DOI: 10.33067/SE.4.2023.7

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The Economic Security of Ukraine and the European Union in the Context of a Military Crisis

Abstract

Year 2022 brought increasing uncertainty and new challenges around the world, including in the European Union (EU), mainly related to the Russian aggression against Ukraine and its direct and indirect effects for all EU Member States. Europe finds itself in a difficult situation which provokes reflection on the current shape of the EU's security policy and the need to rethink and structure its stipulations. Faced with Russian aggression against Ukraine, the EU has implemented a number of new foreign policy initiatives and measures to support both the economy of Ukraine and of its member states. This article explores the issue of EU and Ukrainian economic security in the context of the financial and economic intervention measures taken by the Union to maintain sustainable development in the region. The EU support is helping Ukraine to survive, while on the other hand the EU has certain demands regarding Ukrainian reforms and certain aspects of its policies. These sensitive issues regarding the inadequacy of the EU's role in relation to recent challenges are topical in the debate in Ukraine.

Keywords: Economic Security, Sustainable Development, Public Goods, Eastern Partnership

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Introduction

Following Russia's aggression against Ukraine on 24th February 2022, the European Union and its international partners called for unity and full solidarity in responding to the ensuing military conflict. Shortly thereafter, EU Member States felt the direct and indirect effects of the situation and the retaliatory sanctions imposed by Russia on the EU in retaliation to the Union's actions to support the embattled Ukraine. They mainly resulted in a decline in demand in the member states of EU, disruptions in the implementation of contracts and projects leading to turnover loss, disruptions in supply chains or shortages in the supply of strategic raw materials or the economic unviability of implementing other means of production. The increase in electricity and gas prices in the EU has also been significant for production and the development of the EU economy. It is for these reasons, among others, that the European Union has fully committed itself to stabilising the economy and returning it to a path of sustainable development, in which all EU institutions would assume an active role.

The purpose of this article is to indicate what financial and economic intervention measures the EU has undertaken to ensure the economic security of its Member States, and what financial assistance it has provided for the reconstruction and development of the economy of Ukraine.

The research analyses involved in the writing of this article were conducted using scientific research methods, among which the leading ones were the analysis of the literature, the descriptive method and deductive reasoning. The authors of the article used research methods and techniques identified primarily in the disciplines of political and economic sciences. For the most part, analyses were conducted in a systematic and comparative manner.

The article consists of five logically related parts. The first two parts present the concept and the essence of economic security while indicating that economic security is also a global public good. The following parts of the article present the evolution of the relations between Ukraine and the EU between 1994 and 2022, i.e. until Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The last two parts of the article indicate the practical aspects of the actions taken by the EU as an international organisation towards Ukraine for economic support on the one hand, and on the other hand towards the Member States, which are also struggling economically due to the effects of the sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia and the retaliation of Russian sanctions against the EU.

The Concept of Economic Security in a Modern Economy

The scale and accelerating pace of the changes in global economy and politics, resulting in a number of threats to the socio-economic order of the world, countries and regions, make the issue of economic security become increasingly important and take on new meanings. The term "security" is multidimensional, as it refers to almost all spheres of human life and concerns political, military, legal, social, economic and environmental aspects. The concept of "security" is an interdisciplinary phenomenon encompassing several scientific disciplines and specialisations, including security sciences, politics, economics, social sciences and others. Most commonly, the concept of "security" is defined as the state of a country or group of countries, capable of withstanding man-made or nature-induced threats, i.e. crisis events. In the social science literature, the concept of security is presented as independence, identity, ability to develop and ability to survive (Dziekański, 2014, p. 122; Pokruszyński, 2010; Koziej, 2011).

Nowadays, there is no uniform understanding of the concept of economic security. When exploring the nature of economic security, scholars often provide their own definitions using various combinations of the concepts of economic independence, stability, sustainability and economic development.

Economic development, intended to lead to an increase in the security of the population, includes quantitative changes taking place in the economy (i.e. an increase in production, employment, consumption, the stock of capital and other economic quantities), as well as qualitative changes, which may include an increase in the qualifications of the workforce, technical and technological progress, modernisation of the structure of the economy, an increase in the level of economic efficiency, and improvement in the structure of goods and services produced in a given economy (Dziekański, 2014, p. 123). Cooperation of the state at the economic, political, military and social level gives an impulse to development, to the changes that increase the potential and attractiveness of countries, and consequently contributes to economic stability (Niedziółka, 2021, p. 206).

