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**ROLE OF POLAND IN UKRAINE’S EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS**

(Lenkijos vaidmuo Ukrainos Europinės integracijos procese)

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Divieiev, M. Role of Poland in European Integration of Ukraine: Bachelor Thesis in Political Science / Supervisor Associate Professor Yehorova, O; Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, Department of Political Science. Kaunas. 2022.

# **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis conducts research of the process of Ukrainian integration into the European Union and the role of Poland in this question. The research explores the basic theories of integration, and a focus on the regional integration. Additionally, the aspect of the integration theory, is presented in the context of European Union and applied in the same manner. There is the analysis of the historical stages in the relationship between Ukraine and EU, and the key aspects that pushed the relationship. The methodology of this thesis is a case study with discourse and document analysis. The bachelor describes and analyzes the process of the Association agreement between EU and Ukraine and additional attention is give to Poland’s role in this question. An analysis of Polish and Ukrainian relationship is presented in both a two-sided format as well as in the regional organizations. A detailed attention is given to how Poland supports Ukraine as a strategic partner and basing on the conducted analysis it can be said that Poland is a strategic partner is Ukraine integration process into the European Union.

Divieiev, M. Lenkijos Rolė, Ukrainos Integracijoje Į Europą: Bakalauro Baigiamsis Darbas Politikos Moksluose / Darbo Vadovė Profesorė Yehorova, O; Vytauto Didziojo Universitetas, Politikos Mokslų ir Diplomatijos Fakultetas, Politikos Mokslų ir Diplomatijos Fakultetas, Politikos Mokslų Katedra. Kaunas 2022.

# **Santrauka**

Šiuo bakalauro baigiamuoju darbu bus atliktas tyrimas analizuojantis procesus Ukrainos integracijos į Europos Sąjungą bei aptarta Lenkijos valstybės rolė šiuo klausium. Tyrime bus analizuoja pagrindinės integracijos teorijos, fokusuojamasi į regioninę integraciją. Papildomai, integracinės teorijos aspektai, pateikti bei pritaikyti Europos Sąjungos kontekste. Analizuojami istoriniai tarpsniai tarp Ukrainos ir Europos Sąjungos, pagrindiniai aspektai dėl kurių santykiai sustiprėjo. Šio baigiamojo darbo metodologijoje yra atvėjo analizė su diskursu bei dokumentu analize. Bakalauro darbe aptariami ir analizuojami procesai Asociacijos sutarties tarp Europos Sąjungos ir Ukrainos bei papildomas dėmesys skirtas Lenkijos rolei šiuo klausimu. Lenkijos ir Ukrainos santykių analizė yra pateikta abiejų: dvišalių formatų bei regionių organizacijų. Detalus dėmesys skirtas kaip Lenkija remia Ukrainą, kaip strateginis partneris. Remiantis atlikta analize galime sakyti, jog Lenkija yra strateginis Ukrainos partneris integracijos procese su Europos Sąjunga.

# **INTRODUCTION**

**Preface.** In a modern, globalized world, the development of international politics is important for any country. Since the world is closely intertwined with each other, and neutral countries such as Switzerland is a drop in the ocean, the presence of allies in international organizations is necessary and mutually beneficial. Bilateral and regional relations of nations play a critical role in the country’s external affairs. Friendly countries can help defend each other’s interests. For instance, in integration into various interstate economic and political associations, acting as an advocate for the partner country as well as call on the world community to support the country for “a certain reason and circumstances”. In 2022, it is clear what is at stake. The partnership between Poland and Ukraine is important for many reasons – historical ties, economic cooperation, diplomatic support for each other in international arena, integration into regional alliances and improvement of security in the East European region. This message is clearly seen in the statement of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, “Our countries are united not only by a common border, but also by common values and positions on key issues of the European and international agenda,”[[1]](#footnote-1). Poland has been actively supporting Ukraine’s European aspirations for many years as well as showing solidarity in an effective policy to counter Russia’s war in Ukraine.

**Novelty and relevance of the topic.** Studies of Ukraine’s integration into the European Union are quite popular among the Ukrainian scientists. However, most of the research written earlier are not relevant. The study of the integration processes became relevant after the 2013 Maidan revolution and Russian invasion in Ukraine. Due to the current situation in Eastern Europe, namely the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, there is an acceleration of the processes of Ukrainian integration into the EU. Therefore, the topic is widely discussed these days: a lot of new information, statements and documents have appeared that fundamentally change the study of the integration process. Despite a large number of research available with many different countries, the role of Poland in this bachelor thesis was chosen for the research, as Poland play a main role in the launch and development of integration processes, acting as an advocate of Ukraine to the EU. In addition to the events of past years, this fact is confirmed in our days not only by words but also by actions nowadays.

**Hypothesis:** Poland and Ukraine are strategic partners in bilateral relations and in regional organizations. Poland supports Ukraine in all possible ways and regardless of the situation. Poland plays an important role in the European integration and promotes the Ukrainian issue in the international arena as a member of the European Union and NATO.

**Research problem.** The process of Ukraine’s integration into the European Union is a very complex issue, as it takes place over a long period of time and faces many factors influencing this process. The goal of the thesis is a detailed study of Ukrainian integration and the role of Poland in this process.

