

Some aspects of the functioning of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development

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Abstract. The aim of the article was to study the history of the formation of the European Union cohesion policy through the identification and formulation of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development to ensure the effective participation of communities and regions of Ukraine in modern European integration processes of transition to functional territoriality as the basis of modern EU cohesion policy in the aspect of its functional territoriality and transition to a new model of territorial development “functional community – functional region – functional state”. Steps to create a new territorial model for managing the European Union’s structural funds in Ukraine by regional policy entities were proposed. These steps encompass the identification of geographical functional ties between regional policy entities that shape a new territory of cooperation going beyond the boundaries of existing administrative-territorial units and forming a new subject of regional policy formation. It implies a functional type of territories with the formation of a new database for programming socio-economic processes of development of local governments in conformity with the objectives of the updated state strategy for regional development of Ukraine. In consonance with the best European experience of seeing regions as a living laboratory for the development of territorial cooperation, measures were recommended to create a living laboratory for the development of the territories of communities of Slobozhanshchyna to develop a mechanism and tools to support functional types of territories at the level of the city of Kharkiv and the Kharkiv Region. There are also further arrangements to create the Kharkiv agglomeration, the Slobozhansk microregion of territorial cooperation and the Dergach subregion. These arrangements and initiatives were addressed publicly within the framework of the annual International Scientific Conference “Economic Development and the Legacy of Semen Kuznets” in 2024 and 2025

Keywords: territorial cohesion; territorial disparities; integrated interaction; intergovernmental management; process improvement; communities and regions

● INTRODUCTION

A new modern challenge for the functioning of the state management system of regional development in Ukraine is the transition to a new investment model of territorial development management and entry into the European

system of developing a territorial cohesion policy, which is aimed at overcoming existing territorial disparities and inequalities through targeted financial support from the European Union structural funds in order to achieve

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harmonious and balanced development of various functional types of territories. As stated by researcher V. Mogyl (2023), Ukraine, as a democratic and legal young state, is gradually implementing a foreign economic course for integration into the European Union, which remains a powerful global socio-economic and political centre. Scientists A. Soloviova & A. Fomin (2025) analysed the obstacles to Ukraine's membership in the European Union and focused on the essence of cohesion policy in overcoming territorial disparities of regions in the European Union for balanced and harmonious development, through investment in infrastructure, education, and innovation in the member states of the European Union, which is a critical stage of its development and expansion, promoting convergence and an example of the benefits of integration.

As argued by V. Kravtsiv & I. Storonyanska (2025), current trends and risks of spatial shifts in the economy of Ukraine in the context of hostilities have led to the highest rates of economic decline since Ukraine gained independence in 1991. The scientists assessed three ambitious tasks of updating the state strategy of regional development of Ukraine based on the introduction of a territorial approach, adopted in 2024, including tasks to define goals and management decisions for individual functional types of territories to form a territorial model of attracting funding from various sources for the implementation of projects for the restoration and reconstruction of the socio-economic development of Ukraine. The authors provided specific proposals in the context of regional development and ensuring Ukraine's capacity to use Ukraine Facility funds at the national, regional and local levels.

Researchers A. Paasi *et al.* (2022) achieved crucial conclusions for understanding the essence of the existence of functional types of territories, namely that territory, borders, and boundaries are not exclusively a state and territorial phenomenon. These concepts are ideas that are formed and take shape only in practice, in contrast to the traditional political and geographical definition of the concept of an administrative and territorial unit. Researcher O. Olkowska (2023) analysed the Polish law adopted in 2014, which establishes the rules for the implementation of cohesion policy programmes, the entities participating in the implementation of these programmes, and the method of cooperation between these entities. It covers two main areas: the rules for the implementation of programmes and cohesion policy, as well as the management and control system for the distribution of European Union funds. K. Jánošková (2024) interpreted the relationship between the use of European Structural and Investment Funds on economic indicators in Slovakia, namely, minor changes in gross domestic product and unemployment, which is a criterion for assessing the territorial impact of European integration policy on the example of Slovakia, which is also a direction of promising Ukrainian research on the topic of predicting socio-economic changes from participation in European Union programmes.

M. Bartůněk & P. Marek (2025) stressed the importance of new regional geography and the use of various data collection methods for studying the territorial identity of the region. The article analyses 76 studies of the territorial identity of regions obtained using the snowball method and targeted search on the Web of Science. The

paper focuses on the use of secondary data sources, namely literature with spatial information, maps, census data, toponym databases, etc., which provide indirect, expert/governmental indicators for determining the boundaries of the functional type of territories. Researchers I. Zalodska *et al.* (2025) considered the basis for the post-war restoration of the territories of Ukraine to be the creation of a model for the reconfiguration of the administrative-territorial structure of Ukraine, namely for Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions using three criteria for community capacity, namely population size, number of students and share of working-age population, understanding that communities in the indicated territories will not be able to independently replenish community budgets. M. Karpa *et al.* (2023) substantiated the theoretical provisions on the definition of "territorial development" as an essential characteristic of regional development and the relevance of developing a territorial development strategy for planning long-term socio-economic development of the regions of Ukraine. The focus is on the creation of networks of cooperation, public authorities, companies, universities and public organisations to create medium-term territorial development strategies is an important political step in regional development.

Researchers N. Kutsmsus *et al.* (2025) considered the impact of the European Union's cohesion policy on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals from the point of view of the political creation of the European Union and achieving high indicators of the level of economic development, highlighting that it is aimed at levelling economic and social differences between the member states of the European Union, and as such requires further action in the context of its improvement and conducting broad political discussions and discussing the implementation of its priorities. At the same time, the issue of studying the role of functional types of territories as drivers of territorial renewal and development, researching the functioning as new subjects of regional policy and public management of territorial development of the European Union in the introduction of better procedures for the preparation, management, monitoring, and control of programmes and projects of the European Structural Funds from the point of view of studying the mechanism of functioning of territorial cohesion policy, which is constantly being improved in the process of implementing European integration policy, remains unexamined. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to determine the essence of modern European integration policy, namely the functioning of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development, the object of which is functional types of territories, which have become full-fledged subjects of developing a European integration policy of territorial cooperation, taking into account the experience of the EU cohesion policy and modern challenges facing the regions of Ukraine.

