

Ukrainian-British relations after Brexit: bilateral cooperation and European integration of Ukraine

Українсько-британські відносини після Brexit: двостороння співпраця та європейська інтеграція України

Natalya Yakovenko

Doctor of Sciences (History), Professor of the Department of International Organizations and Diplomatic Service, Educational and Scientific Institute of International Relations, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv,

e-mail: zaliznaledi@ukr.net

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3493-5950>

Yevhen Luzan

Postgraduate student of the Department of International Organizations and Diplomatic Service, Educational and Scientific Institute of International Relations, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv,

e-mail: eugene.luzan@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8896-1644>

Яковенко Наталія

Доктор історичних наук, професор кафедри міжнародних організацій та дипломатичної служби Навчально-наукового інституту міжнародних відносин Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка,

e-mail: zaliznaledi@ukr.net

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3493-5950>

Лузан Євген

Аспірант кафедри міжнародних організацій та дипломатичної служби Навчально-наукового інституту міжнародних відносин Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка,

e-mail: eugene.luzan@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8896-1644>

***Abstract.** The article examines the development of relations between Ukraine and the United Kingdom after the latter's withdrawal from the European Union. Expert assessments of the consequences of Brexit on Ukrainian-British relations, as well as the analysis of joint documents signed between Ukraine and the United Kingdom in the post-Brexit period, are taken into account. It turns out that, despite the decision to leave the integration association and its influence on political processes within the European community (loss of contributions to the common budget, lack of state representatives in key European institutions, strengthening of Eurosceptic tendencies in the rest of the EU member states), the United Kingdom remained an important international partner of Ukraine in bilateral relations and did not change its favorable attitude to Ukraine's European integration, guided primarily by foreign policy and security interests, but has lost access within the EU to levers of influence on positive decisions regarding Ukraine in this direction. The strategic level of partnership is laid down in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 2020, and later strengthened – already during the hot phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war – by additions to this agreement in terms of trade liberalization with Ukraine, as well as by the later agreement on security cooperation in 2024, which became the first such precedent in a number of bilateral security agreements between Ukraine and other partner countries. Since 2022, the United Kingdom has been actively providing the armed support necessary to repel the Russian invaders, which consists in the transfer of various types of weapons and the training of the Ukrainian military. In the end, the Ukrainian issue became a point of contact in European-British relations, guided by the*

common interest of protecting the region from escalation by Russia and preventing it from undermining the fundamental principles of the international order.

Key words: *Great Britain, Ukraine, EU, Brexit, Ukrainian-British relations, European integration, full-scale war against Ukraine, security agreements.*

Анотація. У статті проаналізовано розвиток відносин між Україною та Великою Британією після виходу останньої з Європейського Союзу. До уваги беруться експертні оцінки щодо наслідків Brexit на українсько-британські відносини, а також аналіз спільних документів, підписаних між Україною та Сполученим Королівством у період після Brexit. З'ясовується, що, попри рішення залишити інтеграційне об'єднання і його вплив на політичні процеси всередині європейської спільноти (втрата внесків до спільного бюджету, відсутність представників держави у ключових європейських інституціях, зміцнення євроскептичних тенденцій у решті держав-членів ЄС), Велика Британія залишилася важливим міжнародним партнером України у двосторонніх відносинах і не змінила свого прихильного ставлення до європейської інтеграції України, керуючись передусім власними зовнішньополітичними та безпековими інтересами, проте втратила доступ у межах ЄС до важелів впливу на позитивні рішення стосовно України на цьому напрямку. Стратегічний рівень партнерства закладено в Угоді про торгівлю та співробітництво 2020 року, а пізніше посилено – вже під час гарячої фази російсько-української війни – доповненнями до цієї угоди в частині лібералізації торгівлі з Україною, а також пізнішою угодою про співробітництво у сфері безпеки 2024 року, яка стала першим подібним прецедентом у низці двосторонніх безпекових угод між Україною та іншими державами-партнерами. Сполучене Королівство, починаючи з 2022 року, активно надає збройну підтримку, необхідну для відсічі російським загарбникам, що полягає в передачі різного асортименту озброєння та навчанні українських військових. Зрештою, українське питання стало точкою дотику в європейсько-британських відносинах, керуючись спільним інтересом захистити регіон від ескалації з боку Росії та не дати їй змогу підважити фундаментальні принципи міжнародного порядку.