The concept of economic security refers to a real situation in which the economy can develop and citizens can enjoy a decent standard of living through uninterrupted access to resources, markets, capital, modern technology or information. Economic security can also be defined as the ability of a country's economic system to exploit internal growth factors and international economic interdependence to guarantee its unthreatened development. Thus, it is a state of undisturbed functioning of economies and, therefore, a situation that allows to maintain basic development indicators and ensure a comparative balance with the economies of other countries (Księżopolski, 2004, pp. 39–54; Księżopolski, Prońińska, 2012, pp. 175–180).

Maintaining economic security is one of the main objectives of countries' domestic and foreign policies as in today's regional and global contexts they operate in certain systems of dependency, trade links and economic influence. And as a result of constant political, economic, social or cultural transformations, these are changing. For this reason, a range of internal and external factors and determinants are taken into account in economic security research. This approach allows for the estimation and prediction of potential events determining or limiting the attainment of the desired state of economic security in the future (Niedziółka, 2021, pp. 195–196). According to D. Niedziółka, economic security can be described either as a state or as a process. Described as a state, economic security is static in nature, which may allow it to be assessed based on empirical data. On the other hand, when described as a process it is defined as a dynamic concept, i.e. subject to constant change, where the goal is to achieve the desired state of an absence of threats (Niedziółka, 2021, p. 196). Different definitions of economic security provide many cognitive opportunities, i.e. to interpret and verify internal and external factors for the purpose of defining and creating new solutions in the field of economic security. The level of economic security is assessed primarily based on macroeconomic indicators, such as national income, national income per capita, purchasing power and the share in the global purchasing power (Księżopolski, 2011, pp. 36–51), unemployment rate, inflation rate, the degree of openness of the economy, foreign and public debt, and the state budget deficit.

V. Hnatenko points out the key role of economic security in achieving the state's economic sovereignty, ensuring economic development, implementing effective social policies, protecting society from environmental disasters, increasing the country's competitiveness in terms of international economic interdependence. He stresses that the creation of an effective system of state economic security makes it possible to identify threats to national economic interests in a timely manner and prevent damage to the entire socio-economic system (Hnatenko, 2020, pp. 97–98).

When presenting definitions of *economic security*, there is a strong emphasis on the international aspect, which, as D. Niedziółka notes, "can play both a stabilising and a destabilising role. However, due to globalisation, it is becoming an inherent element. Consequently, the concept of economic security is expanding to include the ability to compete internationally. The ability to increase the importance of competition can change the conditions shaping economic security. Economic security can be an aspect of potential or real economic, political and social threats shaped through a system of both international dependencies and internal capabilities. Of which socio-economic stability, the ability to maintain macroeconomic equilibrium, the potential to induce economic development are the expression" (Niedziółka, 2021, p. 197).

When considering the nature and definition of the concept of economic security, we should pay attention to its financial aspect. Economic security is linked to financial security, which refers to the financial sphere of the functioning of countries, organisations and economic entities. In any economy there are internal factors that can affect economic and financial security. These include the already mentioned budget deficit, high unemployment rate or high inflation, and rising internal and external debt. In itself, the occurrence of the abovementioned factors is natural but if an increasing trend is observed (budget deficits, public debt, unemployment and inflation) over a longer time horizon, they may indicate a crisis. Therefore, they can be considered a potential threat to economic security.

V.V. Tretyak and T.M. Gordienko point to a connection between the economic security of a country and the global economy. They point out that the concept of economic security of a country should be understood as a state of a country's economy that ensures its competitiveness in the global economic system by means of the economic mechanism and guarantees its stable functioning through the use of appropriate measures and instruments (Tretyak, Gordienko, 2010, pp. 6–8).

The literature also points to different perceptions and understandings of the definition of economic security from the perspective of individual states, e.g. the US, the EU, Japan, China or Russia. The definitions formulated with regard to the concept of economic security result from the nature of the economic policy pursued, the political system and economic objectives (Simanavicius, Subonyte, Simanavičienė, 2019). According to C. Murdoch, economic security should fulfil two conditions:

- preserving the economic autonomy of the country, understood as its ability to decide about its own interests in economic development; and
- maintaining the existing standard of living and ensuring its further growth (Murdoch, 2001, p. 867).

In the European Union, on the other hand, the concept of economic security refers to the creation of conditions within the EU for building sustainable economic development and emphasising the importance of European integration in the globalisation process of a competitive world economy.