● MATERIALS AND METHODS

The proposed study analysed the source base of regulatory documents and studies that form and investigate the policy of territorial cohesion of the EU and regional development of Ukraine. Structural and functional analysis was used to study the methodology for forming the policy of territorial cohesion of the EU and the policy of regional

development of Ukraine, as a modern European integration process of synchronisation and harmonisation of these policies, comparative analysis methods were used to determine the types of functional territories as areas of public management of territorial development, and modelling methods were used to build a conceptual strategy for creating functional territories as a new territorial model for managing EU funds. The comparative analysis method was used to compare European standards for identifying functional territories with the norms of current legislation of Ukraine. The analysis process involved determining common features that define the self-sufficiency of territories within the framework of cohesion policy. By systematising the results obtained, an author's classification was formed, which is based on five groups of criteria covering critical areas of public management of territorial development. The systematisation method allowed structuring the collected data into a hypothesis about the functioning of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development, which is constantly being improved and contributes to the formation of a modern policy of development of functional territoriality. The historical method was also used to describe the stages of the formation of European integration policy.

The source base of the study was an array of regulatory legal acts of the European Union and the legislation of Ukraine in the field of decentralisation and regional development. 25 strategic documents and 19 scientific works indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases were selected for analysis. The selection criteria were: relevance to the topic of European integration, focus on territorial development, and practical significance for the transformation of public administration in conditions of war and recovery. The analysis of the primary sources of the formation of Ukraine's European integration policy (Association Agreement..., 2014) allowed focusing attention on a critical dimension of Ukraine's European integration obligations in the field of regional development, setting out in Article 446, namely the accent on studying the methods of forming the European Union's regional policy in the context of the development of backward territories and territorial cooperation; strengthening cooperation with the participation of socio-economic entities.

The synthesis was used to combine the results of the analysis of the primary source base of regulatory documents, scientific sources, international reports and statistical data, which allowed identifying the main trends and patterns in highlighting and considering modern priorities and trends of the common administrative space for the formation of regional development policies of Ukraine and territorial cohesion of the European Union. Structural and functional analysis of the methodology for the formation of functional types of territories (Integrated territorial investments..., 2019), as a modern component of European policy (Functional territories..., 2023), allowed these functional types to be identified (Functional areas in the EU, n.d.), as subjects of regional policy management and a territorial model for managing the financial assets of the structural funds of the cohesion policy of the European Union.

The modelling method was used as a task for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the regional policy of Ukraine (Law of Ukraine No. 156-VIII, 2015). It

highlighted the focus on developing programmes and projects for functional types of territories through the creation of special mechanisms for the state support. This support was based on building a new socio-economic database for functional regions for devising regional and local strategies aimed at developing functional types of territories. These approaches should be considered in the context of experimental management of regional development (Recommendations for policy..., 2022) and conducting laboratory modelling predictions (EU border regions..., n.d.), as a component of the modern European policy for the development of functional types of territories, based on the theoretical, methodological and practical experience of the development of European territorial cooperation.

Given the systematisation of the provisions of the report on regional policy of Ukraine (Report on the results..., n.d.), the report of the European Commission (Commission staff working document, 2024) and the Territorial Agenda 2030 (2020), a three-level model of management of functional types of territories in Ukraine was proposed, namely "functional community-functional region-functional state". In light of the analysis of the totality of data on the functioning of the policies of territorial cohesion of the European Union and regional development of Ukraine, a vision of a European integration mechanism of public management of the development of territories was recommended for local governments of Ukraine to increase the administrative potential and capacity in creating a modern territorial model of management of the funds of the European Union structural funds.

● RESULTS

The modern European integration process of synchronisation and harmonisation of regional development policies of Ukraine and territorial cohesion of the EU

The functioning of the EU has three major stages of the formation of European integration policy, namely the process of the creation, development, and enlargement of the EU (Consolidated Versions..., 2016). Within these stages, there was a constant improvement of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development based on unchanged institutional principles to reduce uneven development of territories, support the outermost regions and eliminate regional imbalances through the development of policies and thematic actions, on the one hand, and on the other hand, ensuring the implementation of support for territorial cohesion through the proper functioning of the EU structural funds, which are the main financial instruments for achieving harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of EU territories.

The current processes of updating the regional policy of Ukraine are formed on the basis of identifying the challenges of regional development of Ukraine (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. N 587, 2002), in the list of which it is necessary to identify a new challenge regarding the ability of the regional development management system of Ukraine to adapt to the practice of functioning of the EU territorial cohesion policy. It is possible through the formulation of tasks and the best management solutions of the modern European integration process for the synchronisation and harmonisation of the regional

development policy of Ukraine and the territorial cohesion policy of the EU based on the definition of a common vision of the development features of the territories of Ukraine and the EU, namely in the context of supporting lagging territories through the development of territorial cooperation to reduce territorial differentiation, unlock the potential and increase the competitiveness of regions, territories of communities and regions, and the creation of special mechanisms for supporting and developing functional types of territories.

The legislator, characterising the above challenge, defines management measures in the context of creating a regulatory framework for the management of EU structural funds, which are defined in Articles 174 and 175 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (Consolidated Versions..., 2016). The measures are determined through the formation of capable structures that will form a new territorial model of EU funds management at the regional and local levels, which is the basis for the formation of a common administrative space for interstate management

of European integration with the identification of the modern European integration process of synchronisation and harmonisation of regional development policies of Ukraine and territorial cohesion of the European Union for the formulation and project identification of joint management decisions and actions at the national, regional and local levels of government of Ukraine.

As part of the dissertation research, relevant topics of regional development in Ukraine were identified, components of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development were defined (Table 1), based on the study of the history of the functioning of the EU territorial cohesion policy. It will contribute to the convergence of management systems of regional development policies in Ukraine and territorial cohesion in the EU, which will lead to the expansion of the participation of communities and regions of Ukraine in European projects through the creation of a system of support for the development of functional types of territories at the local and regional levels of government in Ukraine.

