticulture, greenhouse management, and IT. Applicants are required to create jobs and apply through the Diia portal. According to the Ministry of

Economy of Ukraine (2025), the programme has already implemented hundreds of projects, which have become an effective tool to support small and medium-sized businesses in times of war and have boosted economic activity at the local level. At the same time, the programme faces challenges related to limited access to funding in certain regions, uneven distribution of funds, and the need to strengthen monitoring of the effectiveness of the grants provided.

In the context of implementing the latter strategy, it is worth noting that in response to inflationary pressures, Ukraine has implemented a series of fiscal and monetary measures aimed to stabilise the economy and optimise the tax system by introducing temporary tax breaks for small and medium-sized businesses. For this purpose, Law of Ukraine No. 3813-IX (2024) was specially adopted. This law provides for temporary tax relief for businesses that continue to comply with their tax obligations even in times of war. Businesses with a high level of voluntary compliance with tax laws may receive simplified reporting requirements and reduced financial burden. It was expected that this initiative would stimulate an increase in voluntary tax payments and create an institutional basis for further expansion of the tax base. Actual results show a moderate increase in revenues from small businesses in the second half of 2024. Thus, according to the State Tax Service, in 2024, the payment of the single tax by individual entrepreneurs amounted to more than UAH 55.14 billion UAH, which is 59% higher than in pre-war 2021 (Minfin, 2025). At the same time, according to the OpenDataBot open data platform, more enforcement proceedings were registered by business entities in 11 months of 2024 regarding debt obligations to the Ukrainian budget than in the entire year of 2023: 25.2 thousand against 22.2 thousand. This is also 22% more than in the whole of 2021, when 20,600 such proceedings were opened (more than 3,000 tax debts of businesses have been pending since 2021) (OpenDataBot, 2024). In general, the situation was not stable in 2024: the annual rate of tax arrears of individual entrepreneurs was +16% compared to the previous period, and at the beginning of 2025, 42,282 entrepreneurs were burdened with tax debts, which amounted to +3.3% (OpenDataBot, 2025). Thus, the implementation of fiscal measures aimed to support entrepreneurial activity under martial law by providing tax benefits and simplifying administration for bona fide taxpayers, has shown partial effectiveness: there has been an increase in revenues from individual entrepreneurs. At the same time, the increase in the number of enforcement proceedings for tax arrears and the general tendency to accumulate arrears indicate that some parts of the business sector are limitedly resilient to the fiscal burden of the crisis. This situation highlights the need to further improve tax policy instruments, in particular in differentiated support for taxpayers based on their financial standing and level of tax discipline. It is also necessary to address regional differences related to security and logistical challenges to business activities and, accordingly, compliance with tax discipline by business entities.

The State Budget for 2023, according to Law of Ukraine No. 2710-IX (2022), set the defence sector at 43% of total expenditures, providing funds for relevant security measures. Expenditures on social programmes, including support for internally displaced persons, were increased, although their growth lagged behind the projected one due to the reallocation of budget funds for defence. This partially achieved the expected reduction in social tensions, but further targeting and efficiency of such programmes are needed.

At the same time, the government has been actively working with international partners to attract financial assistance, which helps to maintain foreign exchange reserves and the stability of the hryvnia. International financial assistance, in particular from the International Monetary Fund and partners, supports the government in financing necessary expenditures and stabilising the economic situation (security and defence: meeting the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other security forces during martial law; social payments: financing pensions, social benefits and other social programmes to support the population; economic stability: supporting economic activity, including measures to restore infrastructure and stimulate business). According to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (2024), in October 2024, the State Budget of Ukraine received 1.4 billion USD in concessional financing from international partners. This helped maintain macroeconomic stability and combat inflationary pressures amid the economic and military crisis.

### The decline in international trade and its impact on the budget system.

The decline in Ukraine's international trade is a substantial factor for Ukrainian fiscal policy, especially under martial law, when the disruption of traditional supply routes and the blockade of some ports led to a significant decrease in exports and imports. The study by H.O. Shamborovskyi (2024) analysed the current state and prospects of Ukraine's foreign trade in the context of war. The study analysed the dynamics of exports and imports, including changes in the geographical structure of trade partners, a drop in trade with the CIS countries, and increased cooperation with the EU, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The paper emphasises that one of the key factors in restoring Ukraine's trade potential is the diversification of markets, expansion of agricultural exports and integration into global production chains.

Thus, according to the National Institute for Strategic Studies (2023a), based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Ukraine's trade turnover decreased by 21.3% in the first half of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. Exports decreased by 24% and imports by 18.6%, while the physical volume of trade decreased by 36%. In 2023, merchandise exports totalled approximately 36.19 billion USD, down 18% compared to 2022, while imports increased by 14.9% to 63.56 billion USD. As a result, the negative balance of foreign trade reached 27.38 billion USD, which is 2.5 times higher than in 2022

(National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023c). In 2024, the foreign trade deficit increased to 29.018 billion USD, exceeding the corresponding figure for the previous year. The import-export coverage ratio increased only slightly from 0.57 in 2023 to 0.59 in 2024 (Ukraine's foreign trade in goods..., 2025), indicating that a deep imbalance between export revenues and import costs persisted. This data confirms that the war has had a significant impact on Ukraine's foreign trade, leading to a decline in exports, an increase in imports, and a widening trade deficit, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

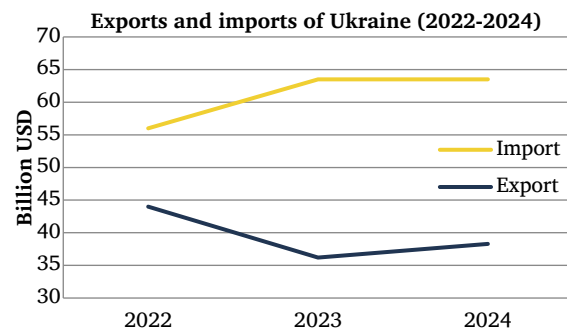


Figure 1. Dynamics of Ukraine's exports and imports in 2022-2024

Source: compiled by the authors based on materials from the National Institute for Strategic Studies (2024a)

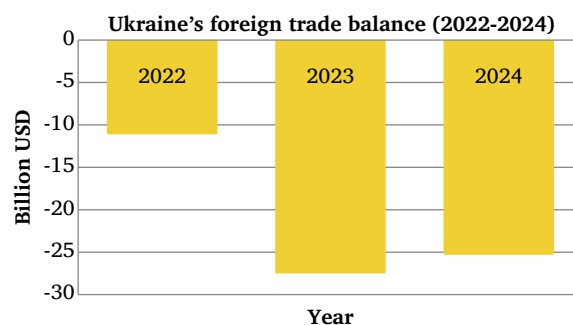


Figure 2. Ukraine's foreign trade balance in 2022-2024

Source: compiled by the authors based on materials of the National Institute for Strategic Studies (2024a)

Thus, the decline in exports resulted in a loss of foreign exchange earnings, a decline in the profits of export-oriented enterprises, and, as a result, a decline in tax revenues to the budget (in particular, income tax and VAT on exports). At the same time, the growth in imports without a corresponding increase in exports deepened the trade deficit, increased pressure on the foreign exchange market, and increased the need for external financing. Therefore, the strategic objective of fiscal policy should be not only to support export-oriented industries, but also to diversify trade destinations and stimulate the processing industry, which can increase the added value in the export structure.

In response to the decline in international trade due to the war, Ukraine took several substantial measures. One of the key decisions was to resume grain exports through

the Black Sea through international agreements, the “grain deal” with the UN and Turkey, which resumed Ukrainian supply of agricultural products to global markets and improved food security. This reduced grain shortages in the countries most dependent on Ukrainian supplies, in North Africa and the Middle East, such as Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and several Sub-Saharan African countries (World Economic Forum, 2022).

In the 2023-2024 years, the government additionally implemented several incentives to support exports: it opened an alternative sea corridor, introduced insurance coverage for ships against war risks, and established river logistics through the Danube. This resumed export flows. For example, thanks to the maritime transport corridor launched in August 2023, in December of the same year, exports by sea increased by 30.7%, or 7 million 340 thousand tonnes, compared to the previous month (Government portal, 2024a). At the same time, the legislation was amended to improve export regulation: a transparent licensing system was introduced, black schemes were eliminated, and conditions for monitoring market stability were established. In particular, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1481-r (2024) established the export licensing and quota system for 2025, whereby the Ministry of Economy determines the list of goods and quota volumes, and the State Customs Service monitors and controls compliance with export conditions. This introduction of a transparent mechanism prevented the emergence of black market, ensure the controlled return of foreign exchange earnings, and track export flows. This is indirectly evidenced by the fact that in 2024, exports from Ukraine grew by at least 13.4% in monetary terms and 28.8% in weight (Government portal, 2024b). These measures also include the introduction of an export security regime. This ensured that VAT payers correlated with exports, set minimum price standards to prevent artificially lowering the value of goods, and improved the interaction between government agencies by avoiding double control. These measures can be viewed as an effective fiscal policy tool that combines elements of regulation and support for exporters, incorporating the military context and the needs of the state.

During the war, Ukraine revised its tax regime for foreign economic activity, balancing the need for fiscal revenues with the need to maintain trade activity (Law of Ukraine No. 2142-IX, 2022). At the initial stage of the full-scale invasion (March-July 2022), the government cancelled or reduced customs duties and VAT for: fuel, humanitarian aid, and strategic equipment. This step quickly provided the necessary goods, but significantly reduced customs revenues, which traditionally accounted for a significant share of the budget. In mid-July 2022, pursuant to Law of Ukraine No. 2325-IX (2022), Ukraine began a phase of gradual refunds of duties and VAT on imported goods, including cars, fuel and machinery. The Verkhovna Rada resumed the collection of these taxes on 1 July, which restored budget revenues of over 3 billion UAH per month, previously lost due to the full or partial refusal to

make customs payments. The restoration of customs and tax discipline also helped to curb excessive imports of lower-priority goods, which at the same time supported the UAH, reducing pressure on the foreign exchange market. The adoption in April 2023 of Law of Ukraine No. 3019-IX (2023) and Law of Ukraine No. 3020-IX (2023) introduced a complete cancellation of VAT and import duties on the import of military goods (weapons, ammunition, armoured vehicles, drones, communication systems, etc.) during martial law. This decision significantly reduced the financial burden on the budget and accelerated the supply of critical resources to the Armed Forces of Ukraine through “customs priority” and simplified clearance. The positive effect on the state budget was a significant reduction in the cost of procuring critical resources for the Armed Forces, which redirected budget funds to other strategic areas, while compensating for some of the losses through international assistance and more effective fiscal policy.

#### **Escalation of armed conflicts as a factor of fiscal burden**

An equally relevant global trend is the growing number of armed conflicts in the world, which significantly affects the international assistance received by Ukraine. According to S.M. Sarbash (2023), the war in Ukraine has led to an increase in defence spending in many countries, which may affect the amount of international aid available to Ukraine. On the other hand, the growing number of global armed conflicts, in the Middle East, such as in Syria and Iraq, as well as escalating tensions in the South China Sea and the armed conflict in Tigray (Ethiopia), may change the priorities of international donors. As Ukraine’s experience shows, not only financial support but also strategic decisions on aid provision depend on political changes in donor countries, which poses certain risks to the sustainability of this support in the long term. This leads to competition for funding and other types of support between different affected countries. At the same time, donor countries such as the US, UK, EU, and others, which previously sought to maintain their assistance to Ukraine as they considered it necessary for ensuring stability in Europe and deterring Russian aggression in the international arena (Jenkins, 2023), have different political interests and internal dynamics in the new geopolitical environment, which may affect the amount and regularity of support for Ukraine. In such circumstances, the key task of Ukraine’s fiscal strategy is to maintain and strengthen partnership support by diversifying funding sources and attracting European countries’ participation in long-term security projects.

Armed conflicts in other regions of the world, including Syria, Israel and Africa, have had a significant impact on global security and the resources available to support Ukraine. These conflicts not only increased the level of global instability but also affected the international mechanisms that could be used to assist Ukraine. For instance, the war in Syria has long been a source of regional tension that has hampered diplomatic efforts to resolve other conflicts, including in Ukraine. In 2024-2025, the escalation of the

situation in Syria increased the burden on humanitarian and security resources, which in turn affected the ability of international institutions to support military and economic assistance to Ukraine (Sharifi, 2024). At the same time, the development of conflicts in Israel and the situation in Africa, particularly in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, diverted a significant portion of Western humanitarian and military resources. This has led to competition for funding at the UN, EU and donor country levels. In general, as of early 2025, these events had a significant impact on the number of resources that could be channelled to Ukraine. The only systemic response was the creation of multi-regional prioritisation mechanisms that streamlined funding depending on the strategic importance and criticality of humanitarian or defence needs. An example of such a mechanism is the European Peace Facility (EPF), which was established in 2021 to assist partner countries and international organisations. After 2022, the allocation of its resources prioritised Ukraine, while leaving some funds for other regions based on their humanitarian and security priorities (The European Peace Facility, 2023). This approach was necessary to ensure European stability in the long term. In turn, tensions on the Korean Peninsula, between North and South Korea, also affect global security. First, in early 2025, North Korea conducted a series of tests of cruise and tactical ballistic missiles and stepped up its rhetoric about its readiness to use nuclear weapons in case of a threat from the United States or South Korea (Reuters 2025a). These moves have significantly diverted international attention and diplomatic resources, potentially taking them away from other crises, including the situation in Ukraine.

Consequently, the escalation of conflicts in these regions leads to a redirection of international aid and resources, which may limit Ukraine's access to the necessary support. For instance, the war in Ukraine has increased global food insecurity, as Ukraine is one of the main suppliers of grain to the world market. This could affect Ukraine's ability to receive economic aid and support from international partners. According to the SIPRI Yearbook (Davis, 2023), there is a possibility that support for economic stabilisation, food infrastructure rehabilitation and social improvement will be limited, particularly in the context of global food insecurity caused by the war. This conclusion is due to the fact that the escalation of armed conflicts in different regions of the world is leading to a redistribution of attention, political priorities and resources of the international community. In situations where the number of simultaneous crises is growing, donor countries are forced to review their foreign aid budgets, identifying which regions require urgent support. This creates competition for limited resources between affected countries. For Ukraine, this situation poses a risk of a decrease in funding, especially if donors' attention is shifted to other priority areas (e.g., the humanitarian crisis in Africa or the conflict in the Middle East). Thus, Ukraine may face competition for international resources and reduced financial support due to priorities

focused on other regions. This impact also extends to the state's fiscal policy through changing priorities in budget expenditures, increased spending on defence and humanitarian needs, and reduced revenues from economic activity.

#### **Political processes in other countries:**

##### **Implications for external financing**

In addition to purely economic trends, political trends are equally necessary the course of the political process in countries that are global economic and political leaders and in partner countries. Among such political processes, the election results are crucial and may significantly affect Ukraine's fiscal policy, as they may lead to changes in government priorities, macroeconomic management strategy and foreign policy, in financial relations with international partners. A change in the political course after the elections could lead to a revision of the terms of international assistance, the conclusion of new agreements or even changes in the amount of financial support from organisations such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. In addition, the political situation may affect Ukraine's interaction with partner countries, which could change economic development strategies and fiscal policy.

The results of elections in donor countries significantly affect the volume and terms of external support to Ukraine, as changes in political courses in these countries may change the approach to providing financial assistance. These countries include, among others, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, and the United States. For example, the parliamentary elections in Poland in 2023 led to the re-emergence of several economic and social issues that affected relations between Poland and Ukraine, including as a reaction to Ukrainian fiscal policy (National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023b). This is due to farmers' and transport workers' protests, as well as trade conflicts that intensified in the post-election period of 2023-2024. According to the NBU's Inflation Report as of April 2024 (National Bank of Ukraine, 2024), which is an analytical source of macroeconomic assessment and forecasting, in February 2024, due to the blockade of the Polish Ukrainian border, importers lost 350-400 million USD and exporters approximately 160 million USD in the first month of restrictions alone. This resulted in a loss of customs and VAT revenues of approximately 7.7 billion UAH (~200 million USD), affecting the ability to finance defence without additional government payments. Thus, the border blockade caused a significant weakening of budget revenues and required a prompt fiscal response from the government. In response, Ukraine promptly redirected export flows and took measures to mitigate the economic impact. The government's diplomatic and fiscal response helped to reduce dependence on a single market and maintain agricultural stability in the crisis.

Among all countries, the United States had the greatest impact on the Ukrainian and global economy on the US presidential election, which resulted in the victory of Donald Trump. His coming to power was marked

by a radical revision of the US foreign policy, including a change in approaches to supporting Ukraine. In January 2025, the newly elected president suspended new aid packages to Ukraine, justifying this by the need to review defence priorities and focus on US domestic policy (The White House, 2025). This decision caused considerable uncertainty in Ukraine's budget planning, particularly in the financing of the security and defence sector and threatened the timely delivery of modern weapons. Although some military assistance was later resumed, the overall situation caused a pause in the negotiation of new support packages, accompanied by an internal political dispute in Congress (Masters & Merrow, 2024). Since the beginning of spring 2025, the United States has effectively suspended much of its military assistance, as well as limited the provision of intelligence and intellectual support, arguing that it needed to reassess its strategic priorities.