Ключові слова: *Велика Британія, Україна, ЄС, Brexit, українсько-британські відносини, європейська інтеграція, повномасштабна війна проти України, безпекові угоди.*

Introduction. Ukrainian-British relations were established in 1991-1992, when the United Kingdom recognized the independence of Ukraine, and later established diplomatic relations (date of establishment – January 10, 1992). In the following years, the dynamics of such relations were influenced by increasingly important socio-political processes in Ukraine, such as the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity. During the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko, the strategic nature of Ukrainian-British relations was first declared (in May 2008, following a visit to London and a meeting with the then Prime Minister Gordon Brown), and since 2014, the United Kingdom has been systematically condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine on international platforms, starting with the initiation of international sanctions for the illegal annexation of Crimea; it also trains the Ukrainian military and provides military assistance (although at first it was non-lethal assistance). The post-Brexit period marked a qualitatively new stage in the formation of Ukrainian-British relations: The United Kingdom has concluded a number of agreements with Ukraine, comprehensively covering issues in the field of political, economic and security cooperation; the bilateral Agreement on Political Cooperation, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership (2020, with amendments) and the Agreement on Security Cooperation (2024) became important milestones. Even though the British side left the European Union after voting for it in a referendum in 2016, official London remained committed to Ukraine's European integration, seeing it as a guarantee of the development of a capable state – in the political, economic and military spheres – even despite the current war with an external aggressor. The issues of internal disagreements in British-European relations, which, in particular, led to Brexit (regarding migration, trade, distribution of powers between national and supranational institutions, etc.), practically did not

affect the aspect of supporting Ukraine as one of the democracies in the post-Soviet space, which are still in the process of their formation and at the same time are subject to significant security threats, which also affect the European continent as a whole. After the start of full-scale aggression in 2022, there is a tendency to find a common denominator in relations between Britain and the EU in matters related to the protection of Ukraine and the deterrence of the Russian Federation.

The purpose of the article is to explore the consequences of Brexit for bilateral Ukrainian-British cooperation and for Ukraine's European integration, the dynamics of changes in these two aspects after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, as well as the aspect of the UK-EU relations amidst war.

Literature review. The foundations of the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism and its impact on European policy are analyzed in the works of (*Krushynskyi V., 2003; Yakovenko N., 2003; Sørensen C., 2004; Baker D. et al., 2008; Spivak I., 2016; Taggart, P. & Szczerbiak, A., 2018; Hissa-Ivanovych O. & Kybich, Y., 2020*); the problems of the UK's exit from the EU and the impact on further European integration processes were studied by I. Spivak and O. Sharov, focusing on the consequences of Brexit for global markets, geoeconomics, and relations with Britain's main economic partners (*Spivak I., 2016; Sharov O., 2019*), T. Neprytska, who focused more on the political aspect of integration and the development of British-European relations after Brexit (*Neprytska T., 2017*). Previous periods of the development of Ukrainian-British relations (from 1991 to 2004) were considered in his scientific works by researcher A. Hrubinko (*Hrubinko A., 2005*), who also analyzed in detail the participation of the United Kingdom in the formation of the EU's foreign and security policy during 1991-2016 (*Hrubinko A., 2017*), and later, together with A. Martynov, published a monograph on the consequences of Brexit for the European Union and forecasts for the future of integration (*Hrubinko A., Martynov A., 2021*), which, in addition to the forecasts themselves, also contained a historiographical overview of the problems of EU development and an analysis of the impact of Brexit on European security. After the start of the full-scale invasion, A. Hrubinko analyzes the bilateral, global, regional and domestic aspects of the role of Great Britain in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and N. Yakovenko focused on diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the United Kingdom during the hot phase of the war (*Hrubinko A., 2022; Yakovenko N., 2023*). O. Cherevko analyzed the evolution of Ukrainian-British relations in the context of the full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, in chronological order listing the key events that took place in Ukrainian-British relations after February 24, 2022 and briefly about the key milestones in cooperation between the two countries before the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation (*Cherevko O., 2023*). The military aspect of such cooperation in the first year of the invasion (military aid, training of Ukrainian soldiers, institutional support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine) is the focus of Y. Stuzhuk (*Stuzhuk Y., 2022*). However, it should be noted that the topical issues of relations in the Ukraine-UK-EU triangle (and Ukrainian-British relations proper) are still rather understudied: this publication proposes to extend the time frame of the study (until the beginning of 2024 – the moment of adoption of the Agreement on Security and Cooperation between Ukraine and the United Kingdom), as well as taking into account the broader context of relations in the Ukraine-EU-UK triangle, which partly determines the strategic nature of bilateral Ukrainian-British relations, which are connected not only by interstate interests, but also constitute an important component of the UK's European policy in the post-Brexit period, which was briefly marked by a shift in British foreign policy orientations towards wider cooperation with non-European actors, in particular in the Indo-Pacific region, but after the large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, received a new impetus for development. There is a lack of a strategic analysis of Ukrainian-British relations that would complement the chronology of events within them.