Table 2. Components of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development

Name	Characteristic
European integration mechanism for interstate management of territorial development	It is created on the basis of the concluded EU agreements: Treaties of Rome, Treaty of Brussels, Treaty of Maastricht, Treaty of Amsterdam, Treaty of Nice, Treaty of Lisbon. Ensuring the functioning: EU structural funds. Multiannual financial programmes. Resolutions of the Conference of Ministers of the Council of Europe responsible for spatial/regional planning (CEMAT). Practice of the Centre of Expertise on Good Governance of the Council of Europe
European integration process of territorial development management	Synchronisation and harmonisation of regional development and territorial cohesion policies
The object of territorial development management policy	Features of uneven development of territories, functional types of territories based on common interests with jurisdiction beyond administrative-territorial units in the system of regional development management and territorial cohesion policy
Prioritising political goals of territorial development management	The management process of policy development for determining priorities for interstate management of European integration based on the identification of challenges and the formulation of territorial development objectives
Principles of functioning and improvement of territorial development management	Multilateralism and good governance, multilevel governance and partnership. Improvement through the creation of databases on standards, tools, best practices and research on territorial development management
Integrated territorial investments	Financial instruments aimed at harmonious and balanced socio-economic development of various functional types of territories
Territorial development management	Includes: intergovernmental administration, national administration and public administration (regional and local) administration
Public management of territorial development	System of regional and local development management by functional types of territories, its synchronisation and harmonisation with the interstate and national levels of regional development management
Ecosystem approach in territorial development management	Identification of territorial development management systems in the context of the activities of government bodies at all levels, institutions, specialised organisations that are subjects and participants in the implementation of regional development and territorial cohesion policies
Public management toolkit for territorial development	A set of tools of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development, namely: methods of achieving political goals, management decisions, financial instruments, databases, best practices, regulatory legal acts, administrative agreements, etc.
Strategic planning for the development of functional types of territories	Development of mechanisms to support the development of functional types of territories at the local and regional levels of government for the implementation of public spheres of socio-economic and harmonious development of territories, taking into account the various features of territorial development. Formation of the three-level organisation of power "functional community – functional region – functional state", functioning of the territorial model of territorial development management
Conducting scientific research on territorial development management	The process of obtaining new data on the implementation of priorities for the European integration development of territories for the assessment and monitoring of the achievement of results of regional development and territorial cohesion policy
Laboratory modelling of territorial development	Introduction of management solutions and methods for simulation, analysis and forecasting of socio-economic processes of development of functional types of territories

Source: developed by the authors based on E. Syromolot & N. Gavkalova (2025)

Studying the functioning of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development will allow representatives of state authorities and local governments of Ukraine to acquire modern knowledge, skills, and competencies in the field of implementing the territorial cohesion policy of the European Union, namely, studying the essence of interstate and public management of territorial development, understanding the content of the European integration process of synchronisation and harmonisation of regional development and territorial cohesion policies, using the knowledge gained to create and strategically plan the development of functional types of territories based on good governance and multi-level governance, and developing tools for the support and development. It is necessary to reveal some aspects of the functioning of the components of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development. The problematic issues of the development of European integration are the focus of attention of many Ukrainian scientists. However, the transition of the state policy of regional development of Ukraine to the essence of the functioning of the policy of territorial cohesion of the European Union remains not yet sufficiently covered. This issue is of a general and directed disciplinary nature from the point of view of understanding the essence of European integration policy, and does not have a focus on determining the territorial impact on the development of effective policies and instruments for the development of territories. Meanwhile, there are expert analytical materials on the issues of regional development of Ukraine, raising these issues, but such materials do not provide a holistic view of the methods of developing and functioning of the policy of territorial cohesion.

Steps towards Ukraine's approximation to the standards of European policy in the domain of regional development are being formed in compliance with the recommendations of the European Commission's reports on the progress made by Ukraine in implementing the EU *acquis* (Chapters of the *acquis* EU, n.d.), among which the key one is *Acquis* 22. Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments of Cluster 5: Resources, agriculture and cohesion, which is an important component in the field of monitoring and evaluation of Ukraine's regional policy in the context of addressing the European integration challenge of Ukraine's regional development, namely the unpreparedness of the regional development management system for EU procedures and best practices (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 695, 2025).

A vital focus of the development of territories in the EU is the prioritisation of European integration policy in the context of ensuring the development of functional types of territories that go beyond the existing administrative-territorial borders and directly influence the formation of the content of the EU territorial cohesion policy as the main investment policy of interstate management of European integration aimed at overcoming obstacles to the socio-economic development of territories (Integrated territorial investments..., 2019). A critical aspect of assessing the territorial impact and formulating directions for strategic planning of regional development of Ukraine in the context of implementing the provisions of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU and moni-

toring the implementation of Ukraine's European integration policy are the reports of the European Commission on Ukraine's implementation of pre-accession obligations of the EU *acquis*, which determine European integration priorities and tasks for Ukraine's regional policy and provide up-to-date information on methods for developing regional development policy.

The Commission staff working document (2024) defines the primary understanding of EU regional policy as EU cohesion policy, which is the main instrument for reducing regional inequalities and investing in sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. This approach coincides with the conclusions of the report that the State Strategy for Regional Development 2021-2027 should have specific practical steps that are provided with the necessary resources to develop the potential of territorial communities and regions through establishing links with European groups of territorial cooperation for integrated territorial management, participation in Interreg cooperation programmes, with focus on using the experience of implementing EU cohesion policy and practices of multi-level governance, programming, financial provision, project management at the local and regional levels of Ukraine.

The identification of three levels in the territorial development management system, namely intergovernmental management, national (state) management and public (regional and local) levels, is a comprehensive step in the justification of public territorial development management as a new theory of managing functional types of territories within the framework of the European integration process of synchronisation and harmonisation of regional development policies of Ukraine and territorial cohesion of the European Union with special emphasis on the geographical uniqueness and functioning of new subjects of regional development policy. The European experience of managing functional types of territories requires new applied thematic studies and timely examination and monitoring of the existing and new source base of the functioning of the territorial cohesion policy of the European Union.

Development of policy toolkit to support the development of functional types of territories

The use of an interdisciplinary approach in conducting research on the European territorial cohesion policy will allow studying its various aspects, which will ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of regional development policies at the local and regional levels of Ukraine through the application of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development and the creation of tools to support functional types of territories, which are modern drivers of balanced and harmonious development of the territories of the European Union. The latest priority in the regional policy of Ukraine remains the European integration task of developing functional types of territories, which are influential European integration actors in the field of forming and improving the EU territorial cohesion policy, and are participants in multiannual EU programmes.

Part of the Commission staff working document (2023) is devoted to the development of functional

types of territories. Focusing on the three-level system of strategic planning organisation, namely: “state-region-community”, an assessment is given of the direction of the state regional policy of Ukraine in defining four functional types of territories: 3 territories of renewal; – regional growth poles; – territories with special conditions for development; and territories of sustainable development, and a recommendation is made on the need to coordinate actions with the EU regional policy, including with the NUTS territorial classification (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics).