In this context, the previous dynamics of cooperation are particularly contrasting since the beginning of Russia's full-scale aggression in 2022, the United States has become Ukraine's largest donor, providing about 175 billion USD in aid, most of which was directed to defence (Masters & Merrow, 2024). This supported the operations of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and overall macroeconomic stability. However, the change in political leadership and growing isolationism in the United States have led to significant risks in ensuring sustained support for Ukraine in 2025. In response to the US restrictions, the European Union has announced its intention to increase its military assistance to Ukraine. Thus, in 2025, it announced a plan to increase military support to 40 billion EUR, which is more than double the previous year's figures. The use of Eurobond mechanisms to finance the new aid package was also considered, which demonstrates the EU's desire to compensate for the decline in US support and maintain Ukraine's fiscal stability in a highly difficult foreign policy environment (Council of the European Union, 2025).

Elections in EU member states have both positive and negative consequences for political and economic support for Ukraine in the EU. For instance, Germany's pro-Ukrainian course was strengthened after the parliamentary elections of 23 February 2025, in which the conservative CDU/CSU bloc led by F. Merz won. The latter's commitment to supporting Ukraine was confirmed during the election campaign and debates, repeatedly stressing that Europe needed to strengthen its defence capabilities independently, and Germany could not stand aside, especially if the United States put national interests above European security (Reuters, 2025b). At the same time, this provided political certainty to reduce the risk of disrupting assistance to Ukraine, a financial basis for increasing defence funding, and prospects for new initiatives, including missile programmes, participation in NATO systems, and reconstruction. For instance, in early March 2025, the Bundestag passed a large-scale package of laws on fiscal reforms, including amendments to the Basic Law and the exemption from the debt brake of more than 1% of GDP for defence and infrastructure (Rahn, 2025). This increased

German debt to finance military needs and provide military assistance to Ukraine and laid the groundwork for a long-term increase in support for Ukraine beyond traditional budgetary constraints.

At the same time, the risks arising from Ukraine's dependence on the results of elections and internal political processes in partner countries should be addressed. Among them:

- changes in international policy priorities may limit the resources available to support Ukraine;
- political instability in donor countries may limit the ability of these countries to assist at the international level;
- if the economic situation deteriorates, this could lead to a reduction or revision of the amount of assistance to Ukraine.

These factors confirm the importance of the political situation in donor countries in determining the level of support for Ukraine during the war. Thus, the analysis of the impact of the electoral process and election results in partner countries on Ukraine assessed risks and developed strategies to ensure the sustainability of fiscal policy even in the event of unfavourable political changes for the economy. To mitigate the risks associated with possible changes in the political courses of other countries, Ukraine can take several strategic steps.

Firstly, diversification of international partners. Ukraine should actively expand its diplomatic and economic cooperation with various countries, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, to reduce its dependence on certain political blocs or countries. This will maintain stability and support in the event of changes in the governments of key partner countries. For example, one of Ukraine's main partners in Asia is India. This country has stable economic development and is a substantial player on the global stage. As of 2024, cooperation with India has significantly decreased (in particular, trade in goods with India for the first 10 months of 2024 amounted to 1.45 billion USD, which is 2.5 times less than in 2021), but may include the development of trade, particularly in agriculture, as well as the strengthening of political relations through shared interests in the context of global security, as stated on the website of the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of India (2024).

In turn, South Africa is one of the most economically developed countries in Africa and a substantial trading partner of Ukraine. Cooperation between Ukraine and South Africa covers several strategic areas, including agriculture, energy and international security. South Africa is key in the region and can help expand Ukraine's influence on the African continent. Mutual trade between the countries has prospects for development due to the opportunity for Ukraine to export its products, in particular agricultural products, as well as other goods that meet the needs of South Africa, according to the website of the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of South Africa (2024).

Argentina is one of Ukraine's largest trading partners in Latin America, particularly in the agricultural sector. Ukraine actively exports grain, oil and other agricultural products to Argentina. In January-October 2023, the

volume of trade in goods amounted to 49.4 million USD. Argentina also has significant potential for cooperation with Ukraine in the fields of science, engineering and energy, according to data on the website of the Embassy of Ukraine in the Argentine Republic (2023).

Second, deepening cooperation with international financial institutions. Ukraine can strengthen its ties with institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the European Investment Bank to have access to financial assistance even in the event of changes in the political situation in partner countries, according to the article. This will ensure the stability of economic support in the face of international uncertainty. In 2024, Ukraine received significant financial support from international partners. According to the National Institute for Strategic Studies (2024b), on 3 July 2024, the state budget received the fifth tranche from the IMF in the amount of about 2.2 billion USD. This was the fifth tranche of the IMF's Extended Fund Facility programme. In addition, on 27 December 2024, Ukraine received a tranche of 485 million USD from the World Bank. The World Bank provided a tranche of 485 million USD under the Public Expenditure Support for Enhanced Accountability and Sustainable Governance in Ukraine (PEACE in Ukraine project) (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2025). These steps demonstrate the deepening of Ukraine's cooperation with international financial institutions, which ensures the stability of economic support in the face of international uncertainty. In 2025, cooperation with international donors, including the World Bank, was further developed. According to the updated assessment of recovery needs presented in the fourth Russian Invasion Damage and Needs Assessment Report (RDNA4) prepared by Ukraine jointly with the World Bank, the recovery and reconstruction priorities for 2025 include both public investment projects and non-investment programmes totalling 17.32 billion USD. These cover the most urgent recovery needs. At the same time, funding in the amount of 5.46 billion USD was provided for public investment projects in 2025. 5.46 billion USD was provided for public investment projects in 2025, and 1.91 billion USD was provided for non-investment priority programmes in 2025. (7.37 billion USD in total) (World Bank..., 2025). The World Bank continues to mobilise external assistance and financial resources as part of its comprehensive support for Ukraine. Since 2022, the Bank has accumulated more than 80 billion USD of assistance. The Bank has accumulated more than 80 billion USD of assistance since 2012 and, in 2025, announced its readiness to deploy new funding packages under the Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund (URTF), as well as other financial resilience mechanisms (World Bank Group, 2025).

Third, active diplomacy to strengthen international support. Ukraine should actively work to strengthen its diplomatic ties with key partners, both states and international organisations, regardless of political changes in these countries. Ukraine is currently working in this direction to implement as many activities as possible. An example of

this is the International Cultural Diplomacy Forum (2024), which took place in Kyiv on 8 October 2024 and was organised by the Ukrainian Institute in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. This annual event brought together leading experts from Ukraine and other countries to discuss ideas, practices, challenges and the future of international cultural diplomacy and cultural relations. Another example is the annual Ukraine Recovery Conference (2025), which, since 2017, has been a substantial platform for attracting international support and discussing ways to restore and develop Ukraine after the crisis. Participation in the conference will actively promote Ukrainian interests in the international arena, strengthen diplomatic ties and attract international support for the implementation of national goals. These strategies will help Ukraine maintain fiscal sustainability and stability in the event of changes in the international political situation.

#### **Implementation of AI:**

##### **Risks and opportunities for the tax system**

Among the innovative trends, it is worth noting the development of ICT, as well as the rapid introduction of its technology, such as artificial intelligence, which is becoming a substantial element in the formation of fiscal policy, particularly in Ukraine. Thus, the study by O. Lukianykhina *et al.* (2024) emphasised that Ukraine is actively integrating digital innovations such as blockchain and AI into its fiscal policy to increase transparency, efficiency and fight corruption. These technologies are regarded as key to modernising the economy and ensuring sustainable economic development. Among other things, blockchain and AI, in their view, promise a new era of fiscal policy characterised by enhanced security, transparency and operational efficiency. These modern tools offer innovative ways to improve tax collection processes, reduce fraud and increase overall fiscal transparency. It is worth noting that Ukraine is already implementing a roadmap for regulating AI developed by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine (Roadmap for regulating..., 2024), which is focused on supporting the competitiveness of Ukrainian companies, protecting the rights of citizens and integrating into European legislation. The approach is based on the creation of tools for regulatory preparation, including methodologies for evaluating AI systems, regulatory sandboxes for testing, and recommendations for various sectors of the economy. This can be used to adapt the system to new challenges in fiscal policy, increasing the efficiency of public resource management and reducing costs by automating processes and forecasting economic risks.

Automation of tax processes and the use of technology to detect tax violations can reduce administration costs and increase the accuracy of determining tax liabilities. In particular, the World Economic Forum (2022) noted that the Ukrainian tax system is actively implementing AI-based systems to monitor financial transactions and detect violations, which contributes to more transparent and efficient tax collection. The introduction of AI can be used

for automation of routine tasks, such as processing declarations, which reduces the burden on tax officials and increases the speed of information processing, and is substantial in reducing bureaucratic costs and improving the

tax collection system, which is critical for countries experiencing an economic crisis. Examples of innovations using AI tools that Ukraine has already implemented to improve tax administration are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** AI tools to improve tax administration in Ukraine

No.	Tool	Description	Effect
1	Automated risk analysis system (Big Data Transfer Pricing)	The State Tax Service, together with EU4PFM, has implemented the Big Data Transfer Pricing IT system. Automated algorithms can quickly identify risky transactions used by multinational companies to transfer profits from Ukraine to low-tax jurisdictions.	Increase control efficiency; reducing the human factor; detection of abuse; minimising the burden on bona fide taxpayers.
2	Single window for submitting electronic reports (e-audit)	A single window system for declarations with an e-audit module for automatic verification of data accuracy and compliance was introduced.	Automation of routine checks; reduced time for processing reports; improved accuracy.
3	Analytical panels of the NACP and the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine	The Prozorro service uses AI to monitor tenders and budget expenditures, while the NACP analyses declarations for corruption risks.	Increasing transparency; prevention of corruption; support for independent audits and budget control.

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on the State Tax Service of Ukraine (2024), Main Department of the State Tax... (2025)

Thus, the introduction of innovative technologies, including artificial intelligence systems, is strategic in transforming Ukraine's fiscal policy in the context of war and economic instability. The use of AI in the tax area contributes to increasing the transparency of public financial management, reducing administrative costs, automating routine processes, and improving the efficiency of tax collection.

#### **Systematisation of existing approaches to identifying the main global trends and their impact on the current fiscal policy in Ukraine**

To summarise the impact of global trends on Ukraine's fiscal policy, it is worth focusing on several key aspects. The first and most obvious factor is inflationary pressure. It is seen as a systemic factor that reduces the investment attractiveness of countries and forces governments to tighten monetary policy (Hryhoriev, 2024). However, in the Ukrainian context, this problem has its specifics: it is necessary to balance the rapid growth of defence spending with the fulfilment of social obligations. This brings to the fore the adaptability of fiscal mechanisms, which have not been adequately covered in previous studies. Therefore, the adaptability of fiscal decisions may become a non-standard, but critically substantial mechanism.

The second relevant challenge is the decline in international trade, which, as noted by N. Reznikova & V. Panchenko (2023), is due to de-globalisation, the destruction of logistics chains, and the rise of protectionism in the global economy. Ukraine suffered particularly severe consequences in the form of a sharp drop in exports after the outbreak of full-scale war. In this context, diversification of foreign trade should be viewed not only as an economic but also as a fiscal strategy to reduce the budget's dependence on vulnerable markets and stabilise revenues. This issue remains open but approaches to using foreign trade as a tool for fiscal stability are worth further study.

The next aspect is the growth of armed conflicts in the world. The war in Ukraine is not the only military confrontation in the world, and this affects the distribution

of international aid. S.M. Sarbash (2023) highlighted that increased geopolitical tensions lead to competition for international support resources, making it more difficult for Ukraine to access stable funding. SIPRI data (Davis, 2023) confirms the correlation between the intensity of armed conflicts and changes in the foreign economic policy of states. Therefore, new concepts of financial self-sufficiency are becoming relevant. Ukraine may consider options for internal financial reserves to reduce its dependence on external factors. This is proposed in the current study as an alternative strategy in case of a decrease in external assistance, which is a new direction of fiscal sustainability in war.

Another substantial point is the political processes in donor countries. N. Reznikova & V. Panchenko (2023) noted that political cycles in partner countries, such as the US and the EU, directly affect the amount of financial assistance to Ukraine. Changing governments or policy reorientation often reduces the willingness to support long-term financing. S.M. Sarbash (2023) adds that foreign aid becomes a "variable" subject to electoral preferences. Although political decisions are often unpredictable, institutionalising foreign aid through international agreements could make the process more stable and less dependent on domestic political changes in partner countries, thereby being used as a stabilising instrument.

A substantial technological trend is the introduction of artificial intelligence tools in fiscal policy. A.V. Lisovyi *et al.* (2024) and A. Shapovalova *et al.* (2024) believe that the automation of control and the use of artificial intelligence significantly improve the fight against shadow finance. The use of AI is not only technically crucial, but also strategically relevant, as it forms the basis for transparent post-war reconstruction and effective crisis finance management.

Each global trend creates new challenges for Ukraine, but at the same time opens opportunities for adaptation and improvement of fiscal policy. The results of the study indicate the need to revamp approaches to Ukraine's fiscal policy in the context of global transformations, with a



focus on increasing adaptability, ensuring domestic financial sustainability, institutionalising international support, and strategically introducing innovative technologies.

### ■ Conclusions

The comprehensive study analysed the impact of global economic trends on Ukraine's fiscal policy in the context of martial law and instability and assessed the effectiveness of current measures. The study identified key global factors (inflation, trade decline, armed conflicts, political changes, technology), analysed their impact on the budget, tax system and international aid, and proposed adaptation strategies.

The study examined the impact of global trends on Ukraine's fiscal policy during the war. Inflationary pressures, a decline in international trade, increased defence spending, the effects of political changes in partner countries, and the role of artificial intelligence in the tax system were analysed. The study determined that the war has significantly worsened economic performance, due to a drop in exports and an increase in debt. At the same time, adaptation measures (international assistance, tax reforms, and technology) were helping to stabilise the situation.

The results obtained emphasise that Ukraine's fiscal policy needs flexibility to counter global challenges. The study revealed interrelations between global trends and national economic policy in times of crisis, which is necessary for public administration and international cooperation. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the impact of major global trends on Ukraine's fiscal policy in a state of martial law, adaptive approaches to public finance management were developed, in particular regarding: optimising the structure of budget expenditures with a priority on defence and humanitarian areas; strengthening tax administration using digital tools; attracting external financing for strategic needs; supporting small and medium-sized businesses through grant and tax programmes. The interrelationships between key global processes, such as inflationary pressures, the decline in international trade, the rise of armed conflicts, political events around the world and

the introduction of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, have been systematised, demonstrating their practical reflection in Ukrainian fiscal policy: increased defence spending, increased debt burden, changing priorities for public investment, more difficult access to external markets, and new requirements for transparency and efficiency. The study pays particular attention to assessing the potential of artificial intelligence in fiscal administration. It shows that the introduction of AI technologies, for the automatic detection of tax risks, revenue forecasting and tax compliance monitoring, contributes to increasing the effectiveness of fiscal control, reducing the human factor and increasing the level of voluntary tax compliance. Such innovations are already being used in the digital services of the State Tax Service and make it possible to improve tax transparency and reduce budget losses. The impact of geopolitical instability caused by the growing number of international conflicts on the level of assistance provided by Ukraine's partner countries and on ensuring the stability of the national fiscal system has also been clarified.

Thus, global economic trends have a direct impact on fiscal policy, but require additional research in the context of Ukraine, especially under martial law, where the stability of public finances and the adaptation of the tax system to new economic realities become a critical task for ensuring the country's economic security. Further research could address the development of more detailed strategies for adapting Ukraine's fiscal policy to long-term challenges, including post-war recovery and integration into the global economy, as well as studying the impact of new technologies on the tax system and public finances.

### ■ Acknowledgements

None.

### ■ Funding

The study was not funded.

### ■ Conflict of Interest

None.

