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# АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ НАУКИ ТА ОСВІТИ

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### **EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES**

European integration is the main priority of Ukraine's foreign policy, which entails systematic reforms in all areas of life according to EU norms and standards. The primary goal of European integration is for Ukraine to gain membership in the European Union, which requires a deep and comprehensive analysis of the consequences of joining the European community.

According to a sociological survey conducted by Maria Zolkina, a political analyst at the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Ukrainians consider the main advantages of EU membership to be the ability to move freely, the improvement of the population's living standards, and free access for young people to study at universities in EU member states. Every fourth Ukrainian believes that EU membership will facilitate internal reforms in Ukraine [1].

At the same time, it should be understood that the process of European integration is associated with deep socio-economic reforms and radical institutional changes, which entail certain economic costs and require significant investments.

Thus, it is necessary to determine the advantages and disadvantages of Ukraine's integration into the EU. Many domestic scholars analyze the pros and cons of Ukraine's accession to the EU in their works, focusing on key aspects: political, economic, and social. There are many economic advantages, among them: the integration of Ukrainian energy, transport, and telecommunications networks into the European infrastructure, the increase in the volume of exports of Ukrainian products to European markets, the exchange of business experience, and the use of new technologies in production. This will contribute to the development of small and medium-sized businesses in Ukraine, improving the country's investment climate. As a result of Ukraine's accession to the EU, the requirements for certification and standardization will increase, leading to an improvement in the

quality of domestic products. The competitiveness of the national economy in the EU market will grow due to achieving European levels of labor productivity, production profitability, and wages [2].

Kvasha O.S. and Sinyakova A.V. identify the potential economic threats, including the loss of competitiveness in certain sectors of the economy when entering the large European market. They note that it will be difficult for Ukraine to transition to European price levels, which could lead to economic problems. There is a risk of harmful production being transferred to Ukraine, where European countries will exploit Ukraine's cheap resource and raw material base, damaging the environment. A significant economic drawback could be that many domestic enterprises will not be prepared for the high level of competition present in the European market. Additionally, the increase in foreign investments in the domestic economy may have negative consequences, as the owners of the main means of production will be foreign, not Ukrainian, entrepreneurs [3].

Considering the social benefits, the following positive outcomes can be noted: effective human rights protection in EU institutions, implementation of social standards in healthcare, education, and culture. Social protection and insurance will be introduced, ensuring a high standard of living for the population, a developed environmental protection system, and the formation of a new national mentality. Social prospects encompass issues of education reform, healthcare, social protection, and social partnership between government, business, and workers. Social drawbacks may include deepening demographic decline, brain drain, and rising unemployment.

In particular, Chorna N. P. identified assistance from the EU in ensuring Ukraine's sovereignty as a political advantage. After accession, Ukraine will be involved in the common European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Additionally, joining such a developed organization will enable Ukraine to become a resilient pluralistic democratic state [2].

Therefore, it can be concluded that since the beginning of the 21st century, Ukraine has placed its main emphasis on integration into the European Union in its foreign policy. Based on the research conducted on the potential consequences of future accession, it can be summarized that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages by far. With EU membership, Ukraine will be able to become a highly developed country, taking a leading position not only within the Eurasian continent but also globally. Thus, we can identify the main advantages and disadvantages of Ukraine's European integration process, namely:

#### Advantages of Ukraine's EU Integration:

- Political & Security Benefits: Membership is seen as a way to strengthen Ukraine's sovereignty, democracy, and rule of law, integrating it into common European security and defense policies. It helps in fighting corruption and building resilient public institutions.
- Economic Growth & Modernization: Key economic advantages include integration into the EU's energy, transport, and telecommunications networks, increased exports, and access to new

technologies and business experience. Adherence to EU standards improves the quality and competitiveness of domestic products.

– Social & Human Development: Benefits for citizens include effective human rights protection, implementation of high social and environmental standards, and the right to free movement for work and study across EU member states.

#### Disadvantages and Challenges:

– Economic Costs: Potential threats include the loss of competitiveness for some industries not prepared for the high level of competition in the large European market, and the difficulty of transitioning to European price levels.

– Social Issues: Drawbacks may include a deepening demographic decline, potential "brain drain" of skilled personnel to other EU countries, and initial rising unemployment.

– Institutional & Political Hurdles: The process requires wide-ranging reforms, including judicial and legislative alignment. There are also concerns within some EU member states regarding the balance of power in an enlarged EU and potential costs associated with the accession of a large country like Ukraine.

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