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ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN UKRAINE AND THE EU: PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

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Kononenko V., Chernetska O., Fokin Y. Environmental challenges and economic cooperation between Ukraine and the EU: prospects for sustainable development.

The article is dedicated to analyzing the cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union, which began with the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 1994 and reached a new level after the signing of the Association Agreement in 2014. The focus is on the impact of this agreement on Ukraine's domestic and foreign policies, particularly in the context of sustainable development and ensuring environmental security.

The article examines the role of international agreements in regulating Ukraine's environmental policy, particularly the principles of preventive measures and the use of natural resources within the framework of sustainable development. Despite the formal incorporation of relevant provisions in international treaties, the real situation regarding environmental security remains challenging due to the conflict between the economic interests of developed countries and transnational corporations and the demands of environmental protection.

The article separately addresses the influence of international law on the development of

Ukraine's energy policy and its integration into the pan-European energy space. The importance of transitioning to renewable energy sources and the role of the European Union in financing and supporting such projects are analyzed. It is noted that sustainable development and environmental protection should become priorities within the framework of Ukraine's energy security policy.

The article also outlines the main challenges Ukraine faces in the context of international environmental security, particularly the insufficient effectiveness of international organizations in recognizing and counteracting environmental crimes. Despite this, the importance of cooperation with the EU to achieve a stable deceleration of environmental degradation is emphasized.

Key words: international environmental security, European Union, Association Agreement, sustainable development, sustainable financing, energy security, environmental policy.

Кононенко В.П., Чернецька О.В., Фокін Я.Ф. Екологічні виклики та економічна співпраця між Україною і ЄС: перспективи сталого розвитку.

Стаття присвячена аналізу співробітництва між Україною та Європейським Союзом, яке роз-

почалося з укладення Угоди про партнерство і співробітництво у 1994 році і досягло нового рівня після підписання Угоди про асоціацію у 2014 році. Основну увагу приділено впливу цієї угоди на внутрішню та зовнішню політику України, особливо у контексті сталого розвитку та забезпечення екологічної безпеки.

Досліджується роль міжнародних угод у регулюванні екологічної політики України, зокрема принципи превентивних заходів та використання природних ресурсів у межах сталого розвитку. Незважаючи на нормативне закріплення відповідних положень у міжнародних договорах, реальна ситуація з екологічною безпекою залишається складною через конфлікт між економічними інтересами розвинених країн та транснаціональних корпорацій і вимогами екологічного захисту.

Окремо розглядається вплив міжнародного права на розвиток енергетичної політики України та її інтеграцію до загальноєвропейського енергетичного простору. Аналізується важливість переходу до відновлюваних джерел енергії та роль Європейського Союзу у фінансуванні та підтримці таких проєктів. Зазначається, що сталий розвиток і захист довкілля повинні стати пріоритетом у рамках реалізації політики енергетичної безпеки України.

У статті також окреслено основні виклики, з якими стикається Україна в контексті міжнародної екологічної безпеки, зокрема недостатню ефективність міжнародних організацій у визнанні та протидії екологічним злочинам. Попри це, визначається важливість співробітництва з ЄС для досягнення стабільного уповільнення погіршення екологічної ситуації.

Ключові слова: міжнародна екологічна безпека, Європейський Союз, Угода про асоціацію, сталий розвиток, стале фінансування, енергетична безпека, екологічна політика.

Problem Statement. In the current conditions of globalization and increasing international integration, environmental security and sustainable development are of particular importance at both national and international levels. Ukraine's cooperation with the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the EU) opens new opportunities for implementing effective environmental protection mechanisms while creating challenges for adapting national policies to EU standards. The signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU laid the legal foundation for the integration of environmental norms and principles of sustainable development. However, their practical implementation faces a number of challenges.

Among the main challenges is the misalignment of the economic interests of states and large transnational corporations with the principles

of international environmental security. Despite the existence of international obligations and legislative initiatives, environmental norms often remain declarative or are only partially implemented. This contributes to the exacerbation of global environmental problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and depletion of natural resources.