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## Вплив глобальних світових трендів на фіскальну політику України в умовах воєнного стану

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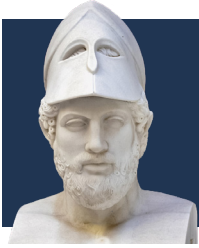
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■ **Анотація.** Аналіз впливу глобальних світових трендів, таких як скорочення міжнародної торгівлі, збройні конфлікти, політичні зміни в інших країнах та впровадження новітніх технологій, є важливим для адаптації фіскальної політики України, забезпечення ефективного управління державними фінансами та підтримання економічної стабільності в умовах воєнного стану. Мета дослідження полягала у вивченні впливу глобальних світових трендів на фіскальну політику України та розробці і обґрунтуванні рекомендацій щодо подолання їх негативних наслідків і використання нових можливостей для забезпечення економічної стабільності в умовах воєнного стану. Досліджено адаптаційні стратегії українського уряду, такі як підвищення рівня податкових надходжень, оптимізація державних витрат, залучення міжнародної допомоги та використання інноваційних технологій у податковій сфері. Оцінено вплив цих заходів на економічну стабільність, бюджетний дефіцит і довгострокові перспективи відновлення економіки. Досліджено вплив інфляційного тиску на державні фінанси, а також ефективність наявних механізмів боротьби з інфляцією та їх роль у стабілізації економіки. Окремо розглянуто наслідки скорочення міжнародної торгівлі для економіки України, що включає зниження доходів від експорту та зміни в умовах міжнародної економічної співпраці. Аналіз також охопив вплив геополітичної нестабільності, зокрема розгортання збройних конфліктів у світі, на потреби у фінансуванні оборони, що вимагає коригування бюджетних пріоритетів. Особлива увага була приділена аналізу виборчих процесів в інших країнах та їх можливому впливу на фіскальну політику України через зміну міжнародних економічних умов. Крім того, досліджено впровадження штучного інтелекту у сферу підприємництва, що може мати як позитивний, так і негативний вплив на податкову систему та бюджет, зокрема, у контексті змін у податкових надходженнях та структурі зайнятості. Результати дослідження можуть бути корисними для розробки ефективних політичних рішень, спрямованих на підтримку економічної стабільності та фінансової стійкості країни в умовах кризи

■ **Ключові слова:** глобальні економічні тренди; вибори; конфлікти; штучний інтелект; економічна стабільність; міжнародна допомога



## Administrative aspects of ensuring the right to full general secondary education: The experience of EU countries

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■ **Abstract.** The article explored the powers and activities of public authorities in EU member states (based on the examples of Spain, Lithuania, and France) in ensuring citizens' right to complete general secondary education. One of the European Union's key priorities is the creation of a common educational space. EU countries have identified the provision of accessible and high-quality secondary education as a priority and have developed mechanisms to integrate this right into their legislative and administrative practices. These efforts involved a comprehensive approach that includes effective coordination between central and local authorities, investment in educational infrastructure, support for inclusion, and the implementation of innovative teaching methods. A distinctive feature of European education is the involvement of students and parents in the governance of educational institutions, which helps to create an educational environment that meets the needs of education service users. The study identified two approaches to the organisation of secondary education in the EU: linear and staged. It also highlighted differences in the operation of educational governance models that reflect each country's unique historical, socio-economic, and political contexts. The article outlined the management features of decentralised education systems in Spain and Lithuania, where local self-government bodies also act as stakeholders in guaranteeing the right to complete general secondary education. In contrast, the French case illustrated a centralised system of educational governance, where the state regulates all aspects of educational activity – from determining curriculum content to setting overarching principles and standards for educational quality. Based on the analysis, the article formulated recommendations for optimising Ukraine's domestic system for ensuring the right to complete general secondary education in line with the best management practices of Spain, Lithuania, and France

■ **Keywords:** public administration; international experience; access to education; quality of education, educational governance

### ■ Introduction

A high-quality secondary education is only possible with an effective system of public administration that ensures proper conditions for the functioning of the educational system, transparent financing, high quality standards, accessibility,

and equal opportunities for all citizens to obtain education. The experience of European countries in guaranteeing the right to complete general secondary education is of great importance for Ukraine in the context of its aspirations for

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### **Suggested Citation:**

Ohar, N., & Petrovskyi, P. (2025). Administrative aspects of ensuring the right to full general secondary education: The experience of EU countries. *Democratic Governance*, 18(1), 48-63. doi: 10.56318/dg/1.2025.48.



European integration. The educational governance system in Ukraine remains inert, in some aspects still marked by remnants of the Soviet administrative model. In contrast, EU countries have long since identified the provision of accessible and high-quality secondary education as one of their priorities. They have developed mechanisms to integrate this right into their legislative and administrative practices through a comprehensive approach that includes effective cooperation between central and local authorities, investment in educational infrastructure, support for inclusion, and the implementation of innovative teaching methods. Therefore, amid the reform of the educational sector, rising demands for the quality of educational services, and the processes of European integration, it is crucial to examine the experience of EU member states in ensuring the right to complete general secondary education. This will allow for the development of recommendations to optimise Ukraine's education system in accordance with the best European practices.

Education is increasingly viewed not only as a tool for social development but also as a means of shaping the state's image and implementing its foreign policy. As noted by V. Pashkov (2020), European countries actively use the education sector as an element of "soft power", integrating humanitarian policy into the system of international influence. This affirms the relevance of revisiting Ukrainian educational policy in the strategic context of European integration.

The issue of ensuring citizens' right to complete general secondary education, in relation to the competences of public authorities, has attracted the attention of scholars, especially in light of Ukraine's European integration trajectory. European trends in the development of school education – both in terms of EU-wide policies and the shared or divergent characteristics of individual member states – have been examined in the monograph by O. Lokshyna *et al.* (2021). The researcher analysed not only European but also international experiences, including that of Germany and Poland, with regard to school education. She argued that the goal of education in modern conditions is not merely the transmission of knowledge, but the development of essential/key competences and qualifications. In her words, "a highly qualified specialist who meets the demands of an innovative economy and, at the same time, an active citizen capable of successfully living in a multicultural community – is the kind of product the globalised world expects from education".

The Polish case was taken as a foundation in the work of A. Rachynskyi (2022), who outlined the European standards for organising the educational process as prerequisites for integration into the EU's educational space. The scholar emphasises that the prevailing educational approach in the EU is grounded in several key principles: democracy (focus on individuality and creative thinking), relevance (education's high practical and social value), lifelong learning (absence of temporal gaps in knowledge acquisition), flexibility (adaptation to modern realities), technological

progress (use of digital technologies), and internationalisation (alignment with EU-wide standards and mutual recognition of school certificates, diplomas, etc.).

In her research, O. Shparyk (2022) examined strategic EU documents on the digital transformation of the educational environment and the feasibility of implementing these approaches in Ukraine's general secondary education system. The researcher highlighted current trends in the integration and harmonisation of school systems within the EU, including: harmonisation of school structures and curricula; ensuring the quality of school education; implementation of innovative teaching and assessment methods; digital transformation of school education; standardisation of teacher requirements and professional development; promotion of academic mobility for students and teachers; ensuring social inclusion and equal access to education; and strengthening the managerial and organisational autonomy of schools.

Noteworthy as well is the study by V.O. Radkevych *et al.* (2020), which presents a comparative analysis of European practices in vocational education as a component of secondary education, and the possibilities of their implementation in Ukraine as part of ongoing educational reforms. The authors examined organisational models of vocational education systems and contemporary types of vocational institutions in EU countries, their educational programs, and quality assurance approaches. The proposed innovations for improving Ukraine's vocational (vocational-technical) education system are particularly applicable in the post-war period.

Lithuanian authors M. Miguéns & M. Douterlungne (2021) analysed the operation of Lithuania's Education Council as a public advisory body to the parliament, substantiating its important role in shaping and implementing national education policy. The experience of Lithuania's administrative system, particularly in granting broad authority to local governments – including the organisation of open competitions for leadership positions in educational institutions – was elaborated by R. Nesterenko (2022). The researcher emphasised the need for communities to develop optimal networks of educational institutions, as this would improve service quality and optimise related budget expenditures – an especially relevant issue for Ukraine. Regarding the reorganisation of the educational network, the author noted that financial capacity, current demographic conditions, physical accessibility of institutions, and the possibility of transporting students and teachers must all be considered.

Education is a significant domain of individual, national, and global life, as it contributes both to the comprehensive development of individuals and to socioeconomic advancement. At the same time, as noted by I.S. Pyroha (2023), the diversity of approaches to organising educational systems at the international level results in considerable disparities in access to education across countries. This underscores the need to develop international legal cooperation in this area.

In her monograph, O.V. Postupna (2021) substantiated the appropriateness of introducing the concept of “public administration of regional educational systems” into the scientific discourse of public administration theory, drawing particularly on leading European practices in education governance. She noted that Ukraine already has some relevant experience and groundwork in this direction. However, the researcher contends that many issues remain unresolved and can only be addressed through a process of trial and error: “Each community must follow its own evolutionary path of development”.

The relevance of adopting the experience of European countries in diversifying the sources of funding for general secondary education institutions is emphasised in the work of A. Ramsky (2023). The author considered the implementation of fundraising projects especially noteworthy, which is highly relevant during wartime and in the context of post-war economic recovery in Ukraine. T.M. Slinko & E.V. Tkachenko (2023), having studied the state and specific legal features of the Europeanisation of Ukrainian education, concluded that Ukraine should adopt the constitutional approaches of European countries regarding education governance. After analysing the international experience of utilising education funding as a driver of economic growth in the post-war period, N. Nazukova (2023) concluded that ensuring access to quality education – as an integral component of human capital and a factor in labour productivity growth – should become one of the key priorities of national policy during Ukraine’s post-war recovery.

Thus, the analysis of the scholarly literature on the subject allows to conclude that the coverage of the managerial aspects of ensuring the right to complete general secondary education in EU countries has not yet acquired

a systematic nature. Among the existing problematic issues in the studied topic are the presence of two financing pathways – based on public and private ownership – different levels of decentralisation in governance, and a focus on specific components of securing the said right. Furthermore, the disclosure of the experiences of individual EU countries requires further generalisation and adaptation to the particular extraordinary circumstances of Ukraine.

The purpose of this article was to examine, by means of the activities of public authorities in Spain, Lithuania, and France, the peculiarities of ensuring citizens’ right to complete general secondary education in EU member states. In accordance with this purpose, the following objectives have been set: to analyse the experience of EU countries in securing the right to complete general secondary education; to elucidate the normative-legal framework; and to identify the organisational mechanisms for ensuring citizens’ right to complete general secondary education in the EU member states (Spain, Lithuania, and France). Additionally, the article aims to formulate recommendations for optimising the national system of ensuring citizens’ right to complete general secondary education.

## Materials and Methods

The study employs a comprehensive analysis of legal and administrative documents regulating the provision of the right to complete general secondary education in selected EU countries – Spain, Lithuania, and France. The research’s source base comprises pan-European legal acts governing the educational policies of EU countries regarding the assurance of citizens’ right to complete general secondary education. Additionally, the national constitutions and education laws of the chosen states were analysed (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Pan-European legal acts regulating the educational policy of EU countries concerning the provision of citizens’ right to complete general secondary education

Country/Union	Name Document
EU	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2012); European Social Charter (revised) (1996); Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (with Protocols) (1950); Recommendation No. R(85)7 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Teaching and Learning of Human Rights in Schools (1985); Council Framework Programme EU Education and training 2020 (2021); Council Resolution on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training Towards the European Education Area and Beyond (2021-2030) (2021); European Convention on the Rights of the Child (1996).
Spain	Constitution of Spain (1978); Organic Law No. 3/2020 on Education (2020).
Lithuania	Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (1992); Education Law of the Republic of Lithuania (1991) (with changes 2011, 2017, 2024).
France	Constitution of France (Constitution of 4 October 1958, 1958); Education Code (2013); Law of France No. 2019-791 “On a School of Trust” (2019).

Source: compiled by the authors

The application of content analysis to the aforementioned international documents made it possible to identify key common characteristics of the European educational

space that ensure citizens’ right to complete general secondary education. To reveal the differences and similarities in national policies (Spain, Lithuania, and France)

and education governance mechanisms in these countries, a comparative legal analysis was used. This approach allowed for uncovering the specifics of each country in guaranteeing citizens' right to complete general secondary education and the activities of public authorities in organising the educational process and ensuring quality education.

For assessing administrative approaches to implementing the right to education, the case study method was applied, focusing on Spain, Lithuania, and France as examples of decentralised, mixed, and centralised models of education governance, respectively. The comparison was conducted across parameters such as the level of decentralisation in managing the educational process, sources of funding, autonomy of educational institutions in adhering to language policies and the principle of inclusiveness. Particular attention was paid to issues of guaranteeing accessibility, inclusiveness, and quality of education.

In addition to legislative documents, political program documents of the European Commission were also analysed, notably the strategic frameworks "Education and Training 2020" and "Education and Training 2021-2030". This analysis allowed outlining goals, implementation tools, and indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of educational reforms in EU countries. To form scientifically grounded conclusions, scientific publications, monographs, and analytical reports of Ukrainian and European researchers on education governance in EU countries were included in the analysis. This also enabled integrating the findings into a broader academic context.

Using methods of analytical abstraction and generalisation, trends and practices were formulated that can be adapted to Ukrainian educational policy, considering the course of European integration, the challenges of war, and the needs of post-war recovery. Modelling, forecasting, and extrapolation methods made it possible to outline a series of recommendations for applying the experience and positive achievements of EU countries in ensuring citizens' right to complete general secondary education in Ukraine.

## ■ Results and Discussion

### Legislative foundations for the implementation of the right to secondary education in EU countries

The realisation of the right to complete general secondary education in the countries of the European Union is based on a range of international and national legal acts. The overarching legal framework is provided by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2012),

which in Article 14 proclaims the right of everyone to education, including the right to free compulsory education. This provision is mandatory for implementation in the national legislation of each EU member state, thereby establishing common standards while allowing countries to maintain their own models of implementation.

The shared goals and priorities of European cooperation in education and training are outlined in the Council Resolution on the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) (Council Resolution..., 2021). The main directions of this strategy include ensuring high-quality education, fairness, inclusiveness, and accessibility for all; creating conditions for lifelong learning and promoting mobility; enhancing the professional skills and motivation of educators; developing European higher education; as well as supporting the ecological and digital transformation of education systems. Additionally, the document emphasises support for refugees in accessing complete secondary education within EU countries.

According to Article 17 of the aforementioned Charter, equal access to education must be guaranteed for all children within EU countries. Particular attention is given to vulnerable groups, including children from ethnic minorities, asylum seekers, refugees, children in hospitals, those in care, pregnant teenagers, and children deprived of liberty. Ensuring their educational rights prioritises their integration into mainstream schools and inclusion in standard educational programs, which promotes social inclusion and reduces inequality (Charter of Fundamental Rights..., 2012). Furthermore, the EU upholds equal rights to full secondary education for persons with disabilities, as emphasised in the Charter. The 2030 plan states that "member states shall take measures to enable integration and ensure that both mainstream and special schools provide appropriate education. Furthermore, member states should demonstrate significant progress in creating inclusive and adaptive education systems" (Council Resolution..., 2021). The European Committee of Social Rights monitors compliance with this right. For example, in 2017, the Committee found a violation of the right to inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities in the Flemish Community of Belgium due to the lack of an effective remedy against denial of admission of children with intellectual disabilities to mainstream schools (Ensure inclusive..., 2024). A concise analysis of the main legislative norms of the EU in the field of education is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Pan-European legislative norms regulating the guarantee of the right to complete general secondary education

Document title	Key standards of the European education area in ensuring citizens' right to complete general secondary education
Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2012), art. 14, 21	Compulsory and free education is recognised as a fundamental right. Access to complete general secondary education, as part of "compulsory education", which must be free of charge, is confirmed. The right to continue education after basic schooling (i.e., upper secondary, specialised, or academic secondary education) is ensured. Any discrimination is prohibited, including on the grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Table 2. Continued

Document title	Key standards of the European education area in ensuring citizens' right to complete general secondary education
European Social Charter (revised) (1996), art. 10, 17	Access to general and vocational education is guaranteed. Article 17 obliges the member states to take measures to ensure the effective exercise of children's and adolescents' rights to development, including the right to education.
Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (with Protocols) (1950), art 2.	No one can be denied the right to education. The state must ensure this right without discrimination. Parents have the right to raise and educate their children according to their beliefs.
Recommendation No. R(85)7 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Teaching and Learning of Human Rights in Schools (1985)	Provision of free education; special attention to vulnerable groups of children. Emphasises the state's obligation to ensure compulsory basic education for all children regardless of their social background.
Framework Programme of the Council of the EU Education and training 2020 (2021)	Guides EU countries to reduce early school leaving rates to below 10%. Serves as a roadmap for the development of the European education system, taking into account the principles of equality, social integration, and sustainable development.
Council Resolution on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training Towards the European Education Area and Beyond (2021-2030) (2021)	Special attention is given to reducing the share of students demonstrating low proficiency in core subjects. The target is to have no more than 15% of such students across the entire EU. The goal set in ET 2020 is maintained: to reduce the rate of early school leaving (before completing full secondary education) to no more than 9%. Emphasis is placed on preventive work with students, psychological support, and parental involvement.
European Convention on the Rights of the Child (1996)	The Convention recognises the child not only as an object of care but also as a rights-holder, capable of exercising their own educational rights and participating in decisions affecting their life.

Source: compiled by the authors

In the national legal systems of Spain, Lithuania, and France, the right to education is enshrined at the constitutional level. Article 27 of the Spanish Constitution (Constitution of Spain, 1978) establishes the state's obligation to guarantee citizens' right to education without discrimination on any grounds, including religious beliefs. Similarly, articles 40-41 of the Constitution of Lithuania (Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, 1992) stipulate that the state ensures the right to free general education, and educational institutions are secular. Article 13 of the French Constitution (Constitution of 4 October, 1958) also guarantees the right of every individual to free education. According to researcher A. Lyubarets (2023), such normative provisions create the foundation for a unified approach to realising educational rights, although the specific mechanisms of implementation vary significantly. For example, France emphasises centralised state regulation, whereas Spain focuses on decentralisation and the delegation of powers to autonomous communities.