Recommendations for achieving administrative capacity through initiating the creation of an official coordination system in Ukraine to prepare for effective programming and management of EU funds with the participation

of regional and local authorities of Ukraine will be an effective step in implementing practical management actions at the local and regional levels of government based on the study of European (Fig. 1) and Ukrainian practices of creating functional types of territories. It will be the basis for the formation of a new territorial model of a three-level organisation of government “functional community – functional region – functional state”, proposed by E.A. Syromolot, which is not limited to the 4 functional types of territories identified in the state regional policy of Ukraine and creates conditions for the introduction of innovative experimental management of regional development and is provided with the necessary level of knowledge of the identified European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development (Table 1).

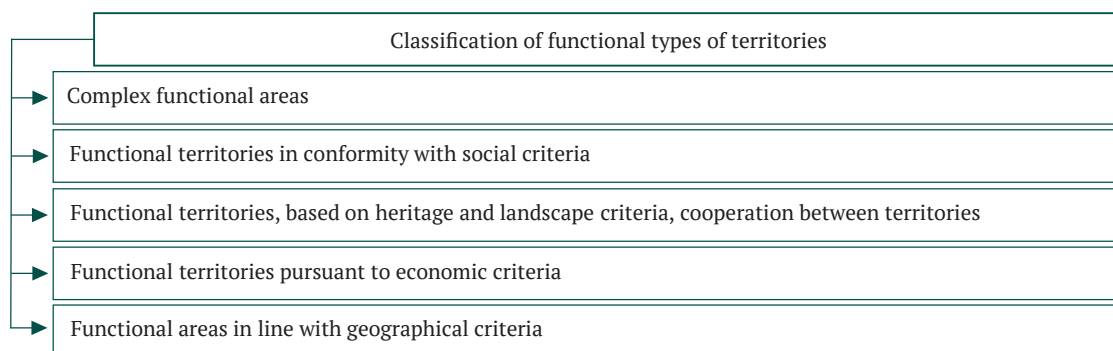


Figure 1. Classification of functional types of territories

Source: compiled by the authors based on the source Functional areas in the EU (n.d.)

The implementation of tasks to create functional types of territories in the city of Kharkiv and the Kharkiv Region is based on the experience gained. It requires standardisation and is the basis for implementing thematic actions, which are the basic management steps for forming the territorial cohesion policy of the European Union and forming the concept of developing a “functional community” and “functional region” in the city of Kharkiv and the Kharkiv

Region (Fig. 2). The next step was to propose an experimental model of management of the development of functional types of territories in the city of Kharkiv and communities of the Kharkiv Region, as “functional communities” and “functional region”, taking into account the existing experience of developing functional types of territories in the Slobozhanshchyna Region and an analysis of Ukrainian and European experience (Fig. 3).



Figure 2. Thematic actions for the development of functional types of territories in the city of Kharkiv and Kharkiv Region

Source: developed by the authors

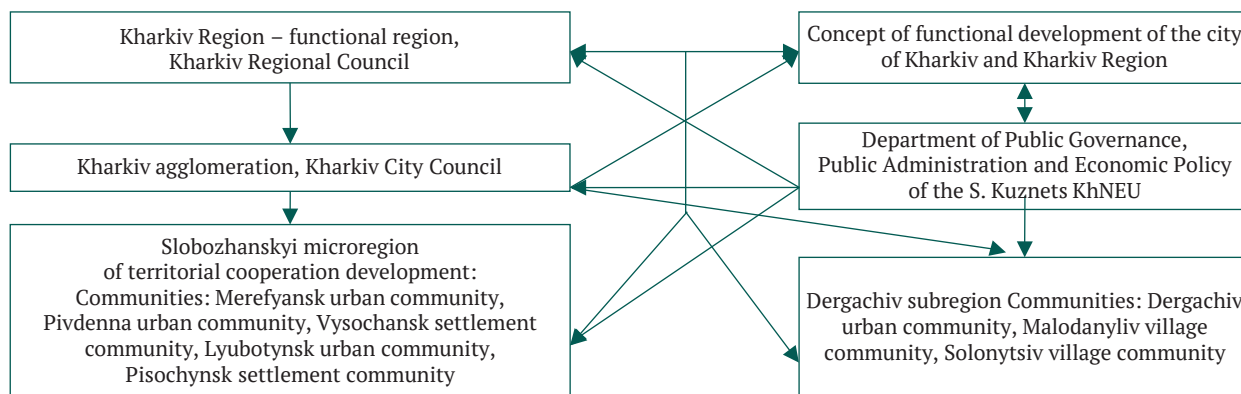


Figure 3. Experimental model of development management by functional types of territories in the city of Kharkiv and Kharkiv Region

Source: developed by the authors

As for the third level of governance, the “functional state”, the following characteristics should be noted. Among the recommendations provided by the European Commission is a proposal to organise coordination with responsible stakeholders on the implementation of the State Strategy for Regional Development of Ukraine and its coordination with the process of recovery and reconstruction of the development of territories affected by the war, both at the level of Ministries and with the participation of representatives of local and regional authorities of Ukraine. There are also recommendations on the dissemination of information about Interreg programmes in Ukraine, among local and regional authorities to support the development of projects with possible new beneficiaries from Ukraine. In 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine established the Coordination Centre for Regional Restoration (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 776, 2025) as a critical institutional body for coordinating the restoration of the regions of Ukraine. At the same time, it should be determined that the issues of monitoring and evaluating regional development from the point of view of approaching the standards of the EU territorial cohesion policy remain unresolved, complex and require the development of new organisational mechanisms for the territorial impact of the priorities of the European Union territorial agenda on the strategic planning of the development of the territories of communities and regions of Ukraine through the introduction of European practice of conducting experiments in the field of regional development management (Recommendations for policy..., 2022) and the implementation of the vision of the development of regions as living laboratories of European integration (EU border regions..., n.d.).