Thus, the relevance of this issue lies in the need to revise approaches to cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the field of environmental security, taking into account the economic interests of both parties and the challenges related to sustainable development.

The aim of the study is to analyze the cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union in the context of implementing international agreements, particularly the Association Agreement, and to assess their impact on economic development and environmental security. The research seeks to identify the key challenges related to climate change and the environmental crisis faced by Ukraine and the EU, as well as to explore opportunities for achieving sustainable development through the implementation of environmentally-oriented policies and the development of renewable energy sources.

The current state of research on the topic. Issues of international environmental security have been examined in the works of N. Agadzhanian, I. Homlya and V. Donchenko. Problems of sustainable development have been studied by T. Tarakhonch and L. Tymchenko. L. Novikova and I. Kharchenko analyzed the transformation of EU international organizations' policies to ensure the energy security of member states. The international legal problems of regional energy security were explored in the dissertation of S. Talibov.

Presentation of the main material. Cooperation between Ukraine and the European Communities was initiated by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Ukraine and the EU and its member states, signed on June 14, 1994, in Luxembourg. In order to update the format, objectives, and mechanisms of cooperation, in 2007 a negotiation process began between Ukraine and the EU for the conclusion of a new framework agreement on these matters [1, p. 153].

An important factor influencing both domestic and external financial policy in Ukraine is the Association Agreement signed in 2014 between Ukraine and the EU (which is already part of national legislation) [2, p. 97-98]. On June 27, 2014, during a working visit to the European Union, the President of Ukraine signed, on behalf of Ukraine, the trade-economic and sectoral provisions of this Agreement [3]. The ratification of the Association

Agreement took place on September 16, 2014, when the Law of Ukraine 'On the Ratification of the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community, and their Member States, on the other hand' was adopted [4].

According to Article 292 of the Association Agreement, the parties guarantee that their environmental policy will be based on the precautionary principle and principles requiring the application of preventive measures, prioritizing the remediation of environmental damage (paragraph 4), and cooperating to promote the responsible and rational use of natural resources in accordance with sustainable development goals (paragraph 5) [5]. Since then, the situation regarding environmental security has not improved: at the end of 2019, UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned about the danger of climate change and the proximity of a 'point of no return' [6].

In the annual report on the major risks the world might face in 2023, the World Economic Forum in Davos indicated that among the top risks for 2023 with the greatest potential global impact are the following: failure to meet net-zero targets; weaponization of economic policy; weakening of human rights; a debt crisis; and failure of non-food supply chains. News headlines all over the world make these results largely unsurprising.

It was also noted that carbon emissions have climbed as the post-pandemic global economy rebounded. Food and energy have become weaponized due to the war in Ukraine [7].

Globalization of industry and the resulting processes of biodiversity reduction, depletion of natural resources, and deepening disparity between developed and developing countries have led to the realization that environmental harm knows no boundaries [8, p. 127].

And the greatest harm to the environment is caused by internationally unlawful actions of states. Most often, the state is held responsible for the actions or inactions of its executive bodies: ministries and departments, law enforcement agencies, border and special services, down to the lower levels of executive authority. The state is also blamed for the conduct of its administrative-territorial units and organizations authorized to perform state functions, particularly when they exceed their powers established by domestic law. The conduct of any state organ is considered as the conduct of the state itself under international law, regardless of whether the organ is performing legislative, executive, judicial, or other functions, and regardless of its position within the domestic system. A state cannot avoid responsibility by citing its domestic legislation as a reason for not carrying out these actions or for carrying them out differently [9, p. 148].

Unfortunately, the economic interests of developed countries and transnational corporations are in conflict with international environmental security. At the same time, international legal norms in this area either do not conflict with the interests of these actors or are only implemented to the extent that they do not contradict their interests, which makes them more declarative. Therefore, international environmental security is a stable state that involves the maximum possible slowing of the deterioration of the natural environment, which is proclaimed by the international community. This state is currently unattainable; however, it remains an important goal that contributes to a more stable slowing of the deterioration of the ecological situation [10, p. 57].