In the current regional and global environment, it is important for a country's economic security to be present in regional structures, integration groups and international organisations. The last decade has seen an increased role of international organisations in responding to new global and regional challenges related to economic, geopolitical, financial and social changes. Ongoing changes in the world have increased the pressure to build a new global architecture for the 21st century, based on the deepening interdependence of the main actors in international relations, namely international organisations and institutions, as well as countries and non-governmental organisations, in addressing the current challenges identified above.

Economic Security as a Public Good

Interest in the issue of economic security results from the dynamics of changes in the system of international relations, the emergence of new economic powers, the fragmentation of power and the evolution from geopolitics towards geo-economics. In economic studies, economic security is treated as a public good provided by the state (Leszczyński, 2016, pp. 165–166).

A review of the world literature on public sector economics allows to formulate a fairly clear and precise definition of a public good. It is a good serving the general public, universal, social and non-private. The category of public good is of particular relevance to the science of public finances. This is because the need for the existence of such goods and the provision of such goods to the public is the reason for the collection and distribution of public funds. R. Holcombe defines a public good as a good that has two characteristics, i.e. it can be consumed by an additional consumer without incurring additional costs, and individual consumers cannot be excluded from its consumption (Holcombe, 1997, p. 1). These two characteristics are called non-rationality and non-excludability (Samuelson, Nordhaus, 1989, p. 45). Similarly, the nature of the public good in the provision of public goods is pointed out by R.A. Musgrave (1959) and J. Buchanan (1968, 1965).

Economic security and its financial aspect are a non-competitive good, and it is virtually impossible to exclude anyone from it. Decisions on the provision of public goods are the result of public choices and political decisions. As a public good, economic security also shares characteristics with other goods in this category (Leszczyński, 2020, p. 112; Stachowiak, 2012). They are listed among the basic functions of a country (region) and are considered a public good providing a rationale for interventionism by public authorities (Żukrowska, 2006, p. 21).

In addition to (simple) public goods, the literature also mentions global public goods, national public goods, regional public goods and transregional public goods (Engerer, 2009, pp. 16–17; Sandler 2007). These goods differ due to, among other things, their providers, which can be the international community, the nation-state, regions, etc., and the beneficiary communities of these goods, e.g. nation-states, regions. Security measures are purely global public goods if everyone can benefit from their provision. They are "mixed" if the benefits are restricted to national or transnational beneficiaries (Dulbecco et al. 2005). Regardless of their pure or mixed nature, the provision of global public goods confronts the countries involved with the problem of collective action on a transnational or even international scale. Governments have an incentive to co-operate and provide transnational or international public goods because collective provision can reduce security risks (Engerer, 2009, p. 17; Bulbecco, LaPorte, 2005, pp. 1201–1214). In this way, the security motive can foster the formation of alliances to reduce or share commonly perceived risks. The provision of security measures as global public goods depends on the participation of all member states of an international organisation adequately involved in the provision of such a good. According to T. Sandler, this means that internationally, the provision of security measures is more difficult if countries have completely different preferences or if incomes differ because a low-income country cannot meet the standard of security desired by a rich country (Sandler, Enders, 2007). N. Birdsall and A. Diofasi point out another problem, namely the financing of public goods. The low level of funding for global public goods is a cause for concern, but their underfunding is not surprising. Like public goods at the local and national level, standard economic theory suggests that global public goods will be underfunded because, in a world of sovereign nations, no single nation can fully exploit the benefits of its own expenditure on a "global" good. Inequalities in global power relations and the lack of effective international governance systems further impede the provision of GPG (Birdsall, Diofasi, p. 4).

In outlining the above, it can be considered that as an international organisation, the European Union is a provider of the public good which is economic security. It is the responsibility of the bodies of the European Union to prepare appropriate legal solutions, to take appropriate planning and strategic actions, to equip the EU institutions with appropriate instruments that will allow them to perform their functions of providing and ensuring a public good to the EU Member States on the one hand, and on the other hand to take action towards third countries bordering the EU in order to mitigate losses resulting from emerging crisis situations that may disrupt the order and economic security of the EU.

