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Determining priorities for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction in the conditions of preparation for EU membership

Abstract. The priorities for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction in preparation for its membership in the European Union are to ensure integration, efficient use of resources, socio-economic growth, and sustainable development. Finding ways to effectively develop the economic and other sectors, adapt to European norms and create a sustainable framework for integration into the European space was the purpose of this study. The methodology is based on the empirical research method. The reform priority coefficient was calculated using a formula for determining the priority areas for improving the economic, demographic, and political sectors of Ukraine. The study identified priority areas for Ukraine's post-war development, including mechanisms such as ensuring sustainable economic growth, modernising infrastructure, developing trade relations with EU countries, supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, improving the quality of education and healthcare, which can be used by scientists and the state to ensure the country's effective development and obtaining the status of a full EU member. The importance of ensuring social protection of the population, including raising living standards and ensuring access to basic social services, was identified. The study found that effective economic diplomacy and the expansion of international relations with EU member states are crucial factors for Ukraine's successful preparation for EU membership. The focus is on ensuring strategic orientation, efficient use of resources and achieving the country's socio-economic development in line with European standards and values. In practice, these results can become the basis for developing strategic decisions and programmes in line with EU criteria

Keywords: international economy; international relations; economic reform; European integration; socio-economic indicators

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INTRODUCTION

Post-war reconstruction is an important stage for restoring economic development and strengthening the stability of countries that have suffered from the consequences of military conflicts. It requires concentrating resources and making strategic decisions to restore the destroyed economic infrastructure and create the preconditions for

sustainable development. As Ukraine embarks on the path to EU membership, it is preparing its economy to meet EU standards and criteria.

There is already prior experience of EU accession among countries that have undergone military conflict, which has been researched by several scholars. For instance,

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M. Kržan & D. Birac (2021) describe the experience of Slovenia, which underwent a military conflict during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s but later implemented significant economic reforms that facilitated its accession to the EU in 2004. The study by T. Popic (2023) describes the reforms that took place in the country during the restructuring of the system following EU requirements, namely the reform of the healthcare system in Slovenia, which directly affects the country's economic development. Reforms included the introduction of compulsory health insurance, reorganisation of medical institutions, and improved access to healthcare services. From 1991 to 1995, Croatia was the object of armed aggression by Serbia, but thanks to the chosen path of reform, in 2013 it became a full member of the EU, as described by Croatian researcher M.C. Grubišin (2023). The study analysed the strategies and measures adopted by Croatia to achieve success in the post-war reconstruction process, including economic and other reforms; it also examined the role played by EU integration in changing the economic, political, and social situation in Croatia. The positive impact of the EU on the reconstruction after the military crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which applied for EU accession in 2016, is analysed in study by A.V. Kostrubitska (2022). The author examined the effectiveness of management practices and strategies used in Bosnia and Herzegovina during post-war reconstruction and analyses the possibility of their application in the Ukrainian context.

As noted by M. Pashkov *et al.* (2022), EU membership implies the achievement of economic, political, legal, and other criteria that must be met by the candidate country. Each accession process is individual and depends on many factors, such as the state of the economy, democracy, legal system, and other aspects of the country. Thus, in obtaining EU membership, Ukraine needs to reform many sectors of its economy. Ukrainian researcher O. Lokshyna (2022) examines the issue of education in Ukraine in the context of the achievements of European integration and development prospects in the context of the military conflict and post-war reconstruction. The author emphasises the need to reform the educational system, specifically in the context of integration of European values, pedagogical approaches and innovative methods.

Considering the above-mentioned studies, this study is relevant, because at the time of the study, Ukraine has yet to go through the post-war reconstruction phase, and there are not enough scientific studies that would consider possible areas of reform in Ukraine. The purpose of this study was to identify key areas for reforming and adapting the Ukrainian economy and other sectors, which is a necessary requirement for obtaining the status of an EU member state.