It should be noted that there is no practice of functioning of permanent organisational formats at the central level of government in Ukraine that would deal with issues of coordination of the development of territorial and cross-border cooperation, while various advisory and consultative, coordination councils, interdepartmental commissions, etc. functioned at different stages of development of regional policy of Ukraine. From the point of view of good practices in developing state policy in the field of Euroregion development in the period from 2002 to 2010, it is worth noting the activities of the Interdepartmental

Commission on the Development of Cross-Border Cooperation and Euroregions established in 2002 (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. N 587, 2002), the activities of the Consultative and Advisory Council on the Development of Euroregions and Cross-Border Cooperation under the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, and the establishment of the Assembly of Ukrainian Border Regions and Euroregions in 2010 (Ukraine’s European integration process, 2010). This experience in developing policy in the field of Euroregion development and cross-border cooperation, as an example of good governance and multilateral cooperation, should be used to implement the experience of developing the territorial cohesion policy of the European Union at the local and regional levels of government of Ukraine. It is worth mentioning the importance of reports on the implementation of the territorial cohesion policy of the European Union. These reports are seen as a process of preparing analytical documents with the data obtained for monitoring and evaluating the harmonious and balanced development of the EU territory over a three-year reporting period pursuant to the provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and improving the vision of priorities, goals, objectives, and results as a process of developing a policy for the development of territorial cooperation for the new reporting period on the principles of multilateralism and good governance.

An analytical report by the European Territorial Development Observatory (Böhme *et al.*, 2024) characterised the use of territorial cohesion policy at national, regional and local levels in the European Union countries as facing certain difficulties due to its complexity, low visibility and competition with other policy priorities, which makes it difficult for stakeholders to fully understand and prioritise. To improve the processes of reflecting in the regional development strategies of Ukraine the practice of developing and operating the EU territorial cohesion policy, European experience should be used. This could encompass the operation of the Coordination Network of Cross-Border Points (About the Border Focal Point Network, n.d.) to create a Coordination Network of Territorial Cohesion Centres as an online network of professional experts to discuss with stakeholders relevant issues of the development of territorial cooperation. The inclusion of European experts in this

network will allow directing cooperation with Ukrainian experts in the field of synchronisation and harmonisation of actions to improve the functioning of the EU territorial cohesion policy and the regional development of Ukraine as a modern process of interstate management of European integration between Ukraine and the EU. An integral factor in the success of the proposed process of convergence of management systems for regional development policies of Ukraine and territorial cohesion of the EU is the organisation of multilateral cooperation with leading European organisations whose field of activity is the development of territories. It was determined by the Ukrainian mission to the EU as a priority for Ukraine's European integration. It also required the implementation of experiments in the field of management of regional development of Ukraine in the context of modelling the strategic development of functional types of territories based on identifying the features of the development and functioning of management bodies grounded on the principles of multilateralism and good governance and assessing the effectiveness of achieving the implementation of certain political priorities.

The interdisciplinary and ecosystem approach to studying European policy is used from the point of view of studying the territorial impact of the source base of regulatory and legal documents, the creation of which is the result of cooperation between scientists, practitioners, and politicians whose field of activity is various aspects of regional development and territorial cohesion. E. Syromolot & N. Gavkalova (2025) defined functional types of territories as an object of public management of territorial development, which made it possible to study modern processes of decentralisation of interstate management of European integration from the point of view of the formation of new subjects of regional policy. These subjects are formed on the basis of functional ties of territories, which go beyond the existing administrative-territorial units of the EU member states. Discussion of the components of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development: research on the role of scientific ideas for the restoration of the development of territories of communities and regions of Ukraine through economic development and overcoming inequalities, obstacles, interregional disparities and asymmetries as components of European integration processes to ensure harmonious and balanced development and improve the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development was disclosed within the

framework of the Conference of the International Scientific Conference "Economic Development and the Legacy of Semen Kuznets" in 2024.

The scientific heritage of S. Kuznets as a pivotal part of the innovation ecosystem of the S. Kuznets Kharkiv National Economic University, which exerts influence on the functioning of important components of the innovation ecosystem of the S. Kuznets Kharkiv National Economic University, namely on cooperation with European organisations and embassies, and arranging cooperation with international universities, in the context of the renewal of the regional development of Ukraine, was presented by E. Syromolot & N. Gavkalova (2025). The annual Conference on the Scientific Heritage of S. Kuznets is a crucial determinant in the formation of the Kharkiv Region as a functional region and contributes to the approximation of the regional policy management system of Ukraine to the standards and best practices of the EU territorial cohesion policy in the context of the priority of developing functional types of territories and forming a three-level organisation of power "functional community – functional region – functional state".

Functional types of territories as an object of public management of territorial development

The Territorial Agenda 2030, which complements the EU's territorial cohesion policy, focuses on two main objectives for territorial development, namely achieving a Fair Europe through the implementation of three priorities: achieving the status of a balanced Europe, developing functional regions, ensuring integration across borders, and achieving the goal of building a green Europe by ensuring a healthy environment, implementing a circular economy, and sustainable connectivity (Territorial Agenda 2030, 2020). The essential characteristics of the defined priority of the development of the functional region Territorial Agenda 2030 are the identification as engines of regional growth that go beyond the administrative borders to organise cooperation with other regions, cities and towns, using an integrated multi-level partnership involving people from different levels of government, in particular local and regional, as well as different political sectors and social groups, which makes functional types of territories the object of public management of territorial development, and provides for the implementation of thematic actions in the field of management of the development of functional types of territories (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. Thematic actions in the field of development management of functional types of territories

Source: developed by the authors

An essential tool for developing territorial cohesion policy, the sphere of public management of territorial development and strategic planning of the development of various types of territories is the implementation of thematic pilot actions initiated by the Territorial Agenda until 2020 to develop priorities for aligning the development of regions with specific needs (Delivery of services..., 2024) and demonstrating and disseminating best practices of innovative management solutions in the field of service provision to address identified territorial challenges and overcome uneven development of territories. A significant step in the institutional development of functional types of territories is the development of a methodology for the functioning as subjects of regional development and territorial cohesion policy in territories that are located outside the administrative-territorial units of EU member states, have common functional connections and development features, are beneficiaries of multiannual programmes for the development of European territorial cooperation, which are financed from the EU structural funds, being a demonstration of the functioning as an object of public administration in the national system of regional development management and interstate management of European integration.