Main results of the research. The results of the referendum on June 23, 2016, in which 51.89% of British citizens voted for the termination of EU membership, came as a surprise to the European community and even to British society itself. For example, C. Adebahr, a fellow of the European Carnegie Endowment, in a column for Global Policy, described the results of the Brexit vote as "the beginning of a new era, an era of great uncertainty for all Europeans" (*Adebahr C.,*

2016), showing the possibility of a reverse process of disintegration within the European community. The consequences of Britain's exit from the EU were as follows: the composition of the European Parliament changed (instead of 751 MEPs, 705 remained, some of the former seats of British MEPs were distributed among the rest of the EU member states), as well as the structure of contributions to the EU's joint budget: Britain ranked third in terms of its share in it (*European Commission, 2021*). 66 million people in the United Kingdom (out of a population of 500 million in the EU) remained outside the Common Market.

However, the then British government, headed by D. Cameron, accepted the results of the referendum, being its initiator at the beginning: then the government officials resigned (D. Cameron himself was in favor of keeping the UK in the EU). After the expression of will, the United Kingdom and the European Union had no choice but to form a new architecture of political and economic relations as separate entities. But Britain has also been an important partner in supporting Ukraine on its path to European integration, having leverage in European institutions – despite all the internal arguments against the United Kingdom's own EU membership. In view of Brexit, Britain has lost its representation in the EU institutions and, accordingly, the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding Ukraine.

Already on February 5, 2020 (a week after Britain's final official exit from the EU), the European Commission, taking advantage of the proposals of French President Emmanuel Macron, who then opposed the EU's eastward enlargement, published new approaches to the enlargement policy, which increased the requirements for candidate countries, in particular in terms of putting forward reforms as a prerequisite for opening negotiations and monitoring the progress of reforms by European experts on the ground (*European Commission, 2020*). This was a concession on the part of the EU for France, which received a reformed accession process for new EU members, including the possibility of postponing or completely stopping negotiations with countries that had not reached the reform process: this option existed before, but was practically not used (*Riebert B., 2020*). This is an illustration of how France, together with Germany, began to play a leading role in shaping the EU's foreign and security policy after Brexit. Given the context of Ukraine, which was just beginning to carry out European integration reforms (in particular, anti-corruption), despite the military conflict with Russia and the constant threat from it, such a policy posed serious security risks. At that time, the leadership of the EU leaders (E. Macron on the French side, A. Merkel and later O. Scholz on the German side) demonstrated loyalty to the Russian leadership: France and Germany were participants in the Normandy format, and Berlin also cooperated with Moscow on the construction of a new gas pipeline "Nord Stream 2" and the then German authorities lobbied for this project (*Saure H., 2024*). First, it has led to a delay in deepening Ukraine's European integration; secondly, it actually became an invitation for Russia to a new phase of the armed conflict, which has been going on since 2014 and entered a full-scale stage on February 24, 2022.