T.M. Slinko & E.V. Tkachenko (2023), analysing the legal regulation of the Europeanisation of Ukrainian education, concluded that Ukraine should adopt the experience of constitutional regulation of education from European

countries. It is worth noting that relevant documents of European countries emphasise the state's role not only in providing free education but also in ensuring non-interference in the religious upbringing of schoolchildren. That is, the constitutional principle of secular education is established, meaning the state's neutrality regarding religious matters and the guarantee of each student's right to education regardless of their religious beliefs or lack thereof. This approach is a crucial element in safeguarding human rights and freedoms in the educational sphere and aligns with the core values of the EU, particularly the principles of non-discrimination, tolerance, and respect for cultural and religious diversity. Religious education is provided based on parental choice. The Lithuanian government guarantees that religious education can take place within the framework of state secondary education. For instance, article 40 of the Lithuanian Constitution states: "State and municipal institutions of learning and upbringing are secular. At the request of parents, they conduct religious education" (Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, 1992). The main provisions of the educational legislation of selected EU countries are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Features of the normative-legal and organisational support for the right to complete general secondary education in Spain, Lithuania, and France

Country name	Legislative provision for the right to complete general secondary education	Content of laws and regulations ensuring the right to complete general secondary education
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Constitution of Spain (1978);</li> <li>■ Organic Law 2/2006 on Education (2006)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Compulsory and free secondary education (ESO) up to the age of 16.</li> <li>■ Recognition of the right to education and freedom to establish educational institutions.</li> <li>■ Three main types of schools: public schools (escuelas públicas), "concerted" schools (escuelas concertadas), and private schools (escuelas privadas). Concerted schools receive state funding and comply with national standards while maintaining certain autonomy in selecting curricula and organising the educational process.</li> <li>■ Inclusive education for students with special needs – primarily integrated into mainstream schools with provision of support.</li> <li>■ Language policy: in most autonomous communities, various models of instruction are implemented – from partial bilingual education to full immersion in the regional language (Catalan, Basque, Galician), with mandatory teaching of Spanish (Castilian) as the official state language.</li> </ul>

Table 3. Continued

Country name	Legislative provision for the right to complete general secondary education	Content of laws and regulations ensuring the right to complete general secondary education
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (1992);</li> <li>■ Education Law of the Republic of Lithuania (1991) (with changes 2011, 2017, 2024).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Compulsory free education up to the age of 16 (primary and basic education).</li> <li>■ Full secondary education (grades 11-12) is also free, although not mandatory.</li> <li>■ Universal inclusion approach: obligation to admit children with disabilities to the nearest school.</li> <li>■ Language rights of national minorities (education in the native language with mandatory study of the state language).</li> <li>■ Voucher-based student funding (“money follows the student”): the voucher covers educational expenses (teachers’ salaries, learning materials), while private schools independently finance the operational costs of their facilities.</li> </ul>
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Constitution of 4 October 1958 (1958);</li> <li>■ Education Code. (2013);</li> <li>■ Law of France No. 2019-791 “On a School of Trust” (2019).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Compulsory education from ages 3 to 16 (including école maternelle).</li> <li>■ Clear educational structure: primary school (école élémentaire), lower secondary school (collège), and upper secondary school (lycée).</li> <li>■ Inclusion: priority given to educating children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms (Law of 2005).</li> <li>■ Private schools under contract – funded from the budget while adhering to the national curricula.</li> <li>■ Strong emphasis on secular education (laïcité) and French as the sole official language of instruction, although optional regional language programs exist in some areas.</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the authors

The implementation of the right to complete general secondary education in the member states of the European Union is based on the integration of supranational legal norms and strategic guidelines with national legal systems. The legal framework for this right is formed within the broader European context, notably through the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, as well as strategic documents such as the Council Resolution on the Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training (2021-2030), which establish common objectives concerning quality, inclusivity, equal access, and mobility. At the same time, the mechanisms for implementation remain decentralised, reflecting national particularities: a centralised model in France and a decentralised one in Spain. The constitutional enshrinement of the right to education, the prohibition of discrimination, and the principle of secularism in educational institutions – with the guaranteed right to choose religious education – ensure that educational policies align with key EU values such as non-discrimination, tolerance, and respect for cultural and religious diversity. Thus, there is a discernible trend toward the formation of unified approaches to the realisation of the right to education within the European legal space, taking into account the national context.

#### Administrative models of education governance in European countries

European countries exhibit a diverse range of approaches to administrative governance in education, spanning from centralised to decentralised models. This diversity is shaped by each country’s unique historical, political, and social contexts. To harmonise policies across EU member states, particularly in education, the Open Method of Coordination is employed. Its key features include: (1) alignment of common objectives, where member states agree on general guidelines and principles; (2) use of indicators and comparative analysis, developing quantitative and qualitative metrics to assess progress toward goals;

(3) creation of national action plans, with each country formulating its own plan aimed at achieving the agreed objectives; and (4) expert evaluation and monitoring through mutual assessment of member states’ achievements to track and analyse results (Shparyk, 2024). Examining the transformational processes in school education within the European Union, researchers A. Dzhurylo *et al.* (2018) note that decentralisation of education governance is a typical feature across EU educational systems. They further argue that in most developed countries this process unfolds along three complementary pathways: involving the public in addressing education issues, strengthening the role of local education authorities in decision-making, and enhancing schools’ autonomy in managing their resources.

France exemplifies a highly centralised education governance model. The entire education policy is crafted at the central government level, particularly by the Ministry of National Education, which regulates curricula, assessment systems, teacher recruitment, and even certification procedures. As noted by M. Miguéns & M. Douterlungne (2021), this approach ensures uniformity of the educational process nationwide, minimising regional disparities but simultaneously limiting the autonomy of schools and local authorities. The centralised nature of French education has deep historical roots developed over centuries. The state not only establishes general principles but also exercises detailed control over curricula, standards, and teaching methods. Every aspect of educational activity – from curriculum content to teacher hiring procedures – is government-regulated. Teachers in France are public servants, whose selection, training, and professional development are overseen by the state. The government is the sole authority authorised to issue diplomas; certificates issued by private schools lack official recognition unless state-approved (Ministry of National Education..., n.d.).

In contrast, Spain employs a decentralised model distributing authority between the central government and autonomous communities. Seventeen autonomous

communities have the right to approve educational programs, allocate budgets for educational institutions, and appoint school leadership, while the central government is responsible for setting basic education standards. According to the Spanish Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education..., n.d.), this system allows education to be tailored to regional needs but requires high coordination across governance levels.

Lithuania occupies an intermediate position: education policy is formulated at the national level by the Seimas and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, but practical implementation is delegated to municipalities. They manage the organisation of the learning process, transportation, meals, teacher support, and infrastructure financing. R. Nesterenko (2022) noted that this model balances strategic national vision with local flexibility in addressing community-level issues.

All three models share a common trend—the involvement of parents and students in governance. In France, this occurs through participation in school councils and consultations in educational decision-making (In the Information..., 2024). In Spain, involvement takes place via school self-governance bodies, and in Lithuania, through local education councils influencing schools' strategic decisions. The publication "Citizenship education in Europe" (2012) highlighted that such participation fosters community responsibility for education and promotes an environment responsive to the needs of education stakeholders.

It is important to emphasise that despite trends toward financial independence and increased autonomy, the role of the state in education governance remains significant across Europe. Researchers A. Yurchenko *et al.* (2022) underlined that strong state control characterises European education systems. This approach ensured the unity of the educational space, compliance with minimum quality standards, and social equity in resource access. Most countries operate hybrid systems where core funding is centralised through state subsidies, while municipalities or regions handle infrastructure development, school maintenance, and adaptation of educational programs to local needs. Lithuania serves as an example, where education funding follows a "money follows the student" principle, and local authorities are responsible for providing material and technical resources. Education is a state priority and is funded at all levels. Secondary education financing is based on the cost of basic education, aligned with the implementation of curricula (also known as the "class basket"). This means approximately 80% of funding is allocated according to class size rather than per student (as before), with a small portion earmarked for textbooks and learning materials according to actual student numbers. Municipalities allocate the remaining – less than 20% – to organising and managing the educational process, providing educational support, and evaluating learning outcomes (Lithuania: Secondary..., 2024). Thus, government funding covers the majority of educational needs, ensuring equal rights to education across all regions of the country.

In France, the state centrally formulates education policy and finances teachers' salaries, while local self-government bodies are responsible for the operation of schools, particularly at the primary level. Funding is predominantly sourced from the national budget, which ensures equitable access to education throughout the country (In the Information Procedure..., 2024). Spain exemplifies a symmetrical distribution of powers: autonomous communities possess broad competencies in financing and management but operate within the framework of national objectives and standards. Regional budgets of the autonomous communities cover the majority of expenditures for general secondary education, taking into account the specific characteristics of each territory (Dzhurylo *et al.*, 2018).

Ukrainian researchers, analysing these models, emphasise the relevance of their implementation in the Ukrainian context. For instance, in the work of A. Yurchenko *et al.* (2022), the importance of an institutional approach to managing school financing was highlighted, based on a combination of state regulation and school autonomy, alongside the mandatory introduction of an expenditure efficiency assessment system. The authors also drew attention to the need for greater transparency in the distribution mechanisms of educational subsidies and improvements in inter-budgetary transfers. Similarly, O.A. Demyanyshina *et al.* (2023) stressed the importance of utilising international experience in financing general secondary education, particularly through targeted grants, public-private partnership mechanisms, and financial incentives for schools in rural and disadvantaged regions, which allow for more effective equalisation of access to quality education across territories.

For Ukraine, which is undergoing a decentralisation process, it is crucial to consider Spain's experience in devolving powers to local communities as well as Lithuania's example of effective cooperation between central authorities and municipalities. At the same time, centralised elements, as seen in France, may be appropriate for unifying educational standards at the national level. A combination of these models will enable Ukraine to achieve a balance between flexible governance and nationwide educational quality.

### **Practices of inclusivity, mobility, and vocational education**

One of the key values of the European Union's educational policy is ensuring equal access to education for all population groups, particularly vulnerable ones. All EU member states adhere to the principles of inclusion, integration, and mobility as fundamental components of the modern European educational model. Inclusive education is increasingly regarded not only as an element of the contemporary humanistic educational paradigm but also as a clearly established international legal obligation of states, especially those within the European Union. All EU member states have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), which in article 24 mandates that states provide inclusive education at all levels and guarantee that "persons with disabilities are not excluded from

the general education system on the basis of disability". The formation of an inclusive educational environment in Europe is based on the principles of human rights, equal opportunities, and social cohesion, the implementation of which requires systematic intersectoral cooperation.

In France, the inclusive education system provides support for children with special educational needs through the mechanism of a personalised schooling plan (PPS – *Projet personnalisé de scolarisation*), the involvement of student assistants (AESH – *Accompagnants des élèves en situation de handicap*), and the establishment of inclusive units called ULIS (*Unité localisée pour l'inclusion scolaire*) within mainstream schools. These elements are defined in the Education Code and legislation (Law of France No. 2005-102, 2005; Education Code, 2013). The inclusive education model in France is founded not only on legislatively enshrined provisions but also on the operation of an extensive support system that includes mainstream educational institutions, specialised medico-psychological services, and local government authorities. Educational programmes in France were adapted to the needs of various social groups, including children with special educational needs (SEN), children from migrant families, and members of national minorities. The state funds special programmes and ensures the training of educators who work with these categories of students (France: Special Education..., 2024). Inclusion is a significant principle of secondary education in France, to which the second chapter of the Education Code is dedicated (Education Code, 2013). The education of each child with SEN follows an individualised plan approved by the parents (and, if possible, the student themselves). These children also have the opportunity to complete upper secondary education and receive vocational training. Furthermore, according to legislation, "the state education service ensures the presence in each institution of one or more coordinators or referents for the admission of children with nervous system disorders to facilitate better integration into the regular environment".

In accordance with the updated version of the Education Law of the Republic of Lithuania (1991), guarantees the right of children with SEN to study in mainstream schools by implementing practices of individualised learning and support through special educators and speech therapists. Particular importance is given to cooperation between municipalities and psychological services, reflecting the interdepartmental nature of inclusion. Within municipal responsibilities, transportation to schools, free meals, and support for students with SEN are organised, including the adaptation of curricula to individual student needs, access to assistive devices, technical equipment, additional educators, psychologists, and assistants (Overview: Lithuania, 2024). However, as noted by R. Nesterenko (2022), the country faces a shortage of specialists for the full implementation of inclusion. The Lithuanian government acknowledges certain shortcomings in fully ensuring the right to secondary education, especially concerning inclusive education. Open recognition of these issues fosters

targeted efforts to address them, aiming to guarantee all children equal access to secondary education. Simultaneously, the system envisages active involvement of parents and the community in managing inclusive programmes.

In Spain, following the adoption of the educational reform LOMLOE, a clear course has been set for integrating children with SEN into mainstream schools, with corresponding funding and an enhanced role for autonomous communities in the practical implementation of inclusion (Organic Law No. 3/2020, 2020). The Spanish model of inclusive education combines centralised regulatory requirements with regional autonomy, allowing flexible adaptation of educational practices to the social inclusion needs of local communities.

Thus, inclusive education in EU countries functions as a legal norm, a political commitment, and a practical strategy of state governance aimed at ensuring equal access to full general secondary education. Each country has chosen its own approach to implementing inclusion, taking into account national contexts, levels of decentralisation, and legal frameworks. Key factors for success include the availability of adequate financial mechanisms, professional support, and legally enshrined guarantees. The experience of these countries demonstrates the necessity of a comprehensive approach to inclusive policy, encompassing both legal and practical dimensions.

Equally important is the issue of providing quality education to children from remote and sparsely populated regions. In Spain, educational institutions are allowed to add or modify subjects within the standard curricula to adapt them to the needs of local communities (Overview: Spain, 2024). Special attention is paid to pupils in rural areas and on islands, for whom specific logistical and pedagogical solutions are provided. The particularities of rural and island schools are considered, ensuring they have the necessary resources and organisational systems to meet their special needs and guarantee equal opportunities. In rural and island areas where deemed appropriate, schooling may be conducted in a municipality near the student's place of residence to ensure educational quality (Spain: Secondary and post-secondary education, 2025).

Spain's decentralisation of educational governance shows that delegating certain powers to the local level allows for more effective responses to regional needs and community involvement in educational management. Particular focus is given to supporting schools in remote areas and communities with low student populations. Spain emphasises the necessity of equipping such institutions with adequate resources, qualified teachers, and modern infrastructure, thereby guaranteeing equal access to quality education. This approach accounts for the country's territorial fragmentation, uneven population distribution, and varying levels of infrastructure provision for educational services. Students in geographically vulnerable regions face limited access to secondary and specialised education, inclusive services, qualified teaching staff, and digital resources. In light of this, the Spanish Education Law

(Organic Law No. 3/2020, 2020) provides for compensatory measures aimed at guaranteeing equality of access to quality education for all population groups regardless of their place of residence. This strategy contributes to reducing educational inequality, supporting socially vulnerable groups – including national minorities and children with SEN – and ensuring territorial balance within the country's educational space. According to the Government of Spain (n.d.), students have the opportunity to choose schools not only based on their place of residence but also according to the school's educational profile, technological equipment, and level of inclusivity, thereby enhancing accessibility and competitiveness of educational institutions.

For Ukraine, this could serve as a foundation for addressing the issue of inequality in access to educational services between urban and rural areas. It is essential to intensify focus on small-scale rural schools by creating additional incentives and resources for them. This may include the introduction of mobile educational centres, equipping such schools with modern technologies for distance learning, as well as attracting qualified teachers through specialised support programmes. Ukraine needs to enhance attention to small rural schools by providing them with extra incentives and resources. This could encompass implementing mobile educational centres, outfitting these schools with state-of-the-art technologies for remote learning, and recruiting qualified educators via dedicated support initiatives.

A pressing issue for European education is the provision of secondary education for refugee children. A critical element in this context is their linguistic adaptation. In France, Spain, and Lithuania, this forms an integral part of integration policies aimed at ensuring the effective inclusion of newcomers within the education system. Each of these countries employs different mechanisms aligned with their national approaches to integration, levels of decentralisation, and resource capabilities. In France, specialised units – UPE2A (Unités pédagogiques pour élèves allophones arrivants) – operate for migrant children, offering intensive French language instruction alongside integration into mainstream classes. Textbooks and learning materials are adapted for allophone students, and support continues until they achieve sufficient language proficiency (Overview: France, 2025). In Spain, schools provide “aulas de enlace” (transition/adaptation classrooms) for foreign children who do not speak Spanish. In these classes, students acquire language skills and gradually integrate into the main curriculum. The language policies of bilingual regions (Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia) require adaptation not only to Spanish but also to regional languages, presenting additional challenges (Overview: Spain, 2025). In Lithuania, preparatory groups or individual Lithuanian language lessons are organised for refugee children to facilitate linguistic adaptation. Upon completion of the adaptation period, they join mainstream classes. Educational institutions often provide psychological and social support to help students adapt not only linguistically but also emotionally and culturally (Overview: Lithuania, 2024).