**The object of the thesis.** The object of the study is the process of Ukraine’s integration in the EU. The subject of the study is the Role of Poland in the advocacy of Ukraine’s integration in the EU.

**Goal:** The Bachelor thesis will explore the role of Poland in Ukraine’s integration process into the European Union

**The tasks of the thesis:**

1. To adapt the regional integration theory, specifically intergovernmentalism, in the context of European Union.
2. To analyze the political and economic relations between Ukraine and EU.
3. To Evaluate the cooperation of Ukraine and Poland.
4. To discuss the concept of Ukraine’s future as a member of EU.

**Methodology.** This bachelor thesis will be done in a case study format and will rely on the document and discourse analysis. Also, additional attention will be paid to statement of politicians and state representatives as it provides vital insight for bachelor thesis development. The method would include the triangulation method, employing documents, discourse, and secondary data analysis. Reasons for such choice of methodology lies in the critical documents analysis which will include different EU treaties as well as different statements presented by EU institutions to provide information regarding the relationship between Poland, Ukraine, and EU as a whole. Discourse analysis will help in explaining the concepts of integration, the criteria, and historical contexts. At the same tie it will assist in developing the main ideas of the thesis: the role that Poland plays in Ukraine’s aspiration to the European Union.

**Literature Review.** This bachelor thesis will include various types of literature and resources to describe and analyze the research. The scientific literature of the book is used as well as the articles of other authors. Chronological books on the events mentioned in the study. Various informative publications, statistics, reports, press releases. Documentary base of contracts agreements and other legal documents. Articles of various well-known media, records of appeals, statements, official resources of the authorities. Important research’s where used, for this thesis. Namely, the research of Hayetska and Prykhnenko, which examined relations between Poland and Ukraine in the context of European integration, as well as Poland’s contribution to the realization of Ukrainian european aspiration. As well as the research of Chebotaryov about the Lublin Triangle, which describes its prerequisites and the potential for functioning in the future. In addition, Oleksiy Khmelnytsky research, which aimed at Ukraine and Poland in the security problems of Eastern Europe.

**Theory.** This bachelor thesis will include the basic theory and history of the concept of integration to explain how and why the integration is work. As well as regional integration theory to explain role of Poland in the EU as being the advocate for Ukraine’s integration process. The regional integration theory encompasses several aspects that explain why and how states decide to give up some of its authority to a regional government and also how can the theory explain the economic and political benefits that contributed to the unification process. The reason this theory was chosen for this bachelor thesis is that though it became prominent in the 20th century by focusing on a broad comparative scope, its directly focusing on the European Union and European integration since around 1960s. Giving insight on Poland’s integration in will provide various explanations in Ukraine’s integration process. Within this regional integration theory, the aspect of intergovernmentalism applies the most, where the main argument is that national governments are crucial actors whenever it comes to regional integration. Governments attempt to maximize their security situation and improve their economic well-being by integration with each other through international an intergovernmental organization.[[2]](#footnote-2) In the case of this thesis its Ukraine which seek integration with EU through the advocacy of Poland.

**Structure of the paper:** The bachelor thesis consists of three main chapter:

First chapter: “Concept of integration and European Union background” begins with the “Integration idea: denotation, forms and theory” subchapter which reveals the theory of basic principles and concepts of integration. Following subchapter is “Regional Integration Theory: Intergovernmentalism” which focuses on the concept of regional integration in the context of the bachelor thesis. Coming subchapter is “European integration: historical background and causes” which aims to study the history of the European Union in the context of the integration theory. Last subchapter in this section is “European Union and Eurozone criteria” which provides the theoretical foundations for European integration criteria.

Second chapter: “European integration of Ukraine” begins with the “Historical ties between Ukraine and European Union” subchapter which explains the historical relationship between Ukraine and the EU, as well as the key moment in the beginning of the process of Ukrainian full-scale integration. Following subchapter is “European Union-Ukraine Association agreement” which provides an analysis of the process of signing an agreement in the case of Ukraine. Coming subchapter is “Ukrainian reforms towards joining the EU” which analyzes the process of implementation of the association agreement and Poland’s assistance in this process. Last subchapter in this section is “EU membership application for Ukraine” in which Description of the key moment to start the application process and its progress despite the current circumstances in Ukraine. In addition, the Polish promotion of the Ukrainian application.

Third chapter: “Relation between Poland and Ukraine form 2019 till nowadays” begins with the “Historical ties between Poland and Ukraine” which describes and analyzes Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership and cooperation to the nowadays. Following subchapter is “Lublin Triangle” in which Trilateral relations between Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania are analyzed. As well as reasons for such cooperation and prerequisites. Last subchapter is “Polish reaction and support for Ukraine during the Russian invasion of Ukraine 2022” which describes and analyzes the Polish assistance provided to Ukraine.