■ MATERIALS AND METHODS

The theoretical basis included academic articles, studies, and analytical reports, specifically, the Razumkov Centre's Analytical Report of December 2022 (Pashkov, 2022) and the Analytical Report published in the National Security and Defence magazine in 2022 (Pashkov *et al.*, 2022). These documents contain important information on post-war reconstruction in Ukraine and its integration into the EU, allowing for a better analysis of key issues and prospects for development. An additional tool was the official statistical

reports, studies and reports of international organisations on economic development, social indicators and other aspects of post-war reconstruction in Ukraine, such as the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.) and Corruption perception index-2022 (2022). All materials used are open source and freely available on the Internet. The study used methods of empirical scientific cognition, namely, the descriptive method was useful in collecting information and interpreting it about foreign practices of preparing for EU membership. The data collected was used to analyse the interaction of economic and political factors, and the impact of preparations for EU membership on Ukraine's post-war reconstruction. To collect and process data, statistical information was used, calculations of economic growth indicators (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, n.d.), as well as documents related to the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), economic diplomacy and international relations (Agreement on partnership..., 1998; The agenda of the Ukraine-EU..., 2009; Free trade agreements, 2019). Considering all the information received, a formula was derived to determine the priority areas for improving and reforming Ukraine's economic, demographic and political sectors to accelerate its acquisition of EU membership status, which is as follows (1):

$$P = \left(W1 * \left(\frac{V1_{UA}}{V1_{DE}} \right) \right) + \left(W2 * \left(\frac{V2_{UA}}{V2_{DE}} \right) \right) + \left(W3 * \left(\frac{V3_{UA}}{V3_{DE}} \right) \right), \quad (1)$$

where P is the compliance score; $W1$, $W2$, $W3$ are weighting factors for the economic, demographic, social and political sectors, respectively (their sum should be equal to 1); $V1_{UA}$, $V2_{UA}$, $V3_{UA}$ are the values of the assessment of the relevant sector of Ukraine for the selected metric or indicator; $V1_{DE}$, $V2_{DE}$, $V3_{DE}$ are the benchmark values of the assessment of the relevant sector for the selected metric or indicator. In the current study, the benchmark country is Germany, given the comparable vector of economic and political development of this country with Ukraine and the state of functioning of the German economy.

In the study, the derived formula (1) was used in combination with the empirical method of measurement. This formula allows to consider the importance of different sectors and assign them appropriate scores depending on their significance for the EU integration process. This formula can be modified depending on the particular needs and specific features of Ukraine's development trajectories. The weightings are based on the analysis, assessment, and consideration of national and European development strategies. The use of this methodology and the chosen assessment formula are substantiated by the ability to consider the complex aspects of reforming Ukraine's economic, demographic, and political sectors.

■ RESULTS

In preparing for EU membership, Ukraine can draw on the practices of other countries that have successfully implemented reforms and already achieved membership, such as Poland, Croatia, and Slovenia, which had post-war experience of reconstruction and sustainable transformation to achieve compliance with EU criteria. They actively implemented reforms in the economic, legal, administrative,

social, and political sectors. Poland is an example of a successful reform experience, having undergone considerable economic transformations since joining the EU in 2004 (Kolodko, 2020). Poland has implemented wide-ranging reforms aimed at improving the competitiveness of its economy, fighting corruption, and strengthening democratic institutions (Ladonko *et al.*, 2022). These reforms have helped Poland to achieve stable economic growth, attract foreign investment and improve the quality of life of its citizens. After gaining independence in 1991 and the end of the Croatian War of Independence, Croatia began rebuilding its country to gain EU membership (Šabić, 2019). The main principles that guided Croatia included economic reform, democratic values, political stability, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. The country has also implemented reforms in agriculture, tourism, and infrastructure, which has contributed to improving living standards and developing the country's economy (Kollias & Messis, 2022). To join the EU in 2004, Slovenia implemented reforms in the areas of financial system, budget policy, labour relations, and public administration (Kržan & Birac, 2021). These reforms have resulted in economic stability, foreign investment, and improved living standards. The described practices of Polish, Croatian, and Slovenian reforms demonstrate that successful acquisition of full EU membership requires a comprehensive approach and implementation of reforms in various areas. Ukraine should use this experience as a basis for setting priorities for post-war reconstruction and reforms aimed at gaining EU membership.