Both Ukrainian and British diplomats unanimously insisted on the preservation of the strategic nature of cooperation between Kyiv and London. In 2017, Secretary of State for Europe and America of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom A. Duncan stated that EU membership is not a determining factor in the policy of cooperation with Ukraine (*Ukrinform, 2017*); Former Ambassador of Ukraine to Britain N. Halibarenko noted Ukraine's interest in a "strong Britain" and the EU in the impetus for its reform against the backdrop of Brexit (*Halibarenko N., 2016*).

Working consultations on a new basic cooperation agreement between Ukraine and the United Kingdom began on January 14, 2020, 2 weeks before the official exit of Britain from the EU. Until the end of 2020, there was still a transition period, when the provisions of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, as well as, ultimately, all European trade legislation, remained in force with respect to Britain. There was a risk of termination of the preferential trade regime from January 1, 2021: access of Ukrainian goods to the British market would be carried out on worse terms.

N. Halibarenko noted in January 2020 that at the end of the previous year, the countries had reached an agreement in principle on most of the provisions of the trade component of the

agreement, including trade in goods and services, e-commerce, and capital flows (*Ministerstvo zakordonnykh sprav Ukrainy, 2020*).

The preamble to the text of the Agreement on Political Cooperation, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership between Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, concluded in October 2020 (signed by Volodymyr Zelensky and Boris Johnson, the then Prime Minister of the UK), contains emphasis on the development of strategic partnership (this level of relations is established by Article 1 of the Agreement), the UK's recognition of reforms in the security and defense sector, its confirmation of political, socio-economic, legal and institutional reforms in Ukraine (*Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2020*).

Among the basic provisions are the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Article 10), arms control (Article 11), the rule of law (Article 13), the protection of personal data (Article 14), the fight against illegal migration (Article 15), terrorism (Articles 19 and 22), crime and corruption (Article 21).

The largest section of the agreement concerns the development of trade and investment, the promotion of competition (Section V). It regulates market access, trade remedies, technical barriers, customs, business, e-commerce, capital flows, public procurement, protection of intellectual property rights, and sustainable development.

The advantage of the document for Ukraine was the expansion of the availability of its products on the British market by 98% while maintaining tariff quotas: the new agreement gave permission for an additional 2 thousand tons of Ukrainian exports to the UK. For Britain itself (as well as for Ukraine), the advantage was gaining access to Ukrainian food: the country depends on imports of such products. The relative cheapness of Ukrainian goods, as well as a wide range of products, became attractive (*Miroshnychenko V., 2020*). This was an indirect advantage of Brexit: without being bound by the conditions set within the EU, Britain was able to independently conclude more favorable agreements with various partners. The EU, on the other hand, is a food exporter, and therefore it is characterized by protectionist measures designed to protect local farmers (in particular, from France and Germany) from competition. Britain, on the other hand, got a way to meet its food security needs when the issue began to become part of the geopolitical agenda (*Toms B., 2020*). First, it is about preventing over-reliance on other countries and regions (China, India, the Middle East); secondly, the very possibility of exporting grain from Ukraine remains in question due to the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, which initially led to the blocking of the main routes for the export of agricultural products (through the Black Sea).

Other areas covered in the agreement include cooperation in the field of energy and energy security (Chapter 1 of Section V of the Agreement), environmental protection (Chapter 6), joint response to global and regional security threats, scientific and technical cooperation (Chapter 9), information society (Chapter 14), agriculture (Chapter 17), education and youth policy (Chapter 22), culture (Chapter 23), sports (Chapter 24).

Unlike the Association Agreement with the EU, it is not about the obligation to have a visa-free regime and access to employment in the UK for Ukrainian workers. Other differences noted in the analytical note of the National Institute for Strategic Studies are the abolition of import duties on products (Article 29 of the agreement with the EU, in contrast to the agreement with the UK, contains provisions on the abolition or reduction of import duties), assistance in the activities of diplomatic missions in both signatory countries of the agreement (Article 25), exemption of British technical and humanitarian aid from duties, fees, taxes and any other payments (Article 397) (*Us I., 2021*). However, it should be noted that the signed agreement is similar in content to the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU (even at the level of numbering sections and articles).