To date, there is some positive experience at the international level in addressing environmental protection issues. The largest international organizations dealing with environmental protection are the United Nations and the European Union. It is within these organizations that, in recent years, there has been an active search for solutions to the ecological crisis, with relevant legislative decisions being made, and the creation of commissions, auxiliary bodies, and structures to oversee the implementation of tasks in the field of ecology. Scientific research by the Club of Rome and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has played a certain role in the conceptual development of solutions to the ecological crisis and in shaping international environmental policy [1, p. 155].

In the context of EU policy, relevant funding is provided to support economic growth while simultaneously reducing pressure on the environment. Sustainable finance also encompasses transparency regarding risks associated with ESG factors (environmental, social, and governance), which may impact the financial system, and the mitigation of such risks through proper management of financial and corporate entities [11].

Sustainable financing plays a key role in achieving the goals of the European Green Deal as well as the EU's international climate commitments and sustainable development goals. This is accomplished by directing private investments towards the transition to a climate-neutral, climate-resilient, and resource-efficient economy, complementing public funds [12, p. 57].

In light of global climate change and the limitations of non-renewable fossil fuel sources, sustainable development must play an increasingly important role in meeting energy needs. The needs of the current generation should consider the well-being of future generations. The energy and climate policy, which is gradually being

implemented in the European Union, focuses on reducing emissions, including in the energy sector, while energy transformation is often achieved (for example, in Denmark, Germany, and France) by phasing out fossil fuels in favor of an energy sector based on renewable energy sources.

The concept of transformation is naturally associated with innovation and new technologies. An important aspect of change is not only the availability of technologies but also the development of an energy policy that allows for a reliable energy supply (energy security) through relatively inexpensive and least environmentally harmful means [13]. However, decisive actions by European countries to reduce CO₂ emissions and replace carbon fuels with clean energy will create pressure on the economies of oil and gas exporters, which will have an indirect impact on importers, including EU member states. The pursuit of cleaner energy not only offers many obvious benefits but also presents some poorly understood risks. The consequences of transitioning to alternative energy sources will vary for different fossil fuel producers: some may experience social unrest, political crises, or even state collapse. The latter could lead to waves of migration towards Europe or the USA. The policies of certain states that lose legitimate sources of budget revenue, especially if they become havens for terrorists, may become more aggressive [14, p. 313].

Energy security, being an important component of modern international relations, serves as a leitmotif for many contradictions and competition for access to external energy markets. In turn, the energy factor is not only a driving force behind international processes but also a source of additional tension [15, p. 49]. Thus, energy security is a part of national security [16, p. 219], which, according to S. Talibov, consists of a legal and institutional system capable of ensuring the sustainable provision of consumers with all necessary and environmentally beneficial resources [17, p. 12]. Therefore, the development of alternative energy should occur in a planned and technologically balanced manner, in accordance with the existing capabilities to generate and store the obtained energy, in order to minimize negative factors both of a technical nature (such as operational instability) and an economic nature (such as the impact on the economy of power plants operating on traditional energy sources).

Conclusions. Cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union has become a key factor in the development of international relations and Ukraine's economic policy. The agreements signed, including the Association Agreement, have a significant impact on both the internal and external aspects of the state's activities. They open new opportunities for economic growth and

integration into the global economy while imposing obligations on Ukraine in the fields of ecology, sustainable development, and social responsibility.

Ukraine faces a number of challenges, including the dominance of economic interests of developed countries and transnational corporations that contradict ecological standards and international initiatives. Although international organizations, such as the UN and the EU, promote the development of solutions to address the global ecological crisis, their measures often remain declarative as they do not always align with the interests of powerful economic players.

At the same time, the recognition of the importance of energy security and sustainable development at the EU level contributes to the transition to more environmentally friendly technologies and policies, which have a long-term positive impact on Ukraine. The shift to renewable energy sources and reduction of carbon emissions is an important step in strengthening energy independence and achieving ecological security.

Cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the fields of economics, ecology, and energy security requires further reforms, implementation of innovative solutions, and expansion of legal mechanisms to ensure stable development and protection of the interests of all participants in international relations.

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