The main requirements for countries intending to join the EU should be considered in the reform process. These requirements, which are reflected in the Copenhagen criteria, were defined by the European Council to ensure sustainable development and strengthen the EU

by accepting new members (Kollias & Messis, 2022). An analysis of these requirements is necessary to understand the process of preparing for and accepting countries into the EU. The economic criteria require a candidate country to have a well-functioning market economy. This means that it must be competitive in the EU internal market and capable of adapting to EU economic rules and regulations. These requirements include economic reforms, specifically with regard to financial stability, transparency and efficiency of market mechanisms. The political criteria stipulate that a candidate country must have a stable democracy and guarantee full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Considerable attention is paid to ensuring the rule of law and equality of minorities. These criteria indicate the need for political system development and stability in the country's governance. The candidate country must also prove its ability to adopt and implement EU legislation and its effective application on its territory. They require the adaptation of national legislation to EU norms and standards. The candidate country must have an effective public administration system, an open and fair justice and control system, and the ability to take part in the EU decision-making and implementation processes. Considering these basic requirements, that EU accession is a complex and long-term process that requires significant efforts and changes in many areas of the candidate country's life. However, fulfilling these requirements contributes to economic development, strengthening democracy, and improving the quality of life of citizens in the country under preparation. Considering the hostilities, the state of the Ukrainian economy in 2023, the social and demographic situation, and political processes, the key areas that need to be reformed to achieve EU membership status have been identified, all of which are interconnected (Table 1).

Table 1. Key areas requiring reform

Area	Feature
Economic	Priority is given to developing a competitive high-tech industry, promoting exports under the DCFTA, improving the business climate, and attracting foreign investment. Structural reforms are required, particularly in the banking system, tax policy, and labour market regulation.
Social	Ensuring affordable and quality education, healthcare, and social protection. It is necessary to improve the social security system and ensure social inclusion.
Demographic	Ukraine is facing a demographic outflow and an ageing population. Sustainable development requires engaging young people, providing them with quality education and employment opportunities. It is necessary to develop family support policies and ensure access to housing and infrastructure for young families.
Political	One of the key aspects affecting Ukraine's path to EU membership is ensuring further strengthening of democratic institutions, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, anti-corruption bodies, freedom of the media, and respect for human rights.

Source: compiled by the authors

It can be concluded that to achieve the status of an EU member state, Ukraine should focus on reforming its economic, social, demographic, and political sectors. It is necessary to improve the management system, engage expert support and take comprehensive measures to improve the situation in these areas. The implementation of these priorities will

contribute to the country's sustainable economic development and improve the quality of life of its citizens. Within the framework of this analysis, it is advisable to make a certain comparative characterisation of the Polish and Ukrainian experience of statehood formation since Poland is a territorial neighbour of Ukraine and a member of the EU (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative analysis of the development of Poland and Ukraine in the context of the striving for integration and accession to the EU

Factors	Ukraine	Poland
Political stability	Instability and political turbulence	Stability and a consolidated political system
Corruption	High levels of corruption at all levels in all sectors	Significant efforts to combat corruption
Management system	High level of bureaucracy, with a much higher level of transparency	Building an effective management system
Systemic issues	Problems in the energy sector and the effectiveness of law enforcement and judicial bodies. Imperfect implementation of reforms or failure to complete reforms	System stability and efficiency
Russian aggression and the existence of military conflicts	Military aggression (since 2014), military, social, economic losses, and temporary occupation of the territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, and Kherson regions	Absence of military conflicts (in recent decades) and membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation as a guarantee of security

Source: compiled by the authors based on T. Gylfason *et al.* (2022)