The text of the agreement separately states that "the United Kingdom recognises Ukraine's aspirations for EU membership and welcomes its European choice", recognises "the significant progress that Ukraine has made in carrying out reforms to this end". One of the goals of Article 1 of the treaty is to support membership not only in the EU, but also in NATO: both organizations are discussed in the context of supporting political, economic, security and defense reforms. However,

there are no obligations of Ukraine in terms of adapting national legislation to the European one, which is part of the Association Agreement with the EU.

Since the agreement was concluded before the full-scale invasion, it contained an emphasis on the goal of promoting a peaceful settlement of the conflict in eastern Ukraine (Article 7). Britain reaffirmed its position on non-recognition of the annexation of part of the Ukrainian territories (Crimea and Sevastopol), which was carried out in 2014. According to the text of the document, the parties stressed the need to give priority to the issue of resolving the conflict between Ukraine and Russia peacefully, coordinating this with other international actors. The desire to achieve a settlement through further international pressure on Russia as an aggressor state and the application of sanctions against it was declared. However, as noted earlier, this did not cancel Britain's support for the Ukrainian defense sector, reforms in the army, and increasing Ukraine's defense capability.

Nevertheless, the provisions on foreign and security policy, in contrast to trade and economic issues, in the document were of a framework nature, not establishing, in particular, mechanisms for coordinating and approving sanctions against the Russian Federation.

The positive side of Brexit in the context of Ukraine already during the full-scale invasion was London's more flexible response compared to Brussels and EU member states to Russia's escalation, which manifested itself in the form of accelerating arms supplies, reducing duties and a principled position on abandoning Russian energy supplies. Following the United Kingdom, it reduced duties for Ukraine and the EU. On the other hand, London has been criticized for failing to create a system of assistance to Ukrainian refugees and slow progress in imposing sanctions on Russian oligarchs (*Casalicchio E., & Kijewski L., 2022*).

Provisions on a softer tariff policy were contained in one of the addenda to the Agreement on Political Cooperation, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership, which were signed in May and August 2022. The first meant the abolition of all tariffs and quotas in mutual trade, the second contained the simplification of mutual access to the public procurement market. The relevant changes were fixed in the basic agreement. Also in March 2023, changes were made due to the signing of the Digital Trade Agreement – for the first time in Ukrainian history. Ukraine became the second country in the world after Singapore to conclude a similar agreement with Britain. Among the key provisions are the promotion of reducing the cost of trade administration through the introduction of digital solutions and technologies, the joint recognition of electronic authentication and digital signatures, the use of digital signatures in full for international trade (together with electronic contracts and invoices), strengthening consumer protection in the online space, the implementation of legislation to prohibit misleading information, cybersecurity, protection of cryptographic data, artificial intelligence (AI), cooperation in the fields of legal technologies and the recognition of digital documents (*Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2023; Ministerstvo ekonomiky Ukrainy, 2023*).

Since the beginning of 2022, even before the full-scale invasion, London has intensified the supply of weapons to Ukraine. Initially, light defensive weapons were provided in the form of thousands of small portable NLAW anti-tank systems. Then, after the start of the full-scale invasion, there were Harpoon anti-ship missile systems, heavy armored vehicles (such as Mastiff, Husky, and Wolfhound), air defense systems, and multiple rocket launchers (M270). In January 2023, Britain announced the provision of 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine, and in May of the same year, the transfer of long-range Storm Shadow missiles. Again, it is worth noting Britain's initiative in providing weapons to Ukraine to be able to defend itself from Russian aggression and gradually expand the range of supplies of weapons and military equipment. Britain's decision to provide tanks preceded Germany's agreement to provide Ukraine (after a long refusal) with its own Leopard tanks; on the issue of long-range missiles, the British were significantly ahead of the United States, which provided its own long-range ATACMS missiles to the HIMARS multiple launch rocket systems only in October 2023.

Together with Poland and the United States, Britain plays a leading role in coordinating international military assistance, as stated in the report of the House of Commons of the British Parliament on military aid to Ukraine since the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion (*UK Parliament, 2024*). Britain is actively involved in the work of the Multilateral Donor Coordination

Platform for Ukraine and the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (better known as the Ramstein format), within which many coalitions have been created, among which the United Kingdom leads the coalition on maritime security.