Alongside strengthening inclusive approaches, the educational policies of EU countries increasingly focus on adapting general secondary education to labour market needs, which drives the enhancement of vocational components within its structure. Rather than the traditional model, where secondary education mainly fulfilled academic and preparatory functions for higher education admission, there is now a rethinking of secondary education as an autonomous level capable of fostering essential life skills, civic competencies, and foundational professional qualifications.

Thus, in France and Spain, models are implemented whereby general education programmes are supplemented by vocational modules, enabling students to simultaneously obtain a full general secondary education certificate and a basic vocational qualification. This fosters differentiation of educational trajectories and increases individualisation of the learning process, responding to contemporary labour market demands. In Lithuania, this integration is even more pronounced: vocational training elements are introduced within compulsory secondary education, promoting early identification of students' abilities, boosting motivation to learn, and reducing risks of early school leaving. Furthermore, the division of general education into three levels – ISCED-1 (primary), ISCED-2 (lower secondary), ISCED-3 (upper secondary) – allows learners to attain the level suited to their needs. Notably, unlike most EU countries where vocational education is the final, non-compulsory level of secondary schooling, in Lithuania it begins during the last two years of compulsory secondary education, thereby supporting comprehensive personal development (Lithuania: Secondary..., 2024). Accordingly, general secondary education serves not only academic but also preventative, orientational, and socialising functions. In summary, contemporary general secondary education in EU countries increasingly operates as a multifunctional space for cultivating key competencies, providing students with conditions for educational self-determination, adaptation to shifting socio-economic circumstances, and further professional growth.

Another vital component is the promotion of educational mobility – the ability of students to continue their studies in another EU country without losing academic status. This is realised through the harmonisation of curricula, unified assessment approaches, and support for multilingual environments in schools. As noted by S. Gaušas *et al.* (2022), the practice of implementing “European hours” fosters the development of European identity and intercultural integration. For the European Union, a priority task is creating a common educational space that ensures students can continue their education in any member state if necessary. To achieve this, the European Council defines core competencies that learners should master and establishes fundamental approaches to integrating member states' education systems. The European Commission actively supports these processes by funding various programmes aimed at introducing innovations in school education. Particular attention is given to establishing multilingual classrooms, addressing the issue of forced interruptions in

education, fostering healthy school environments, and organising international programmes for teacher training and experience exchange. Moreover, EU institutions, in cooperation with national governments, back initiatives aimed at further integrating member states' school systems and improving specific aspects of the educational process, such as the use of digital technologies, development of inclusive education, and adaptation of curricula to contemporary societal challenges (Lyubarets, 2023). This approach promotes the harmonisation of education systems across Europe and guarantees equal access to quality education for all students, regardless of their country of residence.

### Comparison of the educational systems of France, Spain, and Lithuania within the European educational area

Analysis of the implementation of the European education area in the sphere of complete general secondary education demonstrates that the governance context significantly influences the accessibility, inclusivity, and quality of educational systems in EU countries. France maintains a centralised governance model, where the state sets educational standards and funds schools, while municipalities are responsible for infrastructure. Individualised support programs (PPS/PPRE) and the existence of inclusive ULIS classes have succeeded in integrating over 80% of students with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream schools, underscoring the effectiveness of the centralised system in providing access to secondary education even for vulnerable groups (Overview: France, 2025). In Spain, secondary education operates under a decentralised

decentralised model: the national law LOMLONE (Organic Law No. 3/2020, 2020) establishes the framework, while autonomous communities implement policies adapted to local conditions. Although autonomy facilitates regional adaptation, it also generates inequality: infrastructure quality, staff training, and inclusivity vary significantly between communities (Overview: Spain, 2024). Lithuania has a hybrid governance model: policy principles are centrally formulated, while municipalities implement them through a “pupil basket” funding mechanism. This creates a balance between national equality and local adaptability. However, as reports indicate, there remains significant disparity between urban and rural schools, with infrastructure and support for SEN children still weak in certain districts (Overview: Lithuania, 2024). Thus, the implementation of the European Education Area in France, Spain, and Lithuania confirms that system effectiveness depends on balancing centralised regulation, local autonomy, adequate resource provision, and a focus on inclusivity.

To systematise national approaches to the legal framework ensuring the right to complete general secondary education, a structured comparison of the legislative provisions of Spain, Lithuania, and France was conducted. Table 4 presents the main regulatory acts governing this sphere in each country and outlines key features of their substantive content. This format allows for summarising existing models of legal regulation and provides a foundation for further analytical reflection on the potential adaptation of corresponding European practices within the context of Ukraine's national education policy.

**Table 4.** Comparative table of education systems in Spain, Lithuania and France

Parameter	Spain	Lithuania	France
Management model	Decentralised (autonomies possess educational authority)	Mixed: strategy is national, implementation is by municipalities	Centralised (management through the Ministry of Education)
Legal framework	The Constitution of Spain, the Education Act	The Constitution of Lithuania, legislation on education	The Constitution of France, the Education Code
Education funding	Mainly at the level of autonomous regions	Mainly centralised, with elements of local co-financing	Mainly centralised with subsidies to private schools
Inclusion and support for persons with special educational needs (SEN)	Special conditions for rural and island schools	A system has been developed that includes: the right to education at the place of residence, an individual learning programme, the formation of teams of special pedagogical and psychological support and a student assistant, but there is a shortage of specialists.	Individual educational pathways – PPS – are developed with the participation of an interdisciplinary team (MDPH commission – Maison Départementale des Personnes Handicapées). Support for persons with disabilities – AESH profession – support worker for students with disabilities. Funded by the state. Specialised ULIS classes within mainstream schools, where part of the teaching is adapted and part is integrated with the main class. Institutional support Regional academic education authorities (académies) are responsible for implementing inclusion policies at the local level.
Professional education	Within the framework of comprehensive secondary education (upper secondary school)	It begins within the framework of compulsory education.	General, technological and professional areas in the final stage of school
Public participation	Active participation of parents and students in school self-government	Participation of local councils, parents and community organisations in policy development	Participation through school councils, Cnesco (Centre for Educational Research)
Language adaptation	Not highlighted as a separate programme	Implemented through support for students from different regions	Special classes for migrants (UPE2A), intensive French language learning

**Source:** created by the authors based on an analysis of educational legislation

The conducted comparison of the legal and regulatory foundations for implementing the right to complete general secondary education in France, Lithuania, and Spain revealed the presence of different models of governance, financing, and inclusion organisation, which could be valuable for adaptation in the Ukrainian context. A common feature across all three countries is the legal establishment of compulsory basic education, as well as the existence of legal mechanisms supporting children with special educational needs (SEN). At the same time, Lithuania predominantly employs a decentralised financing model based on the principle of “money follows the student,” granting municipalities greater authority over the management of educational infrastructure. This practice of delegating powers related to infrastructure and financing to municipalities demonstrates the effectiveness of decentralisation while maintaining unified national standards. France exhibits a high level of centralisation in educational policy, combined with legally guaranteed inclusion at all levels. This experience could be useful for Ukraine in strengthening a systemic approach to ensuring equal access to education. Spain, meanwhile, implements a hybrid model that combines unified national standards with regional governments’ autonomy in implementing educational programs. This model allows for adapting educational policy to linguistic, cultural, and social particularities, which is especially relevant for Ukrainian regions with diverse demographic compositions.

#### **Rationale for the relevance of considering this experience for Ukraine**

Given that successful integration of the Ukrainian education system into the European and global educational space requires Ukraine to shape its educational policy in accordance with global trends (Kremen *et al.*, 2020), it is advisable to consider the experience of Spain, Lithuania, and France in ensuring the right to complete general secondary education. These countries implement a range of practices that can be effectively adapted within the Ukrainian educational context. Despite differing governance models – from the high centralisation in France to the decentralised management in Spain – they have demonstrated effective instruments for ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in education.

Foremost, Ukraine should pay particular attention to Spain’s experience of granting substantial powers to local self-government bodies in educational management (Spain: Secondary and post-secondary..., 2025). This approach allows for better accommodation of regional specificities, enhances decision-making flexibility, and brings services closer to the end-user. According to the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports (n.d.), effective decentralisation requires the preservation of unified national standards and regular interregional coordination – principles that could also be implemented in Ukraine within the framework of its ongoing decentralisation reform.

Turning to the topic of decentralising public education administration in Ukraine, O.M. Potapova (2024) identified a key issue as inadequate coordination among government

authorities, educational stakeholders, and civil society organisations aimed at aligning the needs of educational service consumers with the state’s human capital development goals. The researcher emphasised that this problem is exacerbated by the institutional weakness of local self-government, a challenge that has become even more pronounced amid wartime conditions. A.O. Yarosh (2018), after analysing European experiences in organising general secondary education in developed countries, concluded that Ukraine should transfer as many management functions as possible to the operational level – that is, to the general education institutions themselves – granting them maximum autonomy in decision-making concerning school management and financial resources. The researcher underscored the importance of school autonomy in financial management and a strategic approach to modernising the learning environment. Such measures would positively impact the quality of educational services and the efficiency of resource utilisation.

Complementing this, the findings of O.A. Demyanyshina *et al.* (2023) demonstrated the effectiveness of European budgetary financing models, particularly the subsidy-based approach, mechanisms of financial decentralisation, and targeted educational investments. The authors highlighted education’s role as a driver of sustainable development, noting that funding general secondary education in the EU is regarded as a strategic investment in human capital. Incorporating these practices could enhance the effectiveness of Ukraine’s state education policy, especially in the context of post-war recovery, expanding community autonomy, and the imperative to provide quality and accessible education for all.

The Lithuanian experience is especially valuable in the context of cooperation between central authorities and municipalities. Owing to a model whereby the Seimas and government define the overarching strategy and municipalities are responsible for its implementation, equal access to education is ensured across all regions. This approach is particularly relevant for Ukraine given the significant disparities between urban and rural schools, as well as the need to restore educational services in war-affected communities.

Since 2019, France has operated a national centre for evaluation, analysis, and support of state education policy – the French National Education Research Centre (Cnesco) (Who are we?, 2023). Its primary objective is to foster a deeper understanding of the functioning of both French and international school education systems and to disseminate educational research findings aimed at raising academic achievement levels among all students. This organisation acts as a liaison between the research community, educators, and policymakers, facilitating interaction between theoretical knowledge, practice, and strategic educational decisions. The existence of such an institution, funded by both government and private donors, enables the assessment of access to quality education nationwide, the analysis of new foreign approaches, and the introduction of best practices into the national system. The French



model merits attention for its unification of educational programmes, quality control mechanisms, and the establishment of systems for linguistic and inclusive adaptation for vulnerable groups. The creation of specialised classes, teacher training for working with children with special educational needs, and the development of national monitoring mechanisms (as exemplified by Cnesco) are practices potentially highly beneficial for Ukraine, particularly in light of the large numbers of internally displaced persons, children with disabilities, and socially vulnerable learners.

Moreover, the practice of combining general and vocational education, as implemented in France, Spain, and Lithuania, could be instrumental in revising Ukraine's educational trajectories. This approach enables the provision of both broad cultural preparation and early professional orientation. Taking this experience into account would allow Ukraine to build a balanced system that combines state standards with local flexibility, legal protection of educational rights with practical implementation mechanisms, inclusivity with competitiveness. As noted by A. Lyubarets (2023), the unification of the educational space at the level of basic standards does not preclude diversity in the forms of education organisation; on the contrary, it creates conditions for flexible realisation of the rights of students and parents within specific social contexts. Such a strategy will ensure genuine, rather than merely declarative, access to complete general secondary education for all citizens of Ukraine.

#### **Adaptation of the implementation mechanisms of EU countries' educational policies in the context of ensuring the right to complete general secondary education in Ukraine**

The conducted analysis indicates that EU countries have established public policies in the field of education, an essential component of which is the experience in management support and implementation of the right to complete secondary education. This experience encompasses both strategic approaches to shaping educational policy and practical mechanisms for its implementation at the central and local levels. European countries demonstrate a high capacity to reconcile nationwide goals with regional specificities, ensuring accessibility and quality of education even in the most remote areas. They employ flexible governance models that combine decentralisation, stakeholder participation, and ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of decisions taken. To implement this experience within Ukraine's educational process, it is necessary to delineate its key components and particularities of implementation, taking into account Ukrainian realities, institutional capacity, as well as the priorities of national development and the European integration course. The recommendations below are aimed at adapting and integrating the best management practices of EU countries into the national system of complete general secondary education.

First, it is essential to adapt Ukraine's regulatory and legal framework to European educational standards and

organisationally implement the best practices derived from the outlined EU experience. This entails not only modifying the content of educational legislation but also introducing procedures that ensure the right to education in accordance with principles of accessibility, non-discrimination, student autonomy, and civil society engagement. In particular, current legislative acts should be reviewed to clarify the roles of central and local authorities in educational governance, as well as to establish mechanisms that allow flexible application of EU best practices within the school environment.

Second, advisory bodies should be established, comprising state officials as well as lawyers, academics, parents, representatives of the teaching community, and possibly students. Their activities would focus on analysing educational legislation, developing proposals and amendments, discussing issues related to ensuring quality secondary education, and formulating recommendations for their resolution while considering the needs present at the local level. The involvement of diverse stakeholders will enhance the legitimacy of managerial decisions and align educational policy with the real needs of communities.

Third, the role of parents, teaching staff, and students in the governance of general secondary education institutions (GSEIs) and the local education system should be strengthened, as is characteristic of most European countries – especially those with decentralised systems. European experience confirms the effectiveness of such approaches in decentralised governance models where school communities possess tangible tools to influence local educational policy. Parental participation in supervisory boards, pedagogical self-governance, and student organisations can serve as platforms for fostering social partnership within the educational environment.

Fourth, although steps have already been taken in Ukraine to integrate vocational education as part of the final stage of general secondary education (scheduled for full implementation by 2027), it would be advisable to conduct a detailed analysis of the experience of each respective country. Particular attention should be paid to the French model, which offers expanded opportunities for students to choose educational trajectories at the stage of obtaining complete general secondary education. This approach facilitates individualised learning, enhances student motivation, and ensures a closer link between education and the labour market.

Reforming inclusive education is also appropriate. Inclusive education has been introduced in Ukraine for several years, with ongoing work involving children with special educational needs (SEN). However, to better guarantee their right to complete secondary education, it would be advisable—drawing on Lithuanian experience—to differentiate categories of specialists working with distinct groups of inclusive children, since currently the position of teacher assistant in Ukraine lacks specific qualification criteria. Furthermore, based on the French experience, children with SEN within general secondary schools should be provided the opportunity to receive vocational education depending on the nature of their inclusion.

Ukraine's education governance practice should incorporate selected achievements of the examined countries, in particular: increased focus on remote regions to ensure quality education not only in urban but also rural areas (Spanish experience); clear delineation of the volumes of state funding and funding from local self-government bodies for the education system; specification of spheres of responsibility (Lithuanian experience); codification of the educational sector (French experience); and clear division of powers regarding educational governance among central executive authorities, state bodies at the local level, and local self-government (French experience).

### ■ Conclusions

This article analyses the legislative framework ensuring citizens' right to complete general secondary education and the powers of public authorities in EU member states regarding its implementation. The experiences of Spain, Lithuania, and France are examined as examples demonstrating both the diversity of educational systems and the simultaneous European harmonisation. A review of scholarly literature on the subject reveals that the managerial aspects of securing the right to complete general secondary education in EU countries currently lack systematic coverage. Key issues include the coexistence of two funding models – public and private – various degrees of decentralisation in educational governance, and the specific emphasis on certain components of ensuring this right.

The legal framework and organisational mechanisms for guaranteeing citizens' right to complete general secondary education have been considered. Analysis of legislative acts and educational management models across EU countries allowed identification of several common characteristics of the European educational space. Chief among these are constitutional recognition of compulsory and free education as a fundamental personal right. This right is ensured through the possibility of continuing education after basic schooling (i.e., upper secondary, specialised or academic education). The educational process prohibits any form of discrimination based on gender, race or ethnicity, religion or beliefs, disability, age, or sexual orientation. The right to complete general secondary education is also guaranteed through adherence to democratic principles in educational organisation, including granting autonomy to educational institutions, involving students and parents in governance,

ensuring free basic secondary education, and implementing principles of inclusiveness and state neutrality in religious matters. The managerial features of ensuring the right to complete general secondary education in Spain, Lithuania, and France are revealed through indicators such as the level of centralised educational governance, sources of funding, adherence to inclusiveness principles, vocational orientation of students, public participation in educational management, and overcoming language barriers. Decentralised educational governance systems granting local self-government bodies advantages in organising the educational process are illustrated by Spain and Lithuania. France exemplifies a centralised educational governance system where the state regulates all aspects of educational activity – setting general principles, defining curriculum content, teaching methodologies, and education quality standards. As teachers are civil servants, their educational activities and professional development are controlled by the government.