Review of EU-Ukraine Relations Between 1994–2022

The date when the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and Ukraine (14th June 1994) was signed can be taken as the beginning of the cooperation between the European Union and Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 1994). The document set out a framework for cooperation between the two sides in such areas as political, trade and economic relations. At the same time, a year earlier, a resolution of the Verkhovna Rada "On the main directions of Ukraine's external policy" contained declarations on "Ukraine's membership of the European Communities" as a long-term goal of Ukrainian foreign policy, to be achieved through the conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the implementation of which was to be the first stage towards the Association Agreement, and then towards full membership (Zheltovskyy, 2021, p. 59). Despite the fact that the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the "Strategy for Ukraine's Integration into the EU" in June 1998 or the "Law on the Foundations of National Security in Ukraine", in which accession to the EU and NATO was identified as a foreign policy goal for Ukraine, the necessary reforms identified in the above-mentioned documents were not decided upon. In fact, that policy, known as "declarative Europeanisation", has not led to a deepening of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU (Zheltovskyy, 2021, p. 59; Dragneva, Wolczuk, 2015, p. 34). It was only in 2004, as a result of the so-called "Orange Revolution", that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was introduced in the European Union (European Parliament, 2023b). The EU offers its neighbours a privileged relationship based on all parties' commitment to the same values, i.e. democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development. The instruments for implementing the ENP are the legal agreements concluded between the EU and its partners. These are the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or Association Agreements. The ENP also has a regional dimension. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is an example, established to strengthen the EU's relations with most of its eastern neighbours, i.e.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The main objective of the Eastern Partnership is to "accelerate political association and deepen economic integration" between the EU and its eastern neighbours. The level of integration and cooperation is proportionate to the extent to which individual partner countries adhere to European values, standards and structures, and the progress they have made in doing so (European Parliament, 2023b).

The literature offers both positive and negative reflections on the EU's approach towards Ukraine within the ENP. H. Hallgren and I. Solonenko point to the positive aspects of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan being signed in 2005, which entailed assistance with a comprehensive list of reforms (Hallgren, Solonenko, 2015). This was the first time the EU had been involved in the internal reform process in Ukraine, since until the ENP was launched in 2004, the EU had pursued a policy that could be described as "Russia first" (Solonenko, 2007, pp. 16–20). This means that various tools and political arrangements were offered first to Russia, and only later to Ukraine. The launch of the ENP in 2004 was the moment when the EU attempted to unify its policy towards the entire neighbourhood, including Russia. With the ENP, the EU became an actor in Ukraine's internal reform process for the first time. With the signing of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan in 2005,[1] the EU offered Ukraine a comprehensive list of reforms, ranging from democracy and the rule of law to technical standards. This was a kind of "homework" for Ukraine to do (Smith, 2005, pp. 757–773). On the other hand, the negative aspects draw attention as well. T. Kuzio points out that the fact that the EU's approach to Ukraine after the Orange Revolution was based on the ENP showed that the EU treats Ukraine in a similar way to North African countries, Israel or Russia. That is, as countries that were either not part of Europe at all or had never declared a desire to join the EU. Representatives of the Ukrainian parliament also expressed similar criticism of the EU's uniform approach in implementing the Eastern Partnership policy (Zheltovskyy, 2021, p. 60; Kuzio, 2006, p. 6).

The natural next step after signing the Action Plan in 2005 was to negotiate a qualitatively new international agreement – the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. The preparation of the agreement was preceded by lengthy negotiations, which were conducted between 2007 and 2011 and concluded in 2012. The failure of President Viktor Yanukovych to sign the agreement at the 2013 EU-Ukraine summit in Vilnius was a direct catalyst for dramatic political change in Ukraine (Bainczyk, 2016, p. 31).

[1] The EU-Ukraine Action Plan was signed at the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council on 21st February 2005.

The dramatic events that unfolded in Ukraine after November 2013 were largely the aftermath of pro-EU protests against then-President Viktor Yanukovych's decision not to sign an Association Agreement with the EU. These events led to the identification of a strategic choice for Ukraine's development towards European integration (Leszczenko, 2019; Kruglashov, 2018). Euromaidan eventually led to a change of government and to parliamentary elections in October 2014, which brought pro-EU and pro-reform parties to power. The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was temporarily and partially in force from 1st November 2014, before entering into force on 1st September 2017. An integral part of the agreement is the establishment of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) between Ukraine and the EU involving not only the liberalisation of tariffs but also the gradual opening of markets to the movement of goods, capital and business. Thanks to it, Ukraine was supposed to gain access to the EU's internal market, including services. In the new agreement both partners agreed to ensure a full integration of Ukraine and EU in the flow of capital and investments as well as full adaptation of Ukraine to the EU public procurement market, the protection of intellectual property rights and combating the practices aimed at hindering or restricting competition on the territory of both the EU and Ukraine. This part of the agreement, which is one of the core elements of the deal, became fully effective on 1st January 2016. The agreement also covers cooperation in the areas of justice, freedom and security. However, it does not include the promise of future accession of Ukraine to the Union. In addition to political support from 2014 until February 2022, the EU and its financial institutions have mobilised more than 17 billion euro in grants and loans to support Ukraine's reform process. As part of its jointly agreed reform agenda, the EU is closely monitoring the progress in a number of priority areas, such as the fight against corruption, judicial reform, constitutional and electoral reforms, energy efficiency, public administration reform and improving the business environment (European Parliament, 2023a).