The methodological toolkit for improving the processes of management, coordination, planning, and implementation in different jurisdictions of functional types of territories developed by the Joint Research Centre, the Directorate-General for Regional Development of the European Commission and the World Bank, includes practical recommendations for local and regional authorities to develop integrated strategies, identify flagship projects, improve participation, strengthen urban-rural links, promote cross-sectoral integration, mobilise funding and improve monitoring and evaluation processes at the level of functional territories, which is an example of improving the European integration mechanism of public management of the development of EU territories and demonstrating the best practice of developing European territorial cooperation for its dissemination within the framework of the implementation of the state policy of regional development of Ukraine (Functional areas in the EU, n.d.).

The modern principles of the state regional policy of Ukraine are formed, including on the processes of formulation and identification of functional types of territories as objects of public management of territorial development. These principles are formed through the creation of a system of support for the development through the implementation of regional development programmes and projects in these territories, monitoring, and evaluation of socio-economic processes and results of socio-economic development, including functional types of territories (Law of Ukraine No. 156-VIII, 2015). Therefore, the definition of functional types of territories as an object of public management of territorial development and a subject of development of regional development policies of Ukraine from the point of view of synchronisation and harmonisation with the territorial cohesion policy of the EU is a relevant managerial action within the framework of improving the European integration mechanism of interstate management of European integration between Ukraine and the EU, and its practical implementation at the local and regional levels of government of Ukraine.

Laboratory modelling of territorial development to obtain new data for regional policy

Functional types of territories become a source of creating new regional development databases based on the identified features of territorial development and identified functional ties, on the basis of which projects are formed to attract integrated territorial investments, as a basic financial instrument of the EU territorial cohesion policy. The assessment of the implementation of regional development and European integration of Ukraine for the reporting period 2021-2023 conducted by the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine indicates a lack of progress in determining the list of functional types of territories and the creation by executive authorities and local self-government bodies of special mechanisms and tools to support these territories for the effective participation of communities and regions in EU financial instruments and structural funds that are available to Ukraine as a candidate country for EU membership (Report on the results..., n.d.).

The complexity of the defined task of regional development of Ukraine regarding the development of functional types of territories lies in the plane of determining the relevance of the introduction of a systemic and innovative approach, which provided for conducting experiments in the regional development management system, introducing into local regional development strategies a strategic goal for the development of functional types of territories and conducting laboratory modelling of the development based on the implementation of the best European practices for the development of territorial cooperation. Modern European practice of territorial development recognises cross-border regions as living laboratories of European integration, acknowledging the practice of creating Euroregions as the beginning of the organisation of territorial integration of EU border regions, which cover 40% of the territory and 30% of the EU population (EU border regions..., n.d.).

The practice of creating living laboratories has not yet gained any development in Ukraine, while in the EU, such laboratories have become a political tool for carrying out real experiments, where innovative solutions for the development of territories are created in partnership between local administrations, enterprises, and citizens (Nesti, 2017). A similar opinion was held by T. Santonen (2020), who characterises living laboratories as a multi-faceted approach of participants and development entities to the implementation of open innovations, focused on the user, for the joint creation and testing of new solutions in real conditions at different stages of the innovation process using various research, development and testing methods using a systematic methodology. The Living Lab development strategy is based on the concept of Open Innovation 2.0 (n.d.), as an integrated system of multilateral cooperation, guided by the realisation that the problems faced by countries and societies are too big to be solved separately, and that a new approach is needed in creating a four-fold spiral of cooperation on innovation development at the level of government, industry, academia and citizens, to collaborate, exchange ideas, knowledge, resources, innovations to achieve harmonious and balanced development.

The Living Lab concept is based on dynamic, open innovation ecosystems where research and innovation take

place in real policy sectors, rather than in isolated laboratories, and new solutions are not only innovative but also based on the real needs of citizens and end users. This approach makes Living Labs particularly effective in solving current problems and complex societal challenges (Living Labs, n.d.). Modern management tasks for the development of mechanisms to support functional types of territories in the regional development management system of Ukraine should be based on obtaining new data for strategic planning of socio-economic development of territories of communities and regions, related to the significant features of the development of functional types of territories, as those that go beyond the boundaries of existing administrative-territorial units of communities and regions and have identified functional spaces and connections, on which the development of integrated territorial investments and strategic planning of new socio-economic formations is based, as a new territorial model of attracting investments for the development of communities and regions of Ukraine (Functional areas in the EU, n.d.).

Taking into account the European experience, the urgent task of strategic planning of regional development in the context of updating the regional policy of Ukraine to ensure the assessment and monitoring of socio-economic processes occurring in functional types of territories, has

been identified as the urgent task of developing new statistical data for identifying new types of territories on the basis of which local governments of Ukraine will develop mechanisms for supporting new types of territories at the local and regional levels of Ukraine in programmes for the comprehensive restoration of the socio-economic development of communities and regions. Considering the recommendations of the Council of Europe on the development of strengthening good democratic governance and resilience in Ukraine (Strengthening good democratic..., n.d.) and the Plan for the restoration of local self-government from the consequences of the war (Recommendations for policy..., 2022), the Living Laboratory for the Development of Territories of Slobozhanshchyna was created for laboratory modelling and creation of databases of the development of functional types of territories at the local and regional levels, which will ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of the specified tasks for the renewal of the regional development of Ukraine. It was proposed to create a Living Laboratory for the Development of Territories of Slobozhanshchyna as a component of the innovation ecosystem of the Department of Public Governance, Public Administration and Economic Policy of the S. Kuznets KhNEU to obtain primary information to identify the functional ties of the territories of communities of Slobozhanshchyna (Fig. 5).

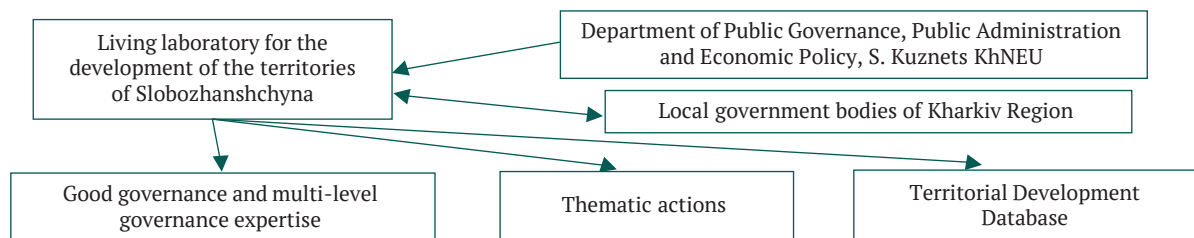


Figure 5. Living laboratory model development of the territories of Slobozhanshchyna

Source: developed by the authors

The pillar for the functioning of the Living Laboratory for the Development of Territories of Slobozhanshchyna, the creation of which was supported by the leadership of the S. Kuznets KhNEU and the Association of European Border Regions, will be the identification of existing functional ties with the communities of Kharkiv and Kharkiv Region in the field of regional development and the training of future specialists for civil service and service in local government bodies by the Department of Public Governance, Public Administration and Economic Policy of the S. Kuznets KhNEU.