The findings highlight the difference in the development of the two analysed countries, emphasising the existence of numerous problematic aspects in Ukrainian development. The results demonstrate that, on the way to integration into European society, it is crucial for Ukraine to carry out reforms in almost all areas. For in-depth analysis, a comparative characterisation with the Croatian experience of statehood and EU membership was conducted, as the experience of Croatia is significantly correlated with the experience of Ukraine (Jović, 2011). The decision to become an EU member was quite favourable for Croatia, as evidenced by the country's post-war development, reforms and time as an EU member state (Agreement on partnership..., 1998). The economic measures taken to stimulate growth and development in Croatia during the reconstruction process were analysed by D. Jović (2011), namely economic reforms aimed at improving the investment climate and ensuring the competitiveness of Croatian enterprises. Croatia has focused on reforms in key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, industry, and infrastructure. The country has attracted foreign investment, improved the business climate, and developed trade ties with other EU member states. This has helped to increase economic growth, create jobs, and improve the lives of the population. In addition, D. Jović (2011) examined political reforms, reforms of the judiciary, the fight against corruption and crime, which led to the improvement of Croatia's rankings in global anti-corruption indices (Corruption perception index-2022, 2022), implementation and adaptation to EU legislation, which included harmonisation of domestic legislation with EU rules and standards. In the area of political stability, Croatia has made significant strides in strengthening democratic institutions by ensuring freedom of speech and human rights.

Croatia has received support and assistance from its partners in its efforts to become an EU member. The EC (European Commission) and other EU institutions have been actively assisting Croatia in the process of reforms and fulfilment of the criteria for membership (Jović, 2011). Consultations, financial support, and experience exchange with other EU member states were provided, which helped to implement the necessary changes and solve problems. Thus, Croatia's reconstruction and EU membership were

interrelated processes. Croatia has been actively working to implement economic, political, and legal reforms, which allowed it to become a full member of the EU in 2013 (Šabić, 2019). The support of partners, specifically the EU, was a key factor in Croatia's success on the path to membership. The EU has provided financial and technical support, promoted reforms and provided expert support in various fields (Jović, 2011). More specifically, Croatia has received financial support from the Pre-Accession Funds Instrument and other EU programmes, which has helped to implement important projects and contributed to the country's growth (Šabić, 2019). In summary, Croatia's progress towards EU membership was made possible by consistent reforms and great efforts of the government and the population. As of 2023, Croatia continues to perceive positive benefits from integration. For instance, it has full access to the EU internal market, which supports trade growth and economic development, and receives financial support from European funds for the development of infrastructure, agriculture, and other sectors (Kržan & Birac, 2021). EU membership has provided Croatia with access to a wide range of opportunities, including economic development, increased investment, and improved living standards.

Ukraine's history on the way to becoming an EU member state began in 1994, when the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between Ukraine and the European Communities and their Member States (1994) was signed (which expired in 2017). The next step was the signing of the bilateral document The Agenda of the Ukraine-EU Association for the Preparation and Promotion of the Implementation of the Association Agreement (2009), which regulated relations and outlined the main requirements for Ukraine to become an EU member. In 2013, the Ukrainian authorities chose the path to European integration, but on 21 November 2013, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine did not accept any of the EU's requirements for signing the Association, which led to massive peaceful protests that eventually led to the ouster of the then government and President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich (Holovko, 2021). In the spring of 2014, Russia occupied a part of Ukrainian territories and started a military conflict in eastern Ukraine, which led to destructive processes in Ukraine and the freezing of the EU Association Agreement (Ukraine 2014-2015..., n.d.). It

was only in 2019 that the Constitution of Ukraine (1996) spelled out Ukraine's accession to the EU. After the start of the full-scale military invasion on 24 February 2022, Ukraine's application for EU membership was signed on 28 February 2022, and on 8 April 2022, Ukraine received the legislative questionnaire, the first part of which was completed on 17 April 2022 and the second part on 9 May 2022. On 23 June 2022, the European Council officially granted Ukraine the status of candidate for EU membership (Pryshchepa *et al.*, 2022).

The main requirements for Ukraine to achieve EU member state status include: combating money laundering; implementation of the anti-oligarchic law; reform of the Constitutional Court; continuation of judicial reform; anti-corruption, including the appointment of the head of the specialised anti-corruption prosecutor's office; harmonisation of audiovisual legislation with European legislation; and changes to legislation on national minorities (Sydorenko, 2022). The EC confirmed that Ukraine had

met only 2 requirements in full (The European Commission..., 2023). The EC believes that Ukraine should focus on amending the procedure for selecting judges to the Constitutional Court in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission. Ukraine also needs to take further systemic measures and establish a track record in high-level corruption cases. The need to bring Ukraine's anti-money laundering legislation in line with international standards and the need to implement the recommendations of the Venice Commission on de-oligarchisation and national minorities (The European Commission..., 2023) were emphasised.