Long-term military exercises for the Ukrainian Defense Forces (Operation Interflex) are being conducted. In November 2023, the goal of training 30 thousand Ukrainian soldiers (including recruits), set by the end of the same year, was achieved. By mid-2024, it was planned to train another 10 thousand military personnel (*UK Parliament, 2023*).

The United Kingdom also became the first country to formalize its long-term security commitments to Ukraine by signing a security agreement on January 12, 2024, between the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, and the UK's Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak. The agreement is concluded for 10 years, and the parties intend to maintain its validity as long as Ukraine "goes its way to membership in the Euro-Atlantic community." There are provisions to regulate the future status of the treaty – if Ukraine becomes a member of NATO before the expiration of the agreement.

The document significantly complemented the existing Agreement on Political Cooperation, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership in terms of security commitments. General considerations on cooperation in the field of defense and security are complemented by provisions on cooperation in the event of a future armed attack, protection of critical infrastructure, cooperation in the field of cybersecurity and information security, cooperation in the fight against dangerous organized crime, recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine, compensation for damage caused by Russian aggression. There is also an emphasis on supporting reforms, with provisions on access to the financial and technology sectors, the insurance industry, etc.

The goal is to "ensure sustainable forces capable of protecting Ukraine now and deterring Russian aggression in the future, through the continuous provision of security assistance and modern military equipment on land, in the air and at sea, in space and in the cyber domains, prioritizing air defense, artillery and long-range firepower, armored vehicles and other key assets if necessary, such as combat aircraft" (*Prezydent Ukrainy, 2024*). It provides support for the protection and defense of the border, its engineering and fortifications, observation and monitoring of the movement of enemy troops, post-war reconstruction of border infrastructure, demining and disposal of explosive ordnance; as well as support for medical training and prosthetics. A separate section of the agreement is devoted to cooperation in the defense industry.

There is a commitment on the part of the United Kingdom to provide long-term advice and support to defence management and policy to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. It is about reforming the Armed Forces of Ukraine with an emphasis on ensuring increasing interoperability with NATO, which contributes to the potential increase in the Alliance's armed forces.

Paragraph 2 of Part 8 of the agreement contains an obligation, in the event of an armed attack by Russia on the Ukraine, to hold consultations at the request of one of the parties to the agreement within 24 hours to determine the measures necessary to counter or deter aggression. The United Kingdom assured that it would provide Ukraine with "rapid and sustainable" security assistance, modern military equipment "in all necessary areas", as well as economic assistance, however, taking into account its legal and constitutional requirements.

In the context of the development of British-Ukrainian relations at the present stage, it is worth noting the strengthening of British-European ties on the basis of common interests in Ukraine. It is worth noting the change of tone towards European partners in the UK's 2023 Integrated Review, which, unlike a similar document adopted two years earlier, that declared the UK's desire to expand its own circle of international partnerships outside the EU and emphasized the opening of the opportunity to independently determine its own foreign policy priorities through Brexit, emphasized the strengthening of ties with European states, actualized by the need for to maintain the security of the region against the backdrop of Russian aggression against Ukraine, and envisaged deepening cooperation with the EU in various areas of common interest, noted close cooperation with France, Italy, Germany within the G7 on sanctions against the Russian Federation,