Following the election of Volodymyr Zelensky as President of Ukraine in April 2019, a series of further measures were initiated indicating the continuation of the pro-European course policy. According to the report on the implementation of the Association Agreement, adopted in December 2019, measures were taken for the development of democracy, human rights and good governance regarding progress in the reform of decentralisation, public administration and the digitalisation programme, the continuation of active measures aimed at involving civil society groups in the monitoring and implementation of the Association Agreement. At the same time, concerns were raised about the protection of minority groups, the inadequacy of the social benefits system or the protection of the rights of internally displaced persons (Zheltovskyy, 2021, p. 66; Kruglashov, Sabadash, 2022, pp. 22–37).

On 21st February 2022, the Russian State Duma officially recognised the independence of the self-proclaimed people's republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. Three days later, on 24th February 2022, after months of intensive concentration of armed forces along the Ukrainian borders, Russian troops attacked Ukraine on several fronts (European Parliament, 2023a). Faced with this new reality, Ukraine started to change its foreign policy to a more proactive one. This includes new geopolitical initiatives concerning the Black Sea region, among others. In October 2020, the presidents of Ukraine and Turkey agreed on a new, closer format of interaction through bilateral dialogue. In December 2020, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Minister of Defence of Ukraine met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Turkey. At that time, they discussed security issues in the Black Sea region and outlined possible directions and areas of further cooperation between the two countries. Another geopolitical initiative launched in 2020 was the Lublin Triangle. This regional configuration was created for political, socio-economic and cultural cooperation between Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine. On 28th July 2020, the Lublin Triangle became a new political reality. The main objectives of the alliance are:

- strengthening the dialogue between the three countries;
- supporting Ukraine in its integration into the EU and NATO;
- joint opposition to Russian aggression in Ukraine.

In May 2020, the mutual challenges and the strategic goal of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in European integration became the basis for the establishment of the Trio Association of these countries. This format of the cooperation allows Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to coordinate joint efforts with regard to their European integration process (Nechaieva-Yuriichuk, 2022, pp. 71–78; 2022a, pp. 141–161; 2022b, pp. 184–195).

Shortly after the start of the war, President Volodymyr Zelenski appealed for Ukraine to be granted the status of a candidate for EU membership without delay.

On 28th February 2022, five days after Russia began its aggression against Ukraine, the latter applied for membership of the European Union. On 7th March 2022 the Council of the European Union asked the Commission to present its opinion on this application. The EU heads of state and government supported this decision at an informal leaders' meeting in Versailles (European Commission, 2022a, p. 1; European Council, 2022a).

The conclusions and recommendations included in the opinion on Ukraine's application for EU membership show that while the legal framework for modern public administration is in place, it has not yet been fully implemented. The implementation of the decentralisation reform, including fiscal decentralisation, has been positively assessed. The independence of the judiciary has been strengthened and independent anti-corruption bodies have been established, including a well-functioning High Anti-Corruption Court. In contrast, it is emphasised that the accountability and effectiveness of the judiciary and the functioning of law enforcement agencies need to be strengthened, particularly when it comes to combating corruption, which remains a serious challenge throughout the country. While the legal and institutional framework is in place to ensure the respect of fundamental rights, more focus is needed on the implementation of these rights. In conclusion, the Commission recommends that Ukraine should be granted candidate status on condition that steps are taken to address, among others, the following:

- enact and implement legislation regarding the procedure for the selection of judges to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, including a pre-selection process based on an assessment of their integrity and professional skills, in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission;
- finalise the verification of the integrity of candidates for members of the Supreme Judicial Council by the Ethics Council and the selection of a candidate for the appointment of the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine;
- further strengthen the effort to combat corruption, in particular at the high level, through proactive and effective investigations and credible results of criminal prosecutions and convictions; finalise the appointment of the new head of the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office by certifying the successful winner of the competition and start and complete the process of selecting and appointing the new director of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine;
- ensure that anti-money laundering legislation is in line with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards; adopt an overarching strategic plan to reform the entire law enforcement sector as part of Ukraine's security environment;

- introduce an anti-oligarchy law to curb the undue influence of oligarchs in economic, political and public life (European Commission, 2022a, pp. 19–22).