For Ukraine, especially in wartime conditions characterised by numerous displaced persons, socially vulnerable students, and extraordinary learning circumstances, the Lithuanian experience of cooperation between central authorities and municipalities is particularly relevant. The French model is also beneficial, where a national centre for evaluation, analysis, and support of state education policy (Cnesco) functions to unify curricula and coordinate with foreign school education systems. The Spanish experience in organising education in rural areas and islands is advisable to consider, particularly given the needs of small rural schools in Ukraine. This approach could involve creating additional incentives for resource support for these educational institutions. Future research on this topic, as raised in this article, may focus on developing pathways for implementing normative legal acts and European educational democracy standards into Ukrainian practice.

### ■ Acknowledgements

None.

### ■ Funding

The study was not funded.

### ■ Conflict of Interest

None.

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## Управлінські аспекти забезпечення права на повну загальну середню освіту: досвід країн ЄС

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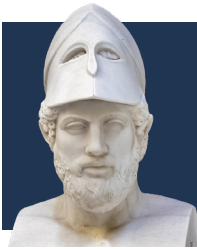
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■ **Анотація.** У статті досліджено повноваження та діяльність органів публічної влади країн-членів ЄС (на прикладі Іспанії, Литви та Франції) щодо забезпечення права громадян на повну загальну середню освіту. Для Європейського Союзу пріоритетним завданням є створення спільного освітнього простору. Країни ЄС визначили забезпечення доступної та якісної середньої освіти як один із пріоритетів, розробили механізми для інтеграції цього права у свої законодавчі та управлінські практики, застосовуючи комплексний підхід, який включає ефективну взаємодію між центральними та місцевими органами влади, інвестиції в освітню інфраструктуру, підтримку інклюзії та впровадження інноваційних освітніх методик. Особливістю європейської освіти є залучення учнів та батьків до управління освітніми закладами, що дозволяє створювати таке освітнє середовище, яке б задовольняло споживачів освітніх послуг. Виявлено, що у країнах ЄС функціонують два підходи до організації середньої освіти: лінійна та поетапна, а також існують відмінності в функціонуванні моделей управління системами освіти, що відображають унікальні історичні, соціально-економічні та політичні особливості кожної країни. Розкрито управлінські особливості децентралізованих систем управління освітою в Іспанії та Литві, де суб'єктами забезпечення права громадян на повну загальну середню освіту виступають також органи місцевого самоврядування. На прикладі Франції продемонстровано централізовану систему управління освітою, де держава регулює всі аспекти освітньої діяльності – від визначення змісту навчальних програм до встановлення загальних принципів і стандартів якості освіти. Сформульовано рекомендації для оптимізації вітчизняної системи забезпечення права громадян на повну загальну середню освіту відповідно до кращих управлінських практик Іспанії, Литви та Франції

■ **Ключові слова:** публічне управління; зарубіжний досвід; доступ до освіти; якість освіти; управління освітою



## Strategies for combating separatism implemented in post-communist countries: Lessons for Ukraine

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**Abstract.** This article examines the strategies employed by post-communist countries to combat separatism, with a focus on their applicability to Ukraine. The relevance of the study lies in the ongoing challenges Ukraine faces in combatting hybrid threats instigated by Russia during war as well as in the political stability of Ukraine after the war. The purpose of the research was to identify effective strategies that can be adapted to the Ukrainian context. A comparative analysis was conducted using case studies from several post-communist states, including Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic States. The results highlighted the importance of political decentralisation, economic development, and international cooperation in mitigating separatist tendencies, as well as the importance of developing effective means of fighting outside influences. In Georgia, decentralisation and power-sharing agreements have been partially successful in addressing the grievances of ethnic communities of Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Adjarians, but were unable to reach Abkhazia and South Ossetia, occupied by Russia. Moldova's approach to Transnistria, which emphasises economic incentives and international mediation, has shown promise in reducing tensions, though Russian interference puts a roadblock on any possible reconciliation. Bosnia and Herzegovina's Dayton Agreement, while successful in ending violent conflict, has institutionalised ethnic divisions, complicating long-term reconciliation. The Baltic states, particularly Estonia and Latvia, provide valuable lessons in managing ethnic Russian minorities through meticulous citizenship policies and integration programs, which have helped prevent separatist movements. The findings suggested that a combination of political, economic, and international strategies is necessary to effectively combat separatism. The practical value of the research lies in its potential to guide Ukrainian policymakers in developing more effective strategies to counter separatism and promote national unity

**Keywords:** public policy; separatist movement; hybrid warfare; conflict management; territorial integrity; decentralisation

### Introduction

Separatism remains a pressing global issue, particularly in regions with ethnically diverse populations and historical grievances. In the post-communist world, the collapse of the Soviet Union and Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia created a fertile ground for separatist movements, as newly independent states struggled to manage ethnic divisions and territorial disputes. Ukraine also faced challenges in maintaining its territorial integrity since 2014,

when Russia stirred up separatist movements in the Donbas region escalating into a full-blown conflict. The global relevance of this issue is underscored by the fact that separatist movements often destabilise not only the affected countries but also entire regions, as seen in the cases of Georgia, Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Recent scholarly works have highlighted the importance of political decentralisation, economic development,

### Suggested Citation:

Yanyshivskiy, T. (2025). Strategies for combating separatism implemented in post-communist countries: Lessons for Ukraine. *Democratic Governance*, 18(1), 64-76. doi: 10.56318/dg/1.2025.64.





and international cooperation in addressing separatist challenges. For example, L. Kakhishvili (2020) emphasised the role of decentralisation in Georgia's efforts to manage separatist regions like Abkhazia and South Ossetia, critically analysing how administrative restructuring can potentially mitigate ethnic tensions by creating more inclusive governance mechanisms that provide meaningful representation to minority populations. M. Stănescu (2023) argued that economic incentives had been crucial in Moldova's approach to Transnistria, the research further demonstrated how targeted economic development strategies can create interdependencies that reduce the appeal of separatist movements by improving material conditions and fostering economic integration. Similarly, P. Pepi (2022) noted that the Dayton Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while successful in ending violence, has institutionalised ethnic divisions, complicating long-term reconciliation. P. Pepi's analysis revealed the paradoxical nature of peace agreements that, while halting immediate conflict, can entrench structural divisions that may seed future separatist tensions by creating parallel ethnic political structures.

The Baltic states, particularly Estonia and Latvia, offer additional insights. M. Alander (2024) and S. Coolican (2021) proposed convincing arguments to the idea that radical measures against local Russian minorities prevented separatist movements in these countries. Their studies provided nuanced evidence of how proactive integration policies, coupled with strict legal frameworks, can effectively neutralise potential separatist movements by addressing minority concerns while maintaining clear national sovereignty. A. Khevturiani & G. Chkhikvishvili (2020) explored how political, socio-economic, and foreign policy factors contribute to separatist tendencies in Europe, emphasising the ideological motivations behind such movements. The authors developed a comprehensive framework that illustrates how historical narratives, economic disparities, and geopolitical contexts intersect to create fertile ground for separatist ideologies, highlighting the multidimensional nature of these conflicts. A. Zaka (2021) explored in detail the decentralisation processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina which has a highly fragmented governance system. The country's slow path toward EU integration highlighted the challenges of balancing decentralisation with national cohesion.

Additionally, R. Vlasenko (2020) examined the role of the Russian Federation in fuelling separatist movements across Europe, providing insights into external influences on regional instability. His analysis meticulously documented the strategic use of hybrid warfare techniques, including information manipulation, economic pressure, and support for local separatist groups, as key instruments in destabilising neighbouring states, particularly focusing on the Baltic states. Further analysing the Baltic experience, Z. Śliwa (2023) highlighted Estonia's decisive actions against pro-Russian activists, including the systematic removal of Soviet monuments and planned restrictions on the Russian language, with the aim of

curtailing Russian propaganda's societal influence in the coming years. These studies collectively demonstrate the complexity of separatism, illustrating that both domestic policies and actions of international actors play a crucial role in shaping separatist conflicts.

Scholars from all over the world have contributed significantly to understanding and explaining separatist dynamics in Europe, yet critical limitations remain in the current scholarly landscape. The existing studies are predominantly focused on isolated case studies of post-communist states, which, while valuable, fail to provide a comprehensive, comparative framework for understanding anti-separatist strategies. A noticeable gap exists in the systematic examination of how various anti-separatist approaches have been implemented and their relative effectiveness across different post-communist states. Current literature insufficiently addresses the nuanced interactions between domestic policies, international interventions, and separatist dynamics. Particularly underexplored are the mechanisms by which international actors influence separatist movements beyond broad geopolitical considerations. Moreover, the existing studies lack a robust methodology for synthesising anti-separatist strategies that could provide actionable guidance for emerging democracies facing similar challenges. This research gap is especially critical for Ukraine, which requires a comprehensive understanding of potential approaches to managing territorial integrity and ethnic tensions.

The purpose of this study was to analyse the strategies employed by post-communist countries to combat separatism and to draw lessons for Ukraine. The research was guided by three main objectives: (1) to identify the most effective strategies for mitigating separatism in post-communist states, (2) to assess their applicability to the Ukrainian context, and (3) to explore the role of international actors in supporting or undermining these efforts. The novelty of this research lies in its comparative approach, which examines the experiences of multiple post-communist countries, including Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the success or failure of anti-separatist strategies.

## ■ Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design to analyse the strategies implemented by post-communist countries to combat separatism, with a focus on drawing lessons for Ukraine. The research was based on a comparative case study approach, which allowed for an in-depth examination of the experiences of Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states. These countries were selected due to their relevance to the Ukrainian context, as all have faced significant separatist challenges in the post-communist era.

The primary method of data collection was document analysis, which included a review of academic articles, government reports, policy documents, international

organisation reports and news articles. The sources were selected through a systematic approach prioritising scholarly contributions that offer substantive insights into separatism strategies. The research focused on sources published between 2019 and 2024, ensuring contemporary analysis of post-communist conflict management. Preference was given to peer-reviewed academic articles, international organisation reports, and government policy documents that provided empirical evidence and comparative analysis of separatist challenges in Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states. Sources were evaluated based on their ability to showcase complex political, economic, and social strategies for addressing territorial integrity and ethnic tensions, with a particular emphasis on methodological consistency and critical examination of conflict resolution approaches. Key documents included academic articles from peer-reviewed journals, as well as reports from international organisations like the European Union, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and International Crisis Group. Policy documents and government reports from the selected countries, focusing on decentralisation, conflict resolution, and minority integration policies, were also analysed. This review helped identify key themes and patterns in separatism management.

The study employed a purposive sampling strategy, selecting countries that have experienced significant separatist movements and have implemented specific management strategies to address them. The selected cases – Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states – exemplify diverse approaches to managing separatism, including political decentralisation, power-sharing agreements, economic incentives, and international mediation. A comprehensive analysis of these strategies was conducted using a comparative case study method, supported by thematic analysis. The thematic analysis identified common patterns across the cases, focusing on key themes such as political strategies (e.g., decentralisation, power-sharing agreements, and federalism), economic measures (e.g., development programs, trade policies, and economic incentives), international involvement (e.g., the role of international organisations and external actors in conflict resolution), and ethnic and minority integration (e.g., policies promoting minority inclusion and reducing ethnic tensions). This methodological approach enabled an in-depth examination of the effectiveness of various separatism management strategies in post-communist states. Finally, the study assessed how these strategies could be adapted to Ukraine, with a specific focus on mitigating hybrid threats and ensuring long-term stability. This structured methodology ensured a comprehensive, evidence-based examination of separatism management strategies. While this study does not involve experimental research, it is grounded in a rigorous analysis of real-world policies and their outcomes. The findings are based on empirical evidence from the selected cases, ensuring the reliability and validity of the research.

## ■ Results

### **Theoretical and contextual framework: Understanding separatism in post-communist societies**

Separatism has long been a persistent challenge for nations across the globe, both historically and in the modern era. As a manifestation of political, cultural, or ethnic divisions, separatism often destabilises states, undermines their sovereignty, and creates long-lasting conflicts. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this issue has grown even more complex due to the rise of hybrid warfare tactics, which combine conventional military actions with disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and the manipulation of ethnic or social tensions. These methods not only amplify the reach of separatist movements but also complicate the ability of states to respond effectively.

After the fall of communism in the 1990s many Eastern European countries faced internal crises fuelled by ethnic divisions and outside forces trying to destabilise newly formed nations. There are many examples of this with varying degrees of success of the separatist movements. In Moldova, Russian elements quickly took control of Transnistria and hold it to this day. In Georgia, separatist forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia proclaimed independence after direct military intervention from Russia. On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved peace by international mediation, while the Baltic states remained undivided and avoided armed conflict altogether by implementing effective political measures and siding with the West. All these countries were in similar positions back when Soviet Union and Yugoslavia fell, but implemented different approaches which led them into vastly different paths of history. In this article the focus was put on the approaches these countries took to combatting separatism and how it affected their internal stability.

Post-communist countries have employed a variety of strategies to combat separatism, each with varying degrees of success. These strategies can be broadly categorised into political, economic, and international approaches, with additional emphasis on ethnic and minority integration. The analysis of case studies from Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of these strategies and their potential applicability to Ukraine, particularly in the context of future stability and the mitigation of hybrid threats.

As defined by O. Memišević (2023), hybrid threats are coordinated activities that combine conventional and unconventional methods to advance actors' strategic interests without declaring war. These threats target various societal sectors using tools like disinformation, cyber-attacks, corruption, and espionage. Whether motivated by economic gain or political destabilisation, they aim to weaken institutions, disrupt social order, and undermine security structures in target states, organisations, and infrastructure.

### **Political strategies: Decentralisation and power-sharing**

One of the most common political strategies employed by post-communist countries to address separatism is decentralisation. In Georgia, decentralisation has been a key



component of the government's approach to managing separatist sentiment throughout the country, not only in breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as the country has large communities of Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Adjarians (Melua, 2021). By granting greater autonomy to these regions, the Georgian government aimed to address the grievances of ethnic minorities and reduce the appeal of separatism. However, the effectiveness of this strategy has been limited by economic disparities and the lack of trust between the central government and regional authorities. According to L. Kakhishvili (2020), while decentralisation has helped to reduce tensions in some areas, like Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, it has not fully resolved the underlying issues of ethnic division and political exclusion. Process of Georgia's Europeanisation brought significant benefits like visa liberalisation and positive changes in governance providing better public services for minorities, which made ethnic communities more integrated with the rest of the country. Additionally, young citizens gained a chance to experience new educational opportunities funded by the EU and the USA. However, there were some difficulties in making such benefits equally accessible to all citizens, especially minorities. These encompassed insufficient access to information, language obstacles, and scepticism toward the notion that minority groups can genuinely benefit from Europeanisation. According to surveys conducted in Georgia between 2015-2019 about support for EU/EAEU membership, ethnic minorities were not keen on their country joining the European block, even though ethnic Georgians were overwhelmingly supportive of it. This suggested that even though minorities had benefited from Georgia's European integration, it was still difficult to convince them to trust the central government (Torres-Adán, 2022).

L. Kakhishvili's (2021) research showed that Georgian political parties had focused heavily on Russia when dealing with separatist movements. Instead of working on internal decentralisation policies to ease territorial tensions, they mainly relied on foreign policy strategies aimed at Russia. This approach highlighted their preference for a centralised way of maintaining territorial integrity, as they saw diplomacy and geopolitical tactics as more effective and manageable compared to complicated internal reforms that could have threatened the country's political unity.

The reintegration of Abkhazia and South Ossetia can be much more difficult, as unlike other ethnic communities, Abkhazians and Ossetians are out of reach for any benefits programme proposed by Georgian central government. Georgia has maintained a consensus on pursuing peaceful means to restore its territorial integrity, ruling out military solutions despite the recent example of Azerbaijan's swift recapture of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the study by P. Lysianskyi & E. Mamontova (2022), three primary scenarios for reintegration were discussed, each with its own challenges and implications. The first scenario centred on Russia's defeat in the war against Ukraine, which could lead to the cessation of Kremlin subsidies for Abkhazia and

South Ossetia, thereby creating an opportunity for Georgia to regain control. The second, a military option akin to the Karabakh model, was deemed unrealistic due to Georgia's current pacifist culture and lack of military strength. It is important to understand that the public opinion on Russia in Georgia was not as outright hostile as some might have thought. As seen from survey data results analysed by A. Buzogány (2019), despite Georgia's reputation as a staunchly pro-Western nation, a significant portion of its population simultaneously supported closer ties with both the European Union and Russia. This suggested that geopolitical alliances are not straightforward but are influenced by complex identity and interest-based factors that go beyond simple explanations of international relations. The third and less-discussed scenario involved Georgia leveraging Russia's potential financial decline under sanctions and military strain, potentially leading to a negotiated reintegration with Russian support (Lysianskyi & Mamontova, 2022). However, this approach risks compromising Georgia's independence, resembling a "Belarusian scenario" that Georgian society is unlikely to accept (How Georgia wants..., 2023). Another proposed way for reintegration was showcasing economic development to convince breakaway regions to return, but as L. Kakhishvili (2020) pointed out, economic development alone is not sufficient to address the root causes of separatism, as long as political grievances remain unresolved. As was explained in the research done by A. Khevtsuriani & G. Chkhikvishvili (2020), there are as many as ten key dimensions that contribute to separatist movements, including ethnic-religious tensions, socio-economic disparities, political struggles, historical memory, geographic conditions, language differences, demographic shifts, and cultural contradictions. While each factor can independently influence separatist sentiments, their interaction creates a nuanced and dynamic landscape of territorial challenges. Therefore, choosing only one method of dealing with separatism covers only part of the problem and does not address all the root causes of it.