as well as rapprochement in relations with Ukraine, Poland and the Baltic states, which are susceptible to the Russian threat (*Government of the UK, 2021; Government of the UK, 2023*). The January 2024 report of the House of Lords' European Affairs Committee noted the "Ukraine effect" in strengthening the UK's relationship with the EU in the field of foreign policy, security and defence. The three areas of cooperation that have developed since the invasion are sanctions against Russia, British-European defence cooperation, and the reconstruction of Ukraine (*House of Lords, 2024*). The United Kingdom is already involved in reconstruction planning – in particular through the Inter-Agency Donor Coordination Platform – and has the experience it has to offer from previous reconstruction programmes. In 2023, Britain was the venue for the Ukraine Recovery Conference. In terms of collective security and defense, back in November 2022, the EU accepted the United Kingdom's request to join the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) military mobility project: Britain sees in it, first of all, a pragmatic value related to the need to coordinate efforts to support Ukraine in Russia's war against it, in particular in terms of providing rapid mechanisms for the transfer of necessary weapons and military equipment. It should be noted that military mobility is a common interest of the EU and NATO and fits into the UK's flexible approaches to defense cooperation with the EU, when it primarily supports those initiatives that complement the activities of the North Atlantic Alliance (*Antinozzi I., 2022*). However, at the time of writing the paper, Britain has not become a full member of PESCO. In addition, the conclusions of the House of Lords committee refer to restrictions on the part of the European Defense Fund with a budget of 8 billion euros for the purchase of weapons, which serve as an obstacle to cooperation with the fund of third countries, including Britain. Effective cooperation between Britain, the United States and the EU on the issue of sanctions policy was noted (in particular, the role of the G7 in coordinating sanctions is decisive, in the opinion of the committee). However, there are concerns about Russia's growing ability to circumvent sanctions through third countries and uninsured shadow tanker fleets. The committee also asked Foreign Secretary David Cameron to provide more details in the context of his statement that there is allegedly a legal way to use frozen Russian assets to rebuild Ukraine, despite the fact that there are also legal difficulties associated with the implementation of such a mechanism. At the same time, it is worth noting that Britain is generally a pioneer in the implementation of sanctions related to the unprovoked Russian full-scale invasion: we are talking about sanctions that were imposed in response to Vladimir Putin's decree recognizing the independence of the separatist formations "DPR" and "LPR" in eastern Ukraine, which was signed on February 22, 2022, two days before the full-scale war. The day before, the first sanctions were imposed by the EU. As of 2024, Britain has sanctioned more than 2000 Russian citizens and companies, depriving Russia of \$400 billion in assets and revenues, equivalent to 4 years of funding for the war in Ukraine. 29 banks, which account for more than 90% of the banking sector of the Russian Federation, more than 130 oligarchs and their family members with a total fortune of about 147 billion pounds at the time of the invasion were sanctioned. Imports to Britain from Russia fell by 99%, exports from Britain to Russia – by 73% (*Government of the UK, 2024*).

Conclusions. The UK's exit from the European Union not only caused a crisis within the integration association, which for the first time faced the voluntary secession of a sovereign state from its membership, but also raised the question of further development of Ukraine's relations with both the EU and Britain. In the first case, it is also necessary to take into account the prospects and aspirations of Ukraine itself to become a member of the European Union, especially given the proximity of Russia, from whose sphere of influence not only Ukraine, but also a number of other states of the former USSR, such as Moldova and Georgia, are trying to leave. Britain is the main driving force supporting Ukraine and, in particular, its European integration aspirations, and remains committed to this even despite its withdrawal from the EU (or at least does not interfere with Ukraine's intentions to join the association), however, after that it does not have any voting rights at the level of various European institutions (European Parliament, EU Council, etc.) and is not able to promote the necessary interests and influence decision-making through its own representation in such bodies. Britain's treaty obligations as part of the EU to Ukraine have been replaced by a new framework defined by bilateral agreements. These are the Trade and Cooperation

Agreement signed in October 2020, which is similar in content to the Association Agreement with the EU, and supplemented/edited in 2022-2023, after the start of a full-scale invasion; as well as the first-of-its-kind January 2024 agreement, which marked the beginning of a series of bilateral security arrangements between Ukraine and other partners. In addition to such a framework, there is also an existing political consensus within the United Kingdom itself on support for Ukraine, which ensures decision-making on the regular provision of military, humanitarian and financial aid packages. Finally, against the backdrop of the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, the nature of British-European relations has changed: there are prerequisites for strengthening cooperation on key vectors related to foreign policy, security and defense, namely, sanctions against Russia, military assistance and reconstruction of Ukraine. Protection from the Russian threat and punishment of the aggressor country for the war unleashed by it are common interests of these parties at the current stage, despite differences in the mechanisms for the practical implementation of the intended goals.

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