● DISCUSSION

The use of the methods of forming the EU territorial cohesion policy in the development of regional development policies of Ukraine at the local and regional levels of government of Ukraine, as a priority of the European integration of Ukraine, requires conducting new comprehensive research and implementing management decisions based on innovative approaches and experimental management of regional development where functional types of territories are considered as objects of management and interdisciplinary research, conducting a study of the identified components of the European integration mechanism

of public management of territorial development. This mechanism was formed on the institutional principles of ensuring the cohesion of territories with special needs in the process of creating, developing and expanding the EU, which is an essential European integration task of regional policy for the formation of a new territorial model of participation of local governments of Ukraine in EU programmes and projects financed from the EU structural funds.

The analysis of the conducted scientific research indicates that scientists have covered various relevant areas of Ukraine's European integration. Nevertheless, the issue of the impact of the EU territorial cohesion policy from the point of view of using the methods of its formation on the process of strategic planning of regional development at the local and regional levels of Ukraine remains unexplained. This causes strategic uncertainty on the part of local governments of Ukraine in using modern practices for the development of European territorial cooperation (Khymynets *et al.*, 2022), which affects the perception of the need to develop a modern territorial model of territorial cooperation of communities close to the best practices for the development of functional types of EU territories, which are formed as new influential subjects of regional development and strategic planning, provided with the

necessary program and financial instruments for support and development.

P. Logvinov *et al.* (2025) considered the experience of the Carpathian Euroregion, which includes Ukrainian border regions, as a practical example of coordination with the priorities of the EU cohesion policy and the best model for sustainable and integrated development of the territories of communities and regions of Ukraine based on a detailed and meaningful description of the implementation of the policy of balanced and harmonious development of the territories of the European Union. The conclusions of this article coincide with the proposed vision of the development of the Carpathian Euroregion as an experimental and evolutionary laboratory of the processes of European integration of multifactor administrative and territorial entities, the reflection of the development of Euroregional formats in the national strategy for the development of cross-border cooperation of Ukraine for the period 2025–2030, the determined importance of the macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian region as a coordination tool for the development of infrastructure projects, the implementation of innovative models of the use of renewable energy sources and the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the region.

Meanwhile, the study determines that the Carpathian Euroregion experiences a deficit of institutional efficiency in using the opportunities of cross-border cooperation for socio-economic progress in border regions. It characterises the need to implement management actions to strengthen the coordination activities of the members of the Carpathian Euroregion, identifying it, including as a subject of regional policy in Ukraine and a participant in the development of regional development strategies and the state program for the development of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine based on the experience of developing the territorial cohesion policy of the European Union. C. Patrascu (2023) characterises the integral role and impact of cohesion policy on all European regions, through the creation of local strategies in the context of the EU renewal of the social market economy model through green and digital transition strategies to overcome challenges in the development of territories, including negative demographic trends and the growing shortage of skilled labour, considering cohesion policy as the main instrument of EU development, with a crucial mission – improving the quality of life and reducing inequalities in European regions, involving and consulting numerous partners and stakeholders.

The study focuses on the existing territorial instruments of the EU territorial cohesion policy, namely: community-led local development (CLLD) and integrated territorial investments (ITI), which are aimed both at interacting with communities and at building integrated multi-lateral financing. It is these tools that need to be applied in the practice of strategic planning for the development of functional types of territories in Ukraine, based on the identification of modern challenges and opportunities for the development of territories of communities and regions of Ukraine in conformity with the sustainable practice of developing European territorial cooperation and implementing management actions to renew the regional development of Ukraine. A. Ciffolilli *et al.* (2024) presented a thematic study of indicators of the use of EU cohesion policy funds in 2014–2020 from the EU structural funds of

various operational programmes in six EU Member States regarding the ability to adapt EU cohesion policy at the national and regional levels of strategic planning, identifying a typical model of absorption and territorial impact of EU cohesion policy at the local and regional levels of European integration of territories, through the ability of public management entities for the development of territories to make better management decisions in the field of balanced and harmonious development. The peculiarity of the study is the fact that it was prepared in accordance with the request of the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development, and it formulates proposals for the EU countries at the level of the countries to simplify the rules and procedures for the use of the instruments of the European Union cohesion policy by promoting the participation of the EU Member States in the development of the policy and adapting the policy to specific needs, reducing uncertainty regarding the application of its key principles and compliance with its requirements, promoting learning and the exchange of good practices.

At the national and regional levels of adaptation to the territorial cohesion policy, proposals are provided to strengthen administrative capacity, enhance coordination, promote compliance of national and regional legislative initiatives with EU rules and regulations to avoid uncertainties, as well as support the potential of beneficiaries of the territorial cohesion policy. F. Molica *et al.* (2025) presented a new perspective on the process of improving the EU territorial cohesion policy starting with the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy, according to which the resources of the EU structural funds were directed to financing large-scale infrastructure projects and investments in industrial production in less developed regions, but at the next stage, these steps became insufficient to ensure sustainable development, especially in more developed regions, where innovation and human capital played a greater role and there was a need to synchronise the EU cohesion policy with other EU policies, taking into account the EU's transition to a knowledge-based economy, the development of innovation and the implementation of structural reforms, strengthening a more centralised approach to management with stronger national coordination. Researcher V.I. Dudkevych (2021) noted the advantageous geographical location of Ukraine and identifies a strong potential for cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union by analysing the political steps that Ukraine took on the path to membership in the European Union. The statement about the complexity of the process of Ukraine's European integration and the need to create a powerful pro-Ukrainian lobby is undeniable.