Decentralisation serves as a key mechanism for addressing separatist tendencies by granting greater autonomy to regions, thereby addressing local grievances, and fostering political stability. However, in cases where decentralisation alone is insufficient to mitigate ethnic or regional tensions, power-sharing agreements emerge as an alternative strategy. These agreements aim to ensure political representation and decision-making influence for diverse ethnic or regional groups, reducing the likelihood of conflict and secessionist movements. Bosnia and Herzegovina's power-sharing agreements, established under the Dayton Accords, have been instrumental in ending the violent conflict that erupted in the 1990s. The 1995 Dayton Accords created a complex system of governance that divides power among the country's three main ethnic groups – Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. Moreover, constitutional, criminal and police reforms were outlined to be later realised by Bosnian authorities while a 60,000 strong NATO-led contingent was stationed to safeguard

their implementation (European Parliament, 2005). While this system has succeeded in maintaining peace, it has also institutionalised ethnic divisions, making long-term reconciliation difficult. As pointed out by A. Zaka (2021) in post-communist Bosnia and Herzegovina decentralisation has been a key strategy in managing separatist tensions, though it has led to a highly fragmented governance system. The Dayton Agreement established a delicate balance between ethnic groups, creating a decentralised state structure with two autonomous entities – Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – alongside the autonomous Brčko District. However, decentralisation has often resulted in inefficiencies, political gridlock, and conflicting administrative structures, with Republika Srpska resisting the transfer of competencies to the central government. RS has almost complete autonomy from the central government in internal matters and has gradually started taking over responsibilities which were supposed to be delegated to the government in Sarajevo, like foreign affairs, police and even its own military force.

Separatism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is deeply intertwined with hybrid threats, particularly those fuelled by external powers such as Russia, as outlined in O. Memišević's (2023) analysis of hybrid threats in the Western Balkans. These renewed threats had also spilled over to Bosnia and Herzegovina where the goal of Russia was to exploit ethnic divisions and support separatist tendencies, particularly through Milorad Dodik, the President of Republika Srpska. Russia's hybrid tactics, including disinformation campaigns, strategic corruption, and the use of proxies like Dodik, aimed to destabilise Bosnia and Herzegovina by fostering mistrust in the EU, weakening state institutions, and promoting anti-Western narratives. These efforts were part of a broader strategy to create a climate of instability and undermine the rule of law, thereby perpetuating divisions within Bosnia and Herzegovina's already fragile political structure. Even after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Putin has had multiple meetings with Milorad Dodik where they exchanged statements of mutual support and awarded each other with medals. Dodik has reaffirmed Moscow that he would use the political powers of the RS to not let Bosnia and Herzegovina join the sanctions against Russia and move closer to the West, after which Russia provided substantial financial support to RS (Fella, 2024). Also, according to R. Vlasenko (2020) Russia had supported nationalistic movements in Bosnia as well as in Montenegro to share anti-Western sentiments. Serbian Orthodox Church, which is still widely popular in former Yugoslav states, was also used to influence public views in these countries. This external interference, combined with internal ethnic divisions, poses a significant challenge to Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity and its aspirations for EU integration, highlighting the need for robust counter-hybrid strategies to address both state and non-state actors perpetuating separatism. Despite progress in local governance reforms, the process remained hindered by ethnic divisions and weak state institutions. As pointed

out by P. Bargués & P. Morillas (2021), the EU has been extensively involved in trying to heal the fragmented country but has only brought frustration to the locals. The country's slow path toward EU integration has highlighted the challenges of balancing decentralisation with national cohesion. This experience demonstrated the need for clear administrative structures, mechanisms to prevent ethnic fragmentation, and strong central institutions to maintain territorial integrity while accommodating regional autonomy.

For Ukraine, these findings suggest that political decentralisation and power-sharing could be effective tools for addressing separatist tendencies, particularly in regions with significant ethnic minorities. However, the experiences of Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina highlight the importance of ensuring that decentralisation is accompanied by measures to promote economic development and build trust between the central government and regional authorities. Without these additional measures, decentralisation risks exacerbating existing divisions rather than resolving them.

#### **Economic strategies: Development and incentives. Moldovan experience**

Economic strategies have proven to be a critical tool in addressing separatism, particularly in post-communist countries where economic disparities and underdevelopment often fuel grievances among marginalised populations. By implementing targeted economic policies, governments can reduce the appeal of separatism and create incentives for cooperation and integration. The case of Moldova provided an example of how economic strategies can be used to address separatist tendencies, as well as the challenges associated with their implementation.

In Moldova, the separatist region of Transnistria has maintained de facto independence since the early 1990s, supported politically and economically by Russia. Transnistria's separation from Moldova has been driven by a combination of historical, political, and economic factors, including the region's industrial base and its desire for greater autonomy. The Moldovan government has sought to reintegrate Transnistria through a combination of economic incentives and cooperation, rather than relying solely on political or military measures. This approach has focused on fostering economic interdependencies between Transnistria and the rest of Moldova, with the aim of reducing the region's isolation and creating a more favourable environment for dialogue. As highlighted by F. Parmentier (2024) in a recent policy brief, one of the key economic strategies employed by Moldova in recent years has been the promotion of cross-border trade and investment between Transnistria and the rest of the country. By facilitating trade and economic cooperation, the Moldovan government has sought to demonstrate the benefits of reintegration to Transnistrian authorities and local populations. For example, Moldova has implemented policies to simplify customs procedures and reduce trade barriers between the two regions, allowing goods and services to flow more freely.



According to M. Stănescu (2023), these efforts have been partially successful in reducing tensions and creating a more favourable environment for dialogue. By fostering economic ties, the Moldovan government has been able to engage with Transnistrian authorities and local populations, demonstrating the potential benefits of reintegration. Another important aspect of Moldova's economic strategy has been the provision of economic aid and development programs in Transnistria. The Moldovan government, often with the support of international organisations such as the European Union and the World Bank, has implemented projects aimed at improving infrastructure, healthcare, and education in the region. These initiatives were designed to address the economic disparities that fuel separatist sentiments and to improve living conditions for residents of Transnistria. For example, Moldova has invested in the construction of roads, schools, and hospitals in the region, as well as programs to promote employment and economic growth. These efforts have helped to reduce the economic isolation of Transnistria and create incentives for cooperation with the central government (Sharan, 2021).

However, the effectiveness of Moldova's economic strategies has been limited by several factors. These factors were explored by A. Torres-Adán (2022) who pointed out that one of the key challenges has been the lack of political will on both sides to resolve the conflict. While economic cooperation has helped to reduce tensions, it has not been sufficient to address the underlying political issues that fuel the conflict. Pro-EU and pro-Russia forces have been competing for influence in Moldova ever since the country gained independence. With no clear long-term path necessary for EU integration, it was always difficult for pro-EU forces to obtain substantial assistance from the EU, thus giving pro-Russia forces a chance at criticising the EU for inaction. At the same time, Russia provided Transnistria with financial aid, energy subsidies, and military backing, which undermined Moldova's efforts to reintegrate the region. Transnistria's reliance on Russian support, both economic and military, has created a significant barrier to reintegration (Kharyshyn, 2020). Additionally, the Moldovan government's efforts have been hampered by corruption and inefficiency, which have undermined public trust in the central. On top of that, the public in Moldova has never been united on the issue of country's foreign policy direction. According to a study by R. Berlinschi (2019), migrants who returned to Moldova from the West had more pro-Western views while those returning from Russia, were significantly more pro-Russian. This is important because it showed that Russia could use their Moldovan population to influence elections and public discussion to quite a large degree, considering that the population of Moldova is only about two and a half million people. This assessment has proved to be correct during the 2024 presidential election and EU membership referendum when, according to Moldova's president Maia Sandu, Russia has allegedly heavily funded anti-EU groups, especially in Gagauz autonomous region, and bribed about 130,000 Moldovan citizens to vote against the EU (Sauer, 2024).

Many residents of Transnistria viewed the Moldovan government's economic initiatives with suspicion, fuelled by Russian propaganda. Despite already relying on Moldova for most exports of everyday goods, the breakaway region's "government" met every new step of cooperation with Moldova with hostility, likely on the orders of the Kremlin. These situations showcased that Transnistria had not operate independently and its government did not represent the people of Transnistria properly. Most recent example of this direct Russian rule over the region was the refusal to receive gas from Ukraine and Moldova after the suspension of Russian gas transit through Ukraine. Even being on a brink of a humanitarian catastrophe, the local "government" waited for Russia to step in and find ways to provide support (Krychkovska, 2025).

Another challenge was the lack of trust between the central government and the local population in Transnistria. Decades of conflict and political tension have created deep-seated mistrust, which could not be resolved through economic measures alone. While economic incentives have helped to reduce tensions, they have not been sufficient to build the trust needed for a comprehensive resolution of the conflict. According to M. Stănescu (2023), economic strategies must have been accompanied by political measures to address the root causes of separatism, including the need for greater autonomy and representation for Transnistria within the Moldovan political system. The process of reintegration of Transnistria into Moldova had to include granting special rights to minorities, including ethnic Ukrainians who have lived across Dniester for centuries.

For Ukraine, the case of Moldova provided valuable lessons on the potential role of economic strategies in addressing separatist tendencies. By promoting economic development and creating incentives for cooperation, governments can reduce the appeal of separatism and create a more favourable environment for dialogue. However, as the Moldovan experience demonstrated, economic strategies must be accompanied by political measures to address the underlying causes of separatism and ensure long-term stability (Sharan, 2021). One such recent measure was the criminalisation of separatism in Moldova. Its implementation was aimed at incitement to violence and financing of separatist movements. Although these measures were described by the Moldovan government as essential for the survival of the state, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) criticised them and recommended to review whether they are adequate and appropriate (OSCE, 2023)

In conclusion, Moldova's use of economic strategies to address separatism in Transnistria highlighted both the potential and the limitations of this approach. While economic incentives have helped to reduce tensions and create a more favourable environment for dialogue, they have not been sufficient to resolve the underlying political issues that fuel the conflict. For countries facing similar challenges, the Moldovan experience underscored the importance of combining economic strategies with political measures to address the root causes of separatism and promote long-term stability.

### International involvement: Mediation and support

International involvement has emerged as a pivotal factor in the management of separatist conflicts within post-communist states. Notably, in the case of Moldova, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe have been instrumental in mediating the conflict in the Transnistrian region. These organisations have spearheaded initiatives, such as the 5+2 talks, to promote dialogue between the Moldovan government and Transnistrian authorities, thereby mitigating tensions and establishing a framework for conflict resolution. The 5+2 negotiations encompassed five principal actors, convened under the auspices of the OSCE, including the OSCE itself, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Transnistria. The OSCE's mandate has also targeted the withdrawal of Russian troops, the enforcement of international human and minority rights obligations, and the monitoring of agreements to ensure a sustainable political settlement. Despite these efforts, the mechanism has experienced stagnation, with the last effective meeting recorded in October 2019. Nevertheless, international mediation remained critical in sustaining efforts toward peace, even in the face of an absence of a comprehensive resolution (Parmentier, 2024).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the international community has played a central role in establishing peace and stability since the end of the war in 1995. P. Pepi (2022) analysed the Dayton Accords, and concluded that they succeeded in establishing a framework for power-sharing and in ending the violence but criticised them for entrenching ethnic divisions and creating a complex political structure that has hindered effective governance. Also, the continued presence of international organisations such as the Office of the High Representative (OHR) highlighted the fragility of the peace and the ongoing need for external support. On top of that, the presence of international troops did more for undermining the central government's ability to maintain security in its own country than for safeguarding peace.

Economic support and development aid have been vital components of international involvement in Bosnia. The European Union, along with other international donors, has invested significantly in rebuilding the country's infrastructure and fostering economic integration to counteract separatist sentiments. By promoting development projects that encourage cooperation across ethnic lines, international actors aimed to create economic interdependence that would make secession less appealing. However, it is important to note that Russia and China had also invested a lot of resources and money into Bosnia and Herzegovina. As O. Memišević (2023) investigated, Russia was the largest investor into the Bosnian economy in 2023 with China being in the top 10. On top of that, persistent economic challenges and high unemployment rates continued to fuel nationalist rhetoric and hinder progress.

The path to EU membership has been a critical incentive for Bosnia to undertake reforms aimed at promoting unity and curbing separatism. The EU's conditionality framework required Bosnia to implement comprehensive

political and economic reforms, including strengthening the rule of law and enhancing government functionality. While the prospect of integration has encouraged some progress, the slow pace of reforms and internal political deadlock posed significant obstacles. P. Bargaúes & P. Morillas (2021) examined the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina since the late 1990s and concluded that local authorities have not been successful in establishing effective governance, despite several institutional reforms implemented between 2000 and 2016. Furthermore, the project of building a unified, multicultural society remains incomplete. At the same time, the EU has not been keen on taking charge and lead the process of fixing institutions.

International mediation has also focused on fostering dialogue between ethnic communities. Initiatives led by various non-governmental organisations and international bodies aim to build trust and reconciliation through education, cultural exchanges, and shared projects. These efforts seek to address the root causes of division by promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. Nevertheless, the legacy of the war, coupled with entrenched ethnic identities, makes reconciliation a challenging and ongoing endeavour (Sharan, 2021). Despite these efforts, Bosnia continues to grapple with separatist challenges, particularly from the leadership of Republika Srpska, which has periodically threatened secession. The international community remained vigilant, employing diplomatic pressure and, where necessary, sanctions to deter moves toward fragmentation. The continued presence of international actors has been essential to ensure that Bosnia does not revert to conflict and that progress towards a stable, multi-ethnic state can be sustained (Memišević, 2023).

In conclusion, while international involvement in Bosnia has been instrumental in preventing further separatist conflicts and promoting peace, the journey towards a fully integrated and cohesive state remains full of challenges. Ongoing support and engagement from the international community are crucial to address these challenges and support Bosnia's path towards lasting stability and integration into the European family. However, while international involvement has been essential in maintaining peace, it has also created a dependency on external actors, limiting the country's ability to achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

For Ukraine, these findings suggested that international involvement could be a valuable tool for addressing separatist tendencies, particularly in the context of hybrid threats. By engaging with international organisations such as the EU and OSCE, Ukraine could benefit from external support in mediating conflicts and promoting stability. However, as the experiences of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated, international involvement must be carefully managed to avoid creating dependencies and undermining national sovereignty.

### Ethnic and minority integration: Policies and challenges

Ethnic and minority integration has been a key focus of efforts to combat separatism in post-communist countries.

In the Baltic states, particularly Estonia and Latvia, the integration of ethnic Russian minorities has been a central component of the government's strategy to promote national unity and reduce the risk of separatism. Through policies such as citizenship programs and language requirements, these countries have sought to encourage the integration of ethnic minorities into the broader society. According to E. Berg & K. Vits (2020), these policies have been largely successful in reducing tensions and promoting social cohesion, although challenges remain in addressing the political and economic marginalisation of minority populations.

In Estonia, after declaring independence from the Soviet Union, the government implemented a series of measures aimed at integrating its substantial Russian-speaking population, which constitutes about a quarter of the country's residents (Śliwa, 2023). One of the cornerstones of this strategy has been the promotion of the Estonian language as a means of fostering a shared national identity. Language proficiency requirements for citizenship and education policies mandating the use of Estonian in schools have been pivotal in encouraging linguistic integration. Teaching of Russian language in schools is planned on being phased out. This process started in 2024 and should be completed in 2029-2030 academic year. As Z. Śliwa (2023) highlighted, starting from 2022 Estonia started taking more serious actions in terms of preventing pro-Russian separatism from flaring up. The government rejected most of applications for citizenship from Russian and Belarusian "grey" passport holders. It became evident that Estonia found that the root cause of potential separatism would be the language and started working harder on diminishing the use of the Russian while heavily promoting the use of Estonian. However, these policies have also been criticised for placing pressure on Russian-speaking communities and not fully addressing their cultural and linguistic rights. According to A. Włodarska (2023) the restrictions implemented in 1990s and early 2000s created serious divisions in Estonian society which was noticed by the government and some more harsher policies were withdrawn, as the government adopted a 2021-2030 plan to integrate all residents into the Estonian society regardless of identity and language. It is important to note that the efforts to integrate the Russian-speaking minority made by Estonia were met with both open and covert counteractions from Russia including nuclear threats and dissemination of propaganda. Thus, after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and because of direct threats to Estonia, earlier relaxations were reversed, and additional actions were introduced like a mass removal of Soviet monuments glorifying Soviet soldiers (Śliwa, 2023).

