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# UKRAINE'S EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ASPIRATIONS: CONFRONTATION OF TWO WORLDVIEWS

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**Annotation.** The *aim of the work* is a comprehensive analysis of Ukraine's European Union aspirations.

The *methodological basis of the study* are official websites of specialized institutions in Ukraine and the European Union, laws, analytical reports, articles by other scientists, etc.

*Results.* According to the results of the conducted research, it was found that Ukraine continues to actively work towards European integration. It's confirmed by a number of normative and legislative acts that have already been adopted or are planned to be adopted in the nearest future. It was found that European integration is not just a priority of Ukraine's foreign policy, the implementation of which began from the moment of independence, but an integral part of the national outlook of the Ukrainian people. In addition, it was analysed that according to the desire of Ukraine, the European Union granted the status of a candidate for EU membership in 2022. The upcoming negotiations are a manifestation of the determination of both sides to implement the European integration policy. Ukraine set the priority of joining European organizations as its key task in foreign policy since independence. The first agreement that regulated relations between the parties was concluded in 1994. It was the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force in 1998 and signed for the period of ten years.

*Conclusions.* Thus, it is important that Ukraine began to build bilateral relations with the European Union after gaining independence. The first bilateral act, which defined the goals and purpose of this cooperation, was signed in 1994, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the term of which was calculated for ten years. Later, a new stage of negotiations between the parties began. It led to the conclusion of the Association Agreement, the signing of which took place in 2014. It became the fundamental document regulating Ukraine's cooperation with the European Union in many areas.

**Key words:** European Union, integration, state, recommendations, history, relations.

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**Formulation of the problem.** European integration is not just a priority of Ukraine's foreign policy, the implementation of which began from the moment of independence, but an integral part of the national outlook of the Ukrainian people. Maybe, this aspect irritated the eastern neighbour the most. It seemed that Russia not only tried to keep Ukraine from getting closer to the West, but also considered it dangerous to build equal relations with a country of such views and attitudes. Therefore, Ukraine definitely would never become a bridge between Moscow and Brussels or a partner in integration projects with participation of Russia and EU. And this could have happened if Ukraine, having at one time refused any significant interstate agreements within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, had not persistently proved to its European partners that they were following the wrong path, not giving the state a signal about the prospect of membership in the European Union for some time after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, granting Ukraine the status of a candidate for the EU membership in 2022 and future negotiations are a manifestation of the determination of both sides to implement the European integration policy.

**Analysis of scientific publications.** Separate aspects of the study of this issue were considered by several scientists, including N. MacFarlane, A. Menon, J. Sherr, G. Van der Loo, P. Van Elsuwege, M. Roth, V. Samokhvalov, T. Gehring, K. Urbanski, O. Yatsenko, V. Nitsenko, N. Karasova, S. Costea, B. Jarabik, G. Sasse, N. Shapovalova, T. Kuzio, H. Haukkala, O. Shumylo, M. Rabinovych, O. Spiliopoulos, P. Rieker, K.L. Gjerde, D. Cardier, R. Dragneva, K. Wolczuk, T. Valasek, K. Raik, K. Kubicek, C. Nitoiu, B. O'Loughin, A. Miskimmon etc.

The author set themselves the **goal** of a comprehensive analysis of Ukraine's European Union aspirations.

**Presenting main materials.** Yet, it is necessary to analyse the historical facts. Let's start with the foundation of the European Union and events happened after 1951. Economic agreements, which were based on both mutual benefit, moral and human values, from year to year, from stage to stage in integration process, built a strong and, most importantly, fair structure. The whole world is now counting on it, and relations between member states are built on mutual respect and support. Today the main slogan of the EU is: "Unity in diversity." Therefore, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, taking a course to find its place in a complex and diverse world, quickly formulated and voiced its respective priorities. Thus, the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On the Main Directions of Ukraine's Foreign Policy" dated July 2, 1993 states: "The prospective goal of Ukrainian foreign policy is Ukraine's membership in the European Communities, as well as other Western European or pan-European structures, in case that this does not harm national interests. In order to maintain stable relations with the European Communities, Ukraine will conclude a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with them, the implementation of which will be the first stage of promotion to associate, and later to full membership in this organization." [1].

In 1994, as a result of persistent and systematic work of the parties, the first significant document in bilateral relations with the European Union was signed – the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement [2].