European Union Aid to Ukraine Following the Russian Aggression

In the face of the Russian aggression, the European Union and its Member States showed solidarity with those fleeing the war in Ukraine and immediately mobilised support for the Ukrainian government in maintaining its functions. The EU provided assistance to support humanitarian aid, military assistance and other support. The Commission is coordinating its aid through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for a wide range of support measures, including in the health, energy, food and agriculture sectors, as well as providing shelter, machinery, and medical equipment and evacuation. The Commission also proposed measures to facilitate trade, in particular the suspension of import duties on Ukrainian exports and the establishment of solidarity routes to help Ukraine export agricultural goods. One of the EU's actions was to mobilise assistance, based on a 2001 directive (European Council, 2001) on protection that ensures access to jobs, housing, education and healthcare across the EU (European Commission, 2022c, p. 1).

Between 2014 and 2021, the EU provided significant financial aid to Ukraine, amounting to 1.7 billion euro under the European Neighbourhood Instrument in the form of grants, 5.6 billion euro under five macro-financial assistance programmes in the form of loans, 194 million euro in humanitarian aid and 355 million euro from the Foreign Policy Instrument. Before the war with Russia, the EU worked closely with financial institutions to support Ukraine. Since 2014 the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have mobilised loans of 9.5 billion euro to Ukraine. The EU also works closely with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have been key partners supporting the Ukrainian economy since 2014. Since 2016, Ukraine has also been steadily increasing its participation in EU programmes, partly co-financed by the EU. It participates in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, the Euratom research and training programme, COSME, Creative Europe and EU4 Youth. Organisations and individuals from Ukraine can also benefit from some activities of the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps. Ukraine participates in several Interreg programmes and is a member of the EU macro-regional strategy for the Danube region (European Commission, 2022c, pp. 3–4).

Since the start of the war, the European Union and its Member States have made more than 77 billion euro available to support Ukraine and its people in the following ways:
- 38.3 billion euro in economic aid,
- 17 billion euro for EU refugee assistance,
- 21.16 billion euro for military support,
- 70 million euro for the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (European Council, 2023).

Major global financial effort is needed to support Ukraine during the war, as well as to rebuild the country and provide new opportunities for its citizens. It is therefore very important to design the main elements of this undertaking accordingly. The reconstruction effort will be led by the Ukrainian authorities in close partnership with the European Union and other key partners, such as G7 and G20 partners and other third countries, as well as international financial institutions and international organisations (European Commission, 2022c).

On 20th June 2023 the Commission proposed the creation of a new financial instrument to support the reconstruction and modernisation of Ukraine. The Instrument for Ukraine will be a dedicated financial instrument that will provide Ukraine with coherent and predictable support for the period 2024–2027. The amount of up to 50 billion euro from the Instrument in the form of grants and loans is expected to help Ukraine finance efforts to maintain macro-financial stability, promote economic recovery, and rebuild and modernise the country. At the same time, it should enable the implementation of key reforms required for EU accession (European Commission, 2023d).

European Union Aid to Member State Economies Following Russian Aggression Against Ukraine

Following Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the European Union and its international partners immediately responded to this violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence by imposing restrictive measures on Russia. Sanctions were also imposed on Belarus due to its collaboration with Russia and facilitation of Russian military aggression. As early as 23rd February 2022, the Council adopted a package of restrictive measures including:
- targeted sanctions against 351 members of the Russian State Duma and another 27 individuals,
- restrictions on economic relations with non-government-controlled areas in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions,

- restrictions on Russian access to EU capital, as well as financial markets and services (European Council, 2022b; 2022c, 2022d; 2022e).

Further sanctions imposed on Russia by the Council on 25th February 2022 covered:

- the financial sector,
- the energy, space and transport (aviation) sectors,
- dual-use items,
- export control and financing,
- visa policy,
- additional sanctions against specific Russians and others (including Belarusians).