To assess the priority areas for improving and reforming Ukraine's economic and other sectors to accelerate its accession to the EU, a formula was developed that considers the weight of a range of factors. To assess the trajectories of reforms and development of the country, this study analysed the socio-economic indicators of Ukraine for 2018-2022 (Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of Ukraine's socio-economic indicators for 2018-2022

Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
GDP (billion USD)	130.8	153.8	155.6	200.9	142.4
Unemployment rate (%)	9.1	8.6	9.9	10.3	25
Inflation rate (%)	9.8	4.1	5	10	26.6
Average salary (UAH/month)	8,870	10,500	11,590	14,017	14,200
External debt (UAH billion)	1,397.2	1,159.2	1,518.9	1,560.2	2,610.9
Exports (billion USD)	47.3	50.1	49.2	65.9	44.4
Imports (billion USD)	57.2	60.8	53.7	69.9	75.2
Average life expectancy (years)	71.8	72.1	71.4	71.3	70.7
Retirement age (years)	60	60	60	60	60
Standard of living (index)	0.68	0.69	0.70	0.71	0.73
Population (million people)	42.4	42.2	41.9	41.6	36.2
Level of corruption (index)	32	30	33	32	33

Note: the table does not include data on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine

Source: compiled by the authors based on State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.), Corruption perception index-2022 (2022)

The analysis of Ukraine's socio-economic indicators for 2018-2022 shows that there are challenges and a need for further reform and development of the country. The Razumkov Centre's Analytical Report describes the current state and prospects of Ukraine's accession to the EU membership (Pashkov *et al.*, 2022). The report analyses the reforms that Ukraine is implementing to meet EU standards and requirements. The report by M. Pashkov *et al.* (2022) addresses the following aspects. Economic integration. The study assesses the level of Ukraine's economic integration with the EU, including trade ties and investment flows. It analyses cooperation in the energy sector, customs cooperation, and the implementation of the DCFTA. The study concludes that Ukraine needs to improve its economic performance and establish better relations with its EU partner countries. Political reforms. The report examines the political reforms undertaken by Ukraine to become an EU member. It analyses the state of democracy, human rights, the fight against corruption and judicial reform. Social changes. The authors of the report study the impact of European integration processes on the social sector of Ukraine. It analyses access to education and healthcare, employment rates, social support, and human rights protection. The

findings of the analytical report show that the country is showing positive dynamics in this area. Civil society. The report examines the role of civil society in Ukraine's European integration. It analyses the role of civil society organisations, citizen activism, and their impact on reforms. Future prospects. The report concludes with an assessment of Ukraine's future prospects on the path to the EU. The report examines the possibilities of expanding cooperation, the benefits and challenges that Ukraine may face.

The analytical report highlights the need to reform and improve many areas of Ukraine's performance to accelerate the country's EU membership in the near future (Pashkov *et al.*, 2022). Ukraine has enough problematic sectors that need to be carefully analysed to implement optimal measures in reforming them. Particular attention should be paid to Ukraine's economic integration into the EU, as it is the country's economic sector that is experiencing the greatest difficulties in post-war reconstruction (Bruszt & Campos, 2019; Endrődi-Kovács & Tankovsky, 2022). Political reforms are also a high priority, as they directly affect social change, the development of civil society, etc. (Pezdevšek Malovrh *et al.*, 2019; Efe & Yazici, 2022). The EU's support and cooperation is important, and victory and

restoration of peace are necessary for Ukraine's further progress towards membership (Petrov & Hillion, 2022). According to the results obtained, it is possible to assess the

priority areas for improving and reforming the economic, demographic, and political sectors of Ukraine in the post-war period (Table 4).