Oddly enough, the issue of European integration in Russia's foreign policy was also on the agenda for long time. For example, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia was also signed in 1994. In addition, at the EU-Russia summit in 2001, Romano Prodi proposed the idea of creating a common European economic space. The EU and the Russian Federation began to implement a strategic partnership through the formation of four areas: economic, internal security, external security, and in the field of science and education. Even the prospect of bilateral relations was determined by the withdrawal of the visa regime. It seems that both Russia and the EU had ambitious plans for close cooperation, and even rapprochement between them. Perhaps, now it makes no sense to analyse who was the first to realize that they are unrealistic, but certain events in recent history on the European continent is obvious for themselves.

Moreover, it is necessary to mention the situation when the Commonwealth of Independent States was created on part of the territory of the former Soviet Union. Many states of the world, including the EU, perceive this as a positive and even democratic movement of already independent states to preserve their permanent ties and search for new levels of communication among themselves.

At the same time, it is worth noting that precisely the high level of professionalism and patriotism of Ukrainian diplomats of that time was able to see in this initially positive movement, a threat to the principles and priorities of foreign policy that were already announced earlier.

The signing of basic documents with comments, non-participation in unions (customs, security), which are contrary to the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, indicate that Ukraine has consistently moved in exactly the direction it chose at the time of the declaration of independence. At the same time, Russia consistently tried to create both political and legal conditions for the return of as many states of the former Soviet Union as possible under its influence. During a long period, this happened in all directions: both in relations with these states and in contacts with the whole world. On the one hand, it consisted in promoting the thesis that Ukrainians and Russians are one people, and on the other hand, in imposing the idea that Russia is the strongest and most reliable partner for the international community. It unilaterally decided that it will be the sole legal successor in international organizations, the sole legal successor of the foreign property of the former Soviet Union and, finally, the sole owner of nuclear weapons.

It is worth mentioning one episode from the history of the work of the Embassy of Ukraine in Great Britain. In 1999–2001, Ukrainian diplomats once again carried out certain actions regarding the distribution of abroad property of the former Soviet Union. In 1992 the relevant Agreement on this issue was signed between successor states of the former Soviet Union. According to this Agreement the above property was subject to division and passes to Parties in accordance with the scale of fixed shares in mention assets. The Ukrainian share was 16,37%. Of course, the Russian Embassy did not provide its Ukrainian colleagues any information about the relevant property in London. However, through local self-government bodies, Ukraine managed to obtain a list of

buildings that belonged to the former Soviet Union. What was the surprise when the Ukrainian side learned that at least half of them had already been re-registered in the name of the Russian Federation [3].

As soon as Ukraine started to act, the process of corresponding re-registration on the territory of Great Britain stopped. There was a judicial review of the case on the claim of Ukraine with the involvement of English lawyers, and there was a decision of the London court in favour of Ukraine. It did not refer to the review of the decisions of local authorities, but to a ban on any legal movements regarding property until the final resolution of disputed issues between Ukraine and Russia.

Definitely, both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the embassies constantly defended and promoted the interests of the Ukrainian state, taking into account the understanding of the realities of the geopolitical situation. Ukrainian diplomats consistently made it clear to international partners that the European choice is a priority not only for the state's foreign policy, but also for people's outlook. At the same time, the Russian Federation, with its actions both in relation to Ukraine and the entire civilized world, increasingly showed non-acceptance of the main democratic principles and respect for international law. And it turns out that more than one decade was needed so that, as the famous Ukrainian diplomat, former Ambassador to the Benelux countries, Representative to the European Union and NATO, Ambassador to Great Britain and Northern Ireland Volodymyr Vasylenko said in his book "At war as at war", it became clear to our partners that: "...The tension between the two states is connected with a deep conflict interests - civilizational, nation-state and geopolitical, and that the goal of Russia is to be reborn as a single great Russia at the expense of the absorption of Ukraine, and the goal of Ukraine is to remain an independent state, and not to become part of Russia" [4].

**Conclusions.** In conclusion, about the prospects of the European integration of Ukraine. One day Ukraine will become a member of the EU. Today, Ukraine is approaching this goal quite quickly. The Association Agreement with the European Union is effectively implemented. In 2022, Ukraine submitted an application to join the EU in the context of the war against Ukraine. And today this issue is already on the current agenda of the future expansion of the European Union. The relevant negotiations should begin in the near future and both sides are currently preparing for them. But it should not be forgotten that according to Volodymyr Vasylenko's, with whom it is difficult to disagree, "...it is not a matter of membership, but of creating such conditions in Ukraine for the functioning of our economy, for the development of our society, for the well-being of our citizens, which would be no worse than in EU countries".

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