The EU has imposed sanctions on several occasions, i.e. 28th February 2022, 1st March 2022, 2nd March 2022, 9th March 2022, 15th March 2022, 8th April 2022, 3rd June 2022, 21st July 2022, 6th October 2022, 16th December 2022, 25th February 2023 and 23rd June 2023 (European Council, 2023). Restrictive measures were also imposed by the EU's international partners, in particular the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland and Australia (European Commission, 2022b).

In retaliation, Russia decided to introduce its own economic sanctions, with economic consequences for the entire internal EU market. Companies in EU Member States have felt the direct and indirect effects of these restrictive measures in particular. These mainly manifest as a decline in demand, disruption of ongoing contracts and projects leading to losses in turnover, disruption of supply chains, especially for raw materials and semi-finished goods, or unavailability or economic unviability of other inputs. The disruption of supply chains particularly concerns cereals and vegetable oils imported into the EU from Ukraine, as well as the supply chains of EU exports to Ukraine. As a result of Russia's aggression, there has been an increase in electricity and gas prices in the EU, with a serious impact on the energy market. High energy prices have a direct impact on a number of economic sectors, including some industries that were previously particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e. transport and tourism. High energy prices also translate into a sharp increase in production costs. In addition, the rising cost of nitrogen fertilisers[2] due to the exceptional increase in natural gas prices has contributed to the high production costs in agriculture). The effects of the aggression were also felt in the financial markets, particularly in terms of liquidity and fluctuations

[2] Russia and Belarus are large producers and exporters of the three most important types of fertiliser (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium).

in the commodity trading market. Also, it should be noted that with the onset of the aggression, a massive forced migration of Ukrainian citizens was observed, both within Ukraine and to neighbouring countries. This unprecedented influx of refugees into the EU has serious humanitarian and economic consequences for the host countries. In this situation, the Commission has decided to prepare assistance packages for EU Member States (European Commission, 2022b).

The Commission Communication titled *Temporary crisis framework for State aid measures to support the economy following Russia's aggression against Ukraine* of 23rd March 2022 set out the criteria for assessing the compatibility with the internal market, applicable to state aid measures that Member States may introduce to address the economic consequences following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, as well as sanctions imposed by the EU and its economic partners in the context of that aggression and retaliatory measures introduced, for example, by Russia. It outlines the options available to Member States under EU state aid rules. It suggested that in the context of granting aid, Member States shall consider introducing (in a non-discriminatory manner) requirements concerning environmental protection or security of supply. Member States were encouraged to use the possibility of granting aid approved on the basis of the guidelines on state aid for climate and environmental protection and energy targets for 2022, notably for renewable energy, energy efficiency or other decarbonisation measures (European Commission, 2022b).

In particular sections of the Temporary Framework the Commission has set out the conditions under which it will consider measures signalled to it to be compatible with the internal market on the basis of Article 107(3)(b) and (c) TFEU. Member States may notify to the Commission about the aid concerning, for example:

- limited financial amounts of aid,
- liquidity support in the form of guarantees,
- liquidity support in the form of subsidised loans,
- aid for the extra costs associated with exceptionally severe increases in the price of natural gas and electricity,
- aid to speed up the introduction of renewable energy and energy storage relevant in the context of REPowerEU,
- aid for decarbonisation of industrial production processes through electrification or the use of renewable hydrogen or electrolytic hydrogen meeting certain conditions and for energy efficiency measures,
- aid for the additional reduction of electricity consumption,
- aid for accelerating investment in sectors of strategic importance for the transition to a net-zero-emission economy.

The temporary framework has been updated by the Commission on several occasions, including 20th July 2022 (European Commission, 2022d), 28th October 2022 (European Commission, 2022e) and 9th March 2023 (European Commission, 2023a). Aid is to be granted until 31st December 2023. Based on these communications, from 2022 onwards, Member States shall notify the Commission about public aid. Poland has reported 6 aid programmes in 2022 (UOKIK, 2023) (Table 1), including aid in the form of grants or loans from the funds of the 2014–2020 operational programmes to support the Polish economy in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, or financial instruments and funds from financial engineering instruments subject to re-use to support the Polish economy after the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In contrast, there is currently one programme to cover the additional costs related to the exceptionally severe price increases of natural gas and electricity in Poland incurred in 2023, pending a Commission decision.