Table 4. Assessment of priority areas for improving and reforming Ukraine's economic, demographic, and political sectors

Factor	Value
Weighting factor for the economic sector	W1 = 0.3
Weighting factor for the demographic sector	W2 = 0.3
Weighting factor for the political sector	W3 = 0.4
GDP in 2022	V1 _{UA} = \$142.4 billion
Average life expectancy of the population	V2 _{UA} = 70.7 years
Corruption level (index) for 2022	V3 _{UA} = 33
GDP in 2022	V1 _{DE} = \$4072 billion
Average life expectancy of the population	V2 _{DE} = 81.1 years
Corruption level (index) for 2022	V3 _{DE} = 80

Source: compiled by the authors of this study based on State Statistics Service of Ukraine (n.d.), Corruption perception index-2022 (2022)

The assessment (coefficient) of Ukraine's level of development on the way to identifying priority areas of reform in the process of acquiring the EU member state status is as follows:

$$P = \left(0.3 * \left(\frac{142.4}{4072}\right)\right) + \left(0.3 * \left(\frac{70.7}{81.1}\right)\right) + \left(0.4 * \left(\frac{33}{80}\right)\right) = 0.435$$

The resulting coefficient of 0.435 (out of a possible 1.0) indicates the overall level of priority for improvement and reform in all the categories under consideration. From an economic standpoint, attention should be paid to the development of GDP, which grew in 2018-2022, although in 2022 there was a decline compared to 2021. In the demographic sector, it is important to pay attention to the population, which also declined during this period. This could cause considerable issues for the country's economic development, and therefore it would be advisable to develop government initiatives aimed at returning Ukrainians to Ukraine after the war. The level of corruption will remain at a similarly elevated level during 2018-2022, which requires further measures to combat this problem. Based on the results obtained, it is recommended that resources be allocated to economic sector development and political reforms, as they are of the highest importance. Work should continue to improve the country's demographic and social situation, which also play a vital role in accelerating the process of becoming a full EU member and affect the economy as a whole. However, as of 2023, it is almost impossible and ineffective to carry out quality reforms in these sectors due to active military aggression. That is why it is necessary to enlist the support of international partners in Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.

According to an assessment made during the European Parliament's plenary session on 17 June 2023, Ukraine needs the help and support of the European community and organisations in almost all areas (Joint Motion for..., 2023). During the full-scale war, Ukraine's GDP has more than halved, demographic indicators have declined significantly, many people have moved abroad, a certain number

are in a difficult situation in the temporarily occupied territories, critical infrastructure has been destroyed, and agricultural activities have almost ceased in the country (Joint Motion for..., 2023). According to a damage and needs assessment conducted by the Government of Ukraine, the World Bank Group, the European Commission, and the United Nations, published on 23 March 2023 (Joint Motion for..., 2023), the estimated cost of reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine has risen to at least €383 billion. The international community and partner states have a clear vector of comprehensive support for Ukraine, e.g., the European Commission has decided to allocate €50 billion to replenish Ukraine's long-term budget as part of financial assistance (€50 billion..., 2023), and call on Ukraine to prioritise strengthening the rule of law, continuing judicial reform and fighting corruption, as progress in these areas will determine not only its progress on the European path, but the success of its reconstruction and recovery. According to the authors, it is necessary to consider the issues, needs and experiences of internally displaced persons and refugees, as their reintegration into local communities will be crucial for strengthening Ukraine's economic, social and institutional resilience and unity.

■ DISCUSSION

The issue of identifying priority areas for Ukraine's reconstruction in the context of its preparation for EU membership requires careful research and analysis. Due to the active process of Ukraine's European integration and the need to prioritise post-war reconstruction in preparation for EU membership, there is a growing interest in research in this area among academics. Within the framework of the analysis of the current issue, both Ukrainian and other scholarly works have been published to study the requirements for EU candidate countries and Ukraine's potential to achieve EU membership.