The next stage of the implementation of EU cohesion policy, which F. Molica *et al.* (2025) defined as territorialisation, was aimed at overcoming excessive centralisation and building capacity, defining a new role and participation of local and regional authorities in the development and implementation of territorial cohesion policy, based on the creation of individual strategies that reflected the specific needs and strengths of different territories. The third stage – hyper-Lisbonisation – transformed territorial cohesion policy into a flexible and crisis-sensitive tool for the transition from spatially oriented to sectoral allocation of resources, which underwent regulatory adaptations, allowing for the redistribution of more funds and the

reorientation to strategic use to meet the EU's urgent priorities. Pursuant to F. Molica *et al.* (2025), periodisation of EU cohesion policy indicates a crucial process of improving the intergovernmental management of European integration development of territories through the identification of three stages of assessing the parameters of current actions as a factor influencing the functioning and achievement of cohesion policy priorities at the intergovernmental, national and regional levels of EU government, and the focus of attention on the use of financial instruments of the EU structural funds to reduce uneven development of territories and find a better territorial model of socio-economic development of territories.

A. Pegan & M. Lovec (2025) pointed out the importance of creating communication platforms for the development of territorial cohesion policy, paying attention to the growth of political problems that have become more complex, and emphasising the advantages of management practices of creating networks and partnerships of multi-level governance over hierarchical control of strategic development planning of territories. O. Marukhlenko & D. Kuzmenko (2024) characterise the essential characteristics of the EU cohesion policy as a regional, structural and main investment policy of the EU, aimed at increasing the economic and social well-being of EU regions and cities, reducing regional economic, social and regional disparities of European regions. The opinion of the authors of this article coincides with the conclusions of O. Marukhlenko & D. Kuzmenko (2024), who note a fairly high level of regional differentiation by level of development in Ukraine, and the importance of identifying the priorities of the EU cohesion policy as strategic imperatives of the regional development of Ukraine with clearly defined goals, instruments, and conditions for supporting local initiatives, based on the consolidation of state resources and territorial communities, but at the same time, which still remain an undefined mechanism for introducing methods of developing the EU cohesion policy into the strategic planning of the regional development of Ukraine, being an urgent challenge for the European integration of Ukraine.

● CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research allowed drawing conclusions about the functioning of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development, which describes crucial components of the European Union's territorial cohesion policy, as the main investment and regional policy of the European Union, the study of which is required to strengthen the ability of representatives of local governments of Ukraine to participate in the financial programmes of the European Union. The European integration mechanism allows defining critical drivers for achieving balanced and harmonious development of the European Union in the context of modern transformations of the regional policy management system and the transition to a new territorial model of territorial development management based on the development of functional types of territories as new actors of regional development in the countries of the European Union. An essential result of the implementation of European integration processes and the renewal of regional policy in Ukraine is the creation of a new territorial model for managing the funds of the European Union

structural funds, which is founded on the development of functional types of territories as new subjects of regional policy in Ukraine, requiring a transition to experimental management of regional development in Ukraine and laboratory modelling of new socio-economic entities as subjects of regional policy for which it is necessary to develop special mechanisms and tools to support the development.

Given the analysis of the implementation of the state strategy for regional development for 2023, the regional development management system at the local and regional levels is not ready to determine and plan the development of functional types of territories, which complicates both the European integration processes of Ukraine and the creation of a new territorial model for managing the funds of the European Union structural funds with the participation of communities and regions of Ukraine. The study proves that a feature of the transition to a new model of spatial development of territories, within the framework of the identified European integration mechanism, is the direct participation of scientists in the formation, together with local politicians, of new strategies for the development of various types of territories. The boundaries of the mentioned territories go beyond the boundaries of existing administrative-territorial units. Hence, the new geography of territories is shaped by establishing functional territorial ties. These ties are used to create new databases, underpinning strategic planning for the development of functional types of territories and supporting the participation in EU programmes as subjects of regional policy.

Discussion of scenarios for the development of functional types of territories of the Kharkiv Region, namely: the Kharkiv agglomeration, the Slobozhansk microregion for the development of territorial cooperation, the Dergach subregion, was proposed to be held within the framework of the permanent section "School of Public Administration and Project Management" of the International Scientific and Practical Internet Conference "Public Administration: Problems and Prospects" together with representatives of communities, experts of the Association of European Border Regions. It possesses extensive experience, practices, and examples of managing functional types of territories, which are Euroregions, European groups of territorial cooperation. Prospects for further research encompass developing the provisions of the concept of the development of the Kharkiv Region as a functional region and the living laboratory for the development of territories of Slobozhanshchyna. It relates to the framework of the modern European integration process of approximation and the use of experience in devising a policy for the functioning of the European territorial cooperation toolkit and the development of functional types of territories, which are critical components of the European integration mechanism of public management of territorial development.

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Деякі аспекти функціонування євроінтеграційного механізму публічного управління розвитком територій

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Анотація. Метою статті було дослідити історію формування політики згуртованості Європейського Союзу через ідентифікацію та формулювання євроінтеграційного механізму публічного управління розвитком територій для забезпечення ефективної участі громад та регіонів України у сучасних євроінтеграційних процесах переходу до функціональної територіальності як основи сучасної політики згуртованості ЄС у аспекті її функціональної територіальності та переходу до нової моделі розвитку територій «функціональна громада – функціональний регіон – функціональна держава». Запропоновано кроки зі створення в Україні суб'єктами регіональної політики нової територіальної моделі управління коштами структурних фондів Європейського Союзу, які включають ідентифікацію географічних функціональних зав'язків між суб'єктами регіональної політики, що формують нову територію співробітництва, яка виходить за межі існуючих адміністративно-територіальних одиниць та формує новий суб'єкт формування регіональної політики, а саме функціональний тип територій з формуванням нової бази даних для програмування соціально-економічних процесів розвитку органів місцевого самоврядування відповідно до завдань оновленої державної стратегії регіонального розвитку України. Запропоновано, у відповідності до кращого європейського досвіду бачення регіонів як живої лабораторії розвитку територіального співробітництва, кроки щодо створення живої лабораторії розвитку територій громад Слобожанщини для розробки механізму та інструментів підтримки функціональних типів територій на рівні м. Харкова та Харківської області, а також подальші кроки щодо створення Харківської агломерації, Слобожанського мікрорегіону територіального співробітництва та Дергачівського субрегіону, які були оприлюднені в рамках щорічної Міжнародної наукової конференції «Економічний розвиток і спадщина Семена Кузнеця» у 2024 та у 2025 роках

Ключові слова: територіальна згуртованість; територіальні диспропорції; інтегрована взаємодія; міждержавне управління; удосконалення процесу; громади та регіони