Latvia, facing similar demographic challenges, adopted comparable strategies. The Latvian government instituted a naturalisation process that includes language and history tests as prerequisites for citizenship. This approach aimed to ensure that all citizens could possess a basic understanding of the national culture and language, thus enhancing social cohesion. Despite these efforts, the pace of naturalisation has been slow, and many ethnic Russians

had remained non-citizens, which continued to be a point of contention both domestically and in relations with Russia. J. Ekman (2024) researched surveys conducted in Latvia in 2014 and 2021 and found that the public opinion in Latvia was more anti-Western than in neighbouring Estonia and Lithuania. Less of half of respondents had positive views on democracy while a third were missing the Soviet times. In addition to that, about a third of Latvia's population is ethnically Russian, which showed why measures to combat separatism in Latvia had been less drastic than in Estonia.

Both countries have also undertaken efforts to increase minority representation in political and public life. This included initiatives to involve minority groups in local governance and to promote their participation in civil society. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these measures was often undermined by persistent socio-economic disparities. According to S. Coolican (2021) ethnic minorities in the Baltic states frequently encounter difficulties in accessing quality education and employment opportunities, which can perpetuate feelings of disenfranchisement and exclusion. However, she also pointed out that the Russian communities often exclude themselves from many aspects of Latvian society. Ethnic Russians still mostly consume Russian television and media, keep contact with relatives in Russia and attend Russian Orthodox Churches (ROC). According to the same study, amongst the churchgoers, the views are vastly more pro-Russian and opposed to liberal European values, although this has not translated into a serious pro-Russian movement.

The Baltic states have also engaged with international organisations, such as the European Union and OSCE, to seek guidance and support in their integration efforts. These organisations have provided frameworks and resources to help balance national identity with minority rights, emphasising the importance of inclusive policies that respect cultural diversity while fostering unity. NATO also plays an important role in the security of the Baltic states. According to J. Ahmaldy (2022), since 2014-2015 Russia had intensified their hybrid attacks on the West, particularly against the EU and NATO. While NATO has increased its presence in the Baltic states to deter Russian aggression, it lacks a cohesive strategy to counter Russia's growing military capabilities. The alliance faces significant challenges in the Black Sea, where Russia has established a strong anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) zone, limiting NATO's operational freedom. Russia's coercion in the Baltic has served as leverage to dissuade NATO from challenging its territorial control in the Black Sea. Moscow maintains escalation dominance, making deterrence in Eastern Europe increasingly complex (Sinovets *et al.*, 2021). The historical legacy of Soviet occupation and the geopolitical tensions with Russia complicate integration policies. Many ethnic Russians in the Baltic states maintain cultural and familial ties to Russia, which can sometimes be at odds with the national narratives promoted by Baltic governments. Furthermore, external influences and propaganda can exacerbate divisions and fuel separatist sentiments.

According to M. Galeotti (2019), Russia did not seek to reclaim the Baltic states but rather has used them as leverage against NATO, the EU, and the United States. Viewing their independence and NATO membership as threats, Moscow employed a multi-vector strategy of political warfare, including disinformation, intelligence operations, and economic pressure, while avoiding outright military confrontation. A key takeaway for Ukraine is that Russia's approach prioritises political destabilisation over territorial expansion. The Baltic states have countered these threats through proactive defence policies, strengthened NATO cooperation, and societal resilience, particularly in integrating Russian-speaking populations. The Baltic experience showed that Ukraine should focus on strengthening its internal political stability, countering disinformation, and deepening Western partnerships to deter hybrid threats from Moscow.

In conclusion, while Estonia and Latvia have made significant strides in integrating their ethnic minority populations, ongoing challenges highlight the complexity of balancing national cohesion with cultural diversity. Continued efforts to address socio-economic inequalities and to create an inclusive society are essential. By fostering an environment where all citizens feel valued and included, the Baltic states strengthened their resilience against separatist pressures and reinforced their national unity. The case of the Baltic states also offered an insight into Russia's strategies for exerting influence over post-communist countries without direct military intervention. For Ukraine, these findings suggested that ethnic and minority integration could be an effective tool for addressing separatist tendencies, particularly in regions with significant minority populations. By promoting policies that encourage the integration of minorities into the broader society, Ukraine could reduce the risk of separatism and promote national unity. However, as the experiences of the Baltic states and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated, these policies must be carefully designed to avoid exacerbating existing divisions and creating new sources of tension.

#### **Lessons for Ukraine: Addressing hybrid threats**

Ukraine faces significant challenges in addressing hybrid threats, particularly those posed by Russia, which have manifested through disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, economic destabilisation, and the manipulation of ethnic and social divisions. Current hybrid threats to Ukraine stem from Russia's ongoing aggression, which targets the country's territorial integrity and administrative structure. Since 2014, the Kremlin has used a combination of military, political, and information warfare to destabilise Ukraine, with a particular focus on undermining the territorial organisation of power. One key hybrid tactic was the imposition of conditions in the Minsk Agreements (2014-2015) that sought to grant Donetsk and Luhansk special status, potentially fragmenting Ukraine's governance. The full-scale invasion of 2022 intensified these threats, leading to the suspension of decentralisation reforms and the establishment of military administrations across occupied

territories. Russia's occupation has disrupted local governance, forcing Ukraine to replace traditional regional administrations with military-civilian structures to maintain control and public services. Additionally, hybrid threats persist through disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and economic pressure aimed at eroding Ukrainian sovereignty. The war has also postponed crucial reforms in local governance, leaving unresolved issues in administrative-territorial restructuring. Meanwhile, occupied areas are subjected to Russian-imposed governance models, further challenging Ukraine's statehood. These hybrid threats, combining direct military action with institutional destabilisation, underscore Russia's broader goal of dismantling Ukraine as an independent state (Radchenko & Krutii, 2023)

Drawing from the experiences of post-communist countries, Ukraine can develop comprehensive strategies to mitigate these threats and strengthen its national stability. One key lesson is the importance of political decentralisation as a means of addressing separatist tendencies. In Georgia, decentralisation aimed to provide autonomy to regions, which are home to ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis (Kakhishvili, 2020). Bosnia and Herzegovina's power-sharing system, established under the Dayton Accords, similarly succeeded in ending violence but institutionalised ethnic divisions, complicating long-term reconciliation (Memišević, 2023). For Ukraine, decentralisation could be a useful tool in regions like Zakarpattia and Odesa, where ethnic minorities might be susceptible to external influence. However, as these examples illustrate, decentralization must be accompanied by efforts to build trust between local and central authorities and ensure that all citizens feel included in the political process.

Economic development and incentives also play a crucial role in countering separatist tendencies. Moldova's approach to Transnistria, which emphasised fostering economic interdependence, demonstrated the potential of economic strategies to reduce tensions (Stănescu, 2023). However, these efforts have been hindered by Russian interference and a lack of trust between the central government and the local population (Parmentier, 2024). Ukraine can draw valuable lessons from Moldova's experience by prioritising economic development in vulnerable regions like Donbas. Investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure can create opportunities and reduce grievances that separatist movements exploit. However, it is essential to address issues of corruption and inefficiency, which could undermine these initiatives (Sharan, 2021).

International involvement is another critical factor. The case of Bosnia highlighted the role of organisations such as the European Union and OSCE in conflict resolution. Bosnia has benefited from international oversight and investment, which have helped maintain peace but created a dependency that limits the country's self-sufficiency (Pepi, 2022). For Ukraine, engaging with international organisations can provide valuable support in mediating conflicts and countering Russian influence. However, Ukraine must ensure that such involvement does not undermine



its sovereignty. Building domestic capacity while leveraging international expertise offers a balanced approach. The integration of ethnic minorities is another crucial area where Ukraine can learn from the Baltic states. Estonia and Latvia implemented policies promoting national language proficiency and citizenship as tools for social cohesion. While these measures helped reduce separatist risks, they also faced criticism for marginalising Russian-speaking minorities (Coolican, 2021). Ukraine must strike a delicate balance by fostering national unity while respecting the cultural and linguistic rights of minorities. Promoting inclusivity through education and cultural programs can help integrate minority populations and build a stronger sense of shared national identity.

## ■ Discussion

The comparative analysis of anti-separatist strategies in post-communist states revealed a broad spectrum of approaches, each influenced by historical, geopolitical, and socio-economic conditions. While the findings of this study aligned with many scholarly perspectives, they also diverged in certain key areas, particularly regarding the effectiveness of decentralisation, economic incentives, and international mediation. Decentralisation had been widely acknowledged as a potential tool for mitigating separatist tendencies. Scholars such as L. Kakhishvili (2020) and D. Melua (2021) emphasised the role of administrative restructuring in Georgia to address ethnic grievances, similar to the decentralisation initiatives examined in this study. However, as highlighted by A. Torres-Adán (2022), the process of decentralisation had to be accompanied by measures fostering trust between the central government and minority populations. The present study corroborated these findings, demonstrating that while decentralisation could reduce separatist sentiments, it was not a panacea. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Dayton Agreement institutionalised ethnic divisions, illustrating that power-sharing arrangements, while effective in preventing immediate conflict, might entrench long-term fragmentation (Pepi, 2022). This aligned with the arguments presented by L. Kakhishvili (2021), who suggested that external diplomatic strategies were often prioritised over domestic decentralisation in addressing territorial tensions. Thus, while decentralisation was an important mechanism, its success was contingent on broader socio-political conditions.

Economic development had also been explored as a means of countering separatism. M. Stănescu (2023) demonstrated the role of economic incentives in Moldova's strategy toward Transnistria, arguing that fostering economic interdependence could reduce separatist appeal. This study supported this assertion, highlighting Moldova's focus on trade facilitation and infrastructure development. However, as F. Parmentier (2024) and R. Berlinschi (2019) noted, external influences, particularly Russian economic and political support, significantly undermined Moldova's reintegration efforts. The findings of this research similarly indicated that economic measures

alone were insufficient if external actors maintained influence over separatist regions. In the case of Ukraine, this suggested that economic reintegration strategies had to be coupled with broader diplomatic and security initiatives. International mediation had played a crucial role in conflict resolution, as evidenced by Bosnia and Herzegovina's reliance on external players such as the EU and OSCE (Bargués & Morillas, 2021). This study aligned with previous research in identifying both the benefits and limitations of international involvement. While external mediation had provided stability in Bosnia, it had also fostered dependency, limiting the country's ability to develop autonomous governance structures (Fella, 2024). Similarly, the 5 + 2 negotiations concerning Transnistria had yielded limited progress due to Russian obstructionism (Parmentier, 2024). The present study further illustrated that while international mediation could stabilize conflicts, its long-term effectiveness depended on sustained local engagement and institutional development.

Another critical aspect explored in this study was the role of ethnic and minority integration. The Baltic states' strategies for integrating Russian-speaking minorities, analysed by M. Alander (2024) and S. Coolican (2021), highlighted the importance of national identity policies in countering separatism. This research supported their findings, emphasising the significance of language policies and civic engagement in fostering national unity. However, as A. Włodarska (2023) observed, such policies had to be carefully designed to prevent alienation. Estonia and Latvia's strict language laws had successfully reduced separatist risks but had also faced criticism for marginalising Russian-speaking populations. The present study suggested that Ukraine had to balance integration policies with inclusive governance to ensure minority communities felt represented rather than excluded. The growing impact of hybrid threats in exacerbating separatism had also been noted in previous studies. M. Memišević (2023) and R. Vlasenko (2020) emphasised Russia's role in fuelling separatist movements through disinformation, economic pressure, and strategic corruption. The findings of this study reinforced these conclusions, highlighting the role of Russian hybrid tactics in Transnistria, Bosnia, and Georgia. Ukraine's experience with hybrid threats, particularly in the context of its ongoing conflict with Russia, underscored the necessity of a comprehensive counter-hybrid strategy that integrated political, economic, and security measures.

## ■ Conclusions

The research highlighted that combating separatism in the context of hybrid threats requires a multidimensional approach, integrating political, economic, and international strategies while fostering societal resilience. By examining the experiences of post-communist countries – Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states – this study has provided a framework for addressing the challenges faced by Ukraine in maintaining territorial integrity and political stability.

One of the most significant findings was the critical role of decentralisation and power-sharing agreements in mitigating separatist tendencies. The experiences of Georgia and Bosnia demonstrated that while decentralisation can reduce regional grievances, its success depends on accompanying measures to build trust, improve governance, and address socio-economic disparities. For Ukraine, this means adopting a balanced approach to decentralisation, particularly in regions with diverse ethnic populations, ensuring that it does not exacerbate existing divisions but fosters inclusivity and cohesion. The economic dimension was found to be equally important, as evidenced by Moldova's attempts to reintegrate Transnistria through economic incentives and development programs. These efforts underline the potential of targeted economic strategies to reduce grievances and foster cooperation, though their success is contingent on addressing corruption and ensuring equitable resource distribution. For Ukraine, prioritising development in conflict-prone and economically disadvantaged regions like Donbas and the South is essential to counter separatist narratives and promote long-term stability.

The study also underscored the importance of international involvement. Moldova's engagement with the OSCE and Bosnia's reliance on the European Union illustrated the potential of external mediation and support in managing separatist conflicts. However, these examples cautioned against over-dependence on international actors, emphasising the need for Ukraine to strengthen its domestic capacity for conflict resolution while leveraging external expertise. Integration of minority populations emerged as another critical aspect. The Baltic states' policies demonstrated how fostering national identity while respecting cultural and linguistic diversity can reduce separatist risks. Ukraine must adopt similar approaches, promoting inclusivity through education, language policies, and cultural initiatives to strengthen national unity and counter external manipulation of ethnic divisions.

Finally, the study highlighted the rising importance of countering hybrid threats such as disinformation and cyberattacks. The Baltic states provided valuable lessons in

combating propaganda through media literacy and monitoring foreign influence. Ukraine must expand its efforts in this area, focusing on public awareness campaigns, strengthening independent journalism, and collaborating with international partners to counter disinformation effectively. The findings of this research emphasised that Ukraine must adopt a holistic strategy combining these political, economic, and social measures to address the root causes of separatism while proactively countering hybrid threats. Beyond their immediate applicability, these strategies highlighted broader lessons for countries facing similar challenges in the post-communist space.

These effective practices of combating separatism will be necessary for Ukraine's future stability, especially in the context of possible hybrid threats like those used by Russia, as well as potential challenges from other neighbouring countries like Hungary and Romania, which have significant ethnic minorities within Ukraine. By learning from the experiences of other post-communist countries, Ukraine can develop proactive strategies to address potential separatist tendencies and mitigate the risks posed by external actors seeking to exploit ethnic divisions.

Future research on this topic should delve deeper into the role of civil society in fostering reconciliation and building societal resilience. Additionally, studies exploring the long-term impacts of international involvement in conflict resolution and the effectiveness of anti-hybrid strategies in different geopolitical contexts would provide valuable insights. As hybrid threats continue to evolve, continuous analysis and adaptation of strategies will be necessary to safeguard Ukraine's territorial integrity and political stability.

### ■ Acknowledgements

None.

### ■ Funding

The study was not funded.

### ■ Conflict of Interest

None.

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## Стратегії боротьби з сепаратизмом, реалізовані в посткомуністичних країнах: уроки для України

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■ **Анотація.** У статті проаналізовано стратегії, які застосовували посткомуністичні країни для боротьби з сепаратизмом, з особливим акцентом на їхню придатність для українського контексту. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена поточними викликами, з якими стикається Україна у протидії гібридним загрозам, спровокованими Росією під час війни, а також потребою забезпечити політичну стабільність у післявоєнний період. Метою дослідження було виявити ефективні підходи, які можуть бути адаптовані до українських реалій. Методологічною основою слугував порівняльний аналіз кейсів посткомуністичних держав: Грузії, Молдови, Боснії і Герцеговини, а також країн Балтії. Результати дослідження підкреслили важливість політичної децентралізації, економічного розвитку та міжнародної співпраці для стримування сепаратистських тенденцій, а також необхідність протидії зовнішньому втручання. У Грузії децентралізація та угоди про розподіл владних повноважень частково сприяли вирішенню проблем національних меншин (вірмен, азербайджанців та аджарців), однак не охопили Абхазію та Південну Осетію, які перебувають під окупацією Росії. Підхід Молдови до Придністров'я, який базується на економічних стимулах і міжнародному посередництві, демонструє потенціал у зниженні напруженості, хоча вплив Росії суттєво ускладнює примирення. Дейтонська угода в Боснії і Герцеговині поклала край збройному конфлікту, проте водночас інституціоналізувала етнічні поділи, що ускладнює довготривалу інтеграцію. Країни Балтії, зокрема Естонія та Латвія, мають цінний досвід у врегулюванні питань із російськомовною меншиною через продумані політики громадянства та програми інтеграції, які сприяли запобіганню сепаратистським рухам. У дослідженні зроблено висновок, що для ефективної протидії сепаратизму необхідна комплексна стратегія, яка охоплює політичні, економічні та міжнародні чинники. Практична цінність роботи полягає в її потенціалі стати основою для формування української державної політики у сфері збереження національної єдності та територіальної цілісності

■ **Ключові слова:** державна політика; сепаратистські рухи; гібридна війна; врегулювання конфліктів; територіальна цілісність; децентралізація

**Journal  
“DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE”**

**Volume 18, No. 1  
2025**

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