A study by German scholar A. Sapir (2022) highlights that Ukraine is already taking active steps in line with European standards. The author analyses the current state of Ukraine's European course and the challenges that Ukraine

will face on its way to joining the EU. He emphasises the need to prioritise post-war reconstruction to prepare the country for EU membership. The author argues that economic reform, fighting corruption and improving the legal system are the main priorities that Ukraine should consider, which correlates with the results of this study and confirms the need to reform many areas of Ukraine, including the economic and legal systems. The importance of reforms in Ukraine is a prerequisite for achieving successful EU integration. This analysis shows that successful post-war reconstruction cannot be limited to economic and political aspects alone. Social reconstruction of the country plays a significant role, as all aspects are interconnected. Improving the quality of education, healthcare, and social protection is an integral part of Ukraine's successful integration into the EU. The development of regional infrastructure and access to services for all segments of the population should also be considered.

The study by Y. He (2022) notes that social reconstruction is one of the crucial areas of development for Ukraine. The author examines how Ukraine assimilates and uses social norms, standards and rules in its integration practice, and how these factors influence the country's development. The author analyses the processes of social reforms taking place in Ukraine and considers how this process affects its political, economic, and social spheres. These results are also in line with the study, which confirms the importance of social reconstruction. However, according to the authors, social reconstruction and reforms should not be the top-priority for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, which partially contradicts Y. He (2022). The results of the study demonstrate that the priority area of Ukraine's development and reconstruction will be based on the restoration of the country's economy and achievement of economic stability in the first place, as well as on the reform of the political system. In the area of economic stability, Ukraine should focus on reducing inflation, developing entrepreneurship, and privatising state-owned enterprises. Achieving economic stability will help attract foreign investors and ensure Ukraine's competitiveness in the European market. It is necessary to continue reforming the legal system, fighting corruption, and improving democracy. This will become the foundation for strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law in Ukraine, which are crucial factors for successful integration into the European political space. The study proved that without improving economic and political processes in the country, it will be impossible to achieve social reconstruction.

T.V. Oriekhova (2022) focuses on Ukraine's economic prospects in the context of preparations for EU accession. The author emphasises the importance of stimulating economic growth and attracting foreign investors. This approach is more consistent and coincides with the results of the study. However, this study has shown that although economic and political reforms are among the top priorities for Ukraine's reconstruction in the context of the country's integration into the European space and its achievement of EU membership, one should not forget about the need to comprehensively improve the country's performance in all areas of activity. The study by V. Berch (2022) highlights the key challenges faced by Ukraine's judiciary in the context of its European integration. The author

emphasises the need to address these issues to achieve compliance with European standards and requirements. One of the key issues identified in the study is corruption in the judiciary. The author notes that corruption seriously undermines trust in the judiciary and violates the principles of justice and equality before the law. To fight corruption, V. Berch (2022) proposes the introduction of effective control mechanisms, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and improving its professional competence. The author emphasises the need for comprehensive reforms in the judicial system of Ukraine to adapt it to European standards and norms. The results of the study also confirm the need to reform the judicial system of Ukraine. These reforms will be a major step towards Ukraine's accession to the EU and will help improve the judicial system and ensure the rule of law in the country.

According to O. Kvasha & A. Syniakova (2019) one of the key aspects of Ukraine's successful integration into the EU is the development of infrastructure and energy efficiency. The development of transport, energy, and digital infrastructure is a prerequisite for Ukraine's competitiveness in the European market. It is worth concurring with these researchers, as attracting foreign investment and cooperation with international partners in infrastructure projects are essential elements of the country's development. Furthermore, expanding international cooperation is of immense importance to Ukraine. Strengthening diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties with other countries will help develop Ukraine's foreign economic activity, and attractiveness to foreign investors. Continued support and assistance from international partners is essential to the success of Ukraine's reconstruction. Notably, without victory, recovery and reconstruction will be impossible. The issue of membership of some EU candidate countries in the context of military conflict, including Ukraine, is considered in the study by D. Cenusă (2022). The author addresses the complexity of the integration process in such conditions and the possible obstacles that countries face. This study also highlights the need to resolve conflicts and ensure stability in the region for a successful path to EU membership.