Table 1. Overview of the Number of State Aid Schemes Notified by the European Commission Under the Temporary Crisis Framework of State Aid Measures 2022–2023

State	Number of State Aid Schemes Notified by the EC in 2022	Number of State Aid Schemes Notified by the EC in 2023
Austria	2	
Belgium	5	4
Bulgaria		1
Cyprus	2	
Czech Republic	3	2
Germany	8	
Denmark	3	
Estonia	3	
Greece	4	
Spain	9	
Finland	5	2
France	10	1
Croatia	5	1
Hungary	6	1
Ireland	7	1
Italy	22	7
Lithuania	6	

Luxembourg	3	
Latvia	3	
Malta	6	
Holland	1	
Poland	6	
Portugal	5	
Romania	4	1
Sweden	2	2
Slovenia	6	2
Slovakia	3	1

Source: Own study based on: European Commission, „List of Member State measures approved under Temporary Crisis Transition Framework", 24th July 2023.

The Commission's Spring 2023 Economic Forecast indicates a much improved economic outlook, particularly with regard to energy prices. It notes that gas storage levels are at a satisfactory level. Further diversification of supply and accelerated growth in renewable generation are expected to enable the Union to replace fossil fuel-based sources, including gas. However, there are growing concerns that increased public spending could undermine central banks' efforts to reduce inflation. In its recent competition policy stocktaking, the Commission published a report on the use by Member States in 2022 of measures approved under the Temporary Crisis Framework and in accordance with its rules. It shows that the EU needs to improve the deployment of renewables and accelerate the decarbonisation of energy supply in line with the targets set out in the REPowerEU plan (European Commission, 2023c, p. 3). In the Commission's view, the economic outlook indicates that the serious disturbances in the economy are receding, and with them the need for an existing exceptional crisis response in terms of state aid control. At this stage, the time horizons foreseen in the different sections of the temporary framework appear to cover the time necessary to meet the objectives as intended. Therefore, the Commission is currently consulting Member States on the need to maintain aid in view of the observed developments in Member States' economies.

Conclusions

Ukraine and the EU have a long and complicated history of political and economic interaction. Undoubtedly, Ukraine benefits greatly from cooperation with the EU and its Member States. The introduction and implementation of numerous economic reforms and the democratisation of Ukraine have been made possible by the financial assistance provided by the EU, i. a. under the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the Eastern Partnership, in the form of grants and preferential loans. Since the beginning of cooperation with the EU, it has been Ukraine's aspiration to fully integrate into the EU. This process was initiated with the signing of the Association Agreement in 2013, and on 28th February 2022 Ukraine officially applied for EU membership. This action shows Ukraine's full determination to be part of the democratic world, despite strong opposition from Russia.

As an international organisation, the European Union is responding to any distortion of the internal market that has arisen either directly or indirectly following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The EU has also been trying to support Ukraine economically and financially since the beginning of the war to enable maintaining its economic development and to support it in the reconstruction of the country despite the war. In this way, as an actor on the international stage the EU ensures economic security within itself by channelling financial aid to Member States and its economic partners. From the Ukrainian side, there are noticeable voices of dissatisfaction with the actions taken by the EU towards Russia's actions and plans. Prompt EU action and decisions are also expected, especially regarding Ukraine's acceptance into the EU and NATO structures. On the one hand, the EU support is helping Ukraine to survive, while on the other hand the EU has certain demands regarding Ukrainian reforms and certain aspects of its policies. These sensitive issues regarding the inadequacy of the EU's role in relation to recent challenges are topical in the debate in Ukraine. Of course, one can consider the actions taken by the EU from a multi-level perspective, taking into account various factors, i.e. political, social, cultural, economic, legal, etc. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that membership in the EU structures is a multi-year adjustment process. In accepting another member into the international organisation, the EU wants to be sure that it is accepting an economically stable state, with a democratic state system and a legal order aligned with the EU acquis. Undoubtedly, some work will also be necessary on the EU side, in terms of rethinking the EU security policy and thoroughly revising the Eastern Partnership Programme in the context of preparing for the membership of other eastern European countries.

Acknowledgement

Research presented in this chapter constitutes a part of the implementation of the "European Financial Security in the Global, Regional and National Dimension" (EUSEC) project funded by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) within the framework of the Erasmus+, Jean Monnet Activities: Jean Monnet Modules, no. 620453-EPP-1-2020-1-PL-EPPJMO-MODULE.

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