The data obtained as a result of the analysis confirm that Ukraine is actively moving towards compliance with European norms and standards to obtain the status of an EU member state. It is established that Ukraine is carrying out large-scale reforms aimed at economic, political, and social modernisation of the country. These measures are aimed at ensuring Ukraine's successful integration into the European space and accelerating the country's accession to the EU. The analysed studies are important for understanding the current state and prospects of Ukraine's European integration and provide a valuable contribution to the formation of strategies for the country's development on the path to EU membership. The research discussion demonstrates that the process of setting priorities for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, in the lead up to its EU membership preparation, is a challenging task. Considering economic, social, and other factors requires a comprehensive and balanced approach. It is essential to consider the best practices and experience of EU member states, but it is also necessary to preserve Ukrainian identity and uniqueness of national reconstruction.

■ CONCLUSIONS

Ukraine is taking active steps in line with European norms and standards to obtain the status of an EU member state. Within the framework of this movement, Ukraine is actively pursuing reforms aimed at economic, political, and social modernisation. It was found that to achieve successful integration into the EU, the priority areas of reconstruction are economic reforms, specifically in the areas of economic stability, inflation reduction, entrepreneurship development, and privatisation of state-owned enterprises, the legal system, fighting corruption, and increasing the level of democracy. The resulting coefficient indicates the overall degree of importance of improving and reforming all the areas considered in the survey. Ukraine should focus on stimulating economic growth in the post-war period: conducting economic reforms; attracting investment and creating a favourable investment climate; developing and restoring infrastructure; supporting entrepreneurship; developing trade relations, taking part in international trade, etc.

Infrastructure development, energy efficiency, and expanding international cooperation are vital aspects of ensuring Ukraine's competitiveness in the European

market. For social reconstruction, attention should be paid to improving the quality of education, healthcare, and social protection. It is essential to ensure the development of regional infrastructure. Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that setting priorities for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction in preparation for EU membership requires a comprehensive approach and the involvement of various sectors of society. Implementation of these priorities will help strengthen the economy, improve the quality of life of citizens, and ensure sustainable economic development of Ukraine. Removing barriers to trade and investment, promoting foreign economic activity, and making Ukraine more attractive to foreign investors are also high priorities. Future research could focus on the effectiveness of the reforms, assessing their impact on the country's economy and social sector, and analysing Ukraine's current progress in line with European standards.

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■ CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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Визначення пріоритетів післявоєнної відбудови України в умовах підготовки до членства в ЄС

■ **Анотація.** Визначення пріоритетів післявоєнної відбудови України в умовах підготовки до членства в Європейському Союзі полягає в необхідності забезпечення інтеграції, ефективного використання ресурсів, соціально-економічного зростання та сталого розвитку країни. Знаходження шляхів ефективного розвитку економічного та інших секторів, адаптації до європейських норм та створенні стійких засад для інтеграції в європейський простір було метою цього дослідження. Методологія побудована на використанні емпіричного методу дослідження. Коефіцієнт пріоритетності реформування вираховано за допомогою створеної формули визначення пріоритетних напрямків вдосконалення економічних, демографічних та політичних секторів України. Визначено пріоритетні напрямки розвитку України в післявоєнний час, враховуючи такі механізми, як забезпечення сталого економічного зростання, модернізація інфраструктури, розвиток торговельних зв'язків із країнами ЄС, підтримка інновацій та підприємництва, покращення якості освіти та здоров'я, які можуть бути використані науковцями та державою для забезпечення ефективного розвитку країни й отримання статусу повноправного члена ЄС. Визначена важливість забезпечення соціального захисту населення, включно з підвищенням рівня життя, забезпеченням доступу до основних соціальних послуг. Дослідження виявило, що ефективна економічна дипломатія та розширення міжнародних відносин із державами-членами ЄС є важливими факторами для успішної підготовки України до членства в ЄС. Акцентовано на забезпеченні стратегічної орієнтації, ефективному використанні ресурсів та досягненні соціально-економічного розвитку країни відповідно до європейських стандартів та цінностей. На практиці ці результати можуть стати основою для розробки стратегічних рішень та програм відповідно до критеріїв ЄС

■ **Ключові слова:** міжнародна економіка; міжнародні відносини; економічне реформування; європейська інтеграція; соціально-економічні показники