# **1. CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION AND EUROPEAN UNION BACKGROUND**

## **1.1 Integrations idea: denotation, forms and theory**

Integration is a broad term that has several definitions. General definition – INTEGRATION (from the Latin integratio – replenishment, restoration) – the union of any elements into one whole, as well as the combination and coordination of actions of different parts of the whole system; the process of convergence and the synergy of distinctive formations.[[3]](#footnote-3) In other words, the basic definition of integration can be matched with the basic concept of an elements and a system – each of elements is an independent part, but when combined, together they form a system. Integration of elements into the system is the process of rapprochement and the formation of relationships which can be – economic, political, and military.

Economic integration occurs by deepening the relationship between national economies. The main actors are the national economies of countries and the interaction of their structures between each other. A common economic space is being created, thanks to which there is a free movement of labor, goods, resources, and capital. This process occurs when countries unite and form a deeper economic space. This is done through integration agreements. Countries expect benefits: economic, political, social, or military. The agreement may be concluded to improve financial performance, but other goals may also be pursued. As a rule, successful economic integration is a good start for political and military integration. For example, the process and stages of the creation of the European Union, as well as the fact that most of the EU members are members of NATO. There are several levels of economic integration: Firstly, Preferential trading area as a result – a more favorable trade regime than between third countries; Secondly, Free-trade area as a result – the abolition of trade barriers such as: quota level, unpleasant tariffs, high taxes; Thirdly, the creation of Customs union as a result – countries abolish national customs tariffs and introduce a common trade policy towards countries that are not members of the customs union; Fourthly, Common market as a result – the absence of trade barriers, cooperation in fiscal and monetary policy, as well as integration in the field of production; Finally, the highest level of integration – Economic and monetary union as a result – the implementation of a common economic policy, the use of common currency(there are exceptions), the formation of a supranational regulatory authority.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Political integration is a set of political processes that are aimed at consolidating, uniting society, political structures or ethnic groups within one state or several states to counteract internal and external destructive factors. Main features of political integration: Interaction – close multilateral relations between countries based on the principle of friendship and cooperation; Coordination – making a common decision in matters of foreign and domestic policy that concern both countries; Unity – formation of a single management system for such issues as defense, foreign policy, foreign economic activity. Countries cooperate with each other by creating of supranational authority in different areas, conduct a common foreign policy as well as domestic one.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Military integration is another aspect of the global political process because where there is a politics, there is the military. Military integration assumes the main goals: the solution of security problems, collective defense, and crisis management. The main actor is an alliance. The main concept of which is to protect the countries of the alliance that are attacked by another country.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Military integration also strives to establish a type of order to prevent civil war and counterinsurgency, for example they could incorporate the rebels into the newly formed or previously existing armed forces to secure the peace in the region. It is usually done after a civil war to promote cooperation and stability inside the country or alliance.

## **1.2 Regional Integration Theory: Intergovernmentalism**

The regional integration theory is one of the best theories to apply to the European Union, as it’s most prominent intergovernmental alliance out there and the best example for this theory. In scope the regional integration theory is, one of its major contributors is Stanley Hoffman who utilize the realist basis to explain the intergovernmentalism theory, where state interest is taken as priority by the government and competition with other governments deliver conclusions that for national governments it is simply better cooperating with each other yet having each still retain its sovereignty and have self-interests. One of the prominent explanations for EU. This theory is criticized by the neo functionalists, who claim that there is more to integration than just national government, there are also other factors such as business corporations, and interest groups, shape the integration process. To secure their interests, some governments pay funds to certain interests’ groups or advocate these groups which will pursue the set agenda.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In the case of this Bachelor thesis, one can say that the mutually beneficial trade and relations between EU and Ukraine through Poland, ended up being one of the theoretical triggers for Poland advocation of Ukraine’s membership in EU, as it’s a mutually beneficial agreement.

## **1.3 European integration: historical background and causes.**

European integration is a process that has its origins in the early in twentieth century. The turning point is the desire of the European community to unite as a consequence of the First and Second World Wars horrors. These thoughts arise among the representatives of the political elite as well as among the entire European people. Since the European society has expressed its desire to unite, the process of economic and political integration begins. This process is known today as an example of the closest level of interaction and the highest level of integration processes, namely the European Union.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The process of European integration begins with the implementation of the Robert Schuman plan. Namely - creation of the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty in April 18, 1951. This treaty is better known as the Treaty of Paris. Since Europe needed economic rapprochement to prevent war between European countries, as well as joint efforts to restore the economy and improve living standards after the Second World War, this treaty became the much-needed solution. As a result of the functioning of the ECSC Treaty, there were positive changes: the European society coped with the post-war crisis in the same way as all subsequent ones, ensured a balanced development and distribution of resources and contributed to the necessary restructuring and reconstruction of industry.[[9]](#footnote-9) It is important to note, since the desire to prevent war became the key to the integration process of Europe. ECSC was also created to take control of the economy and industry of Germany so that they no longer produce military equipment in large volumes and there was no war, since steel and coal are among the most strategically important military resources at that time.

As a result of successful economic integration, the political and military integration of Europe begins. This treaty is a good example which confirms the thesis that was said earlier and shows the effectiveness of document analysis within the case study methodology.

The next stage of the integration process in Europe is the creation and signing of two treaties: the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy community in March 25, 1957. These treaties are better known as the Treaty of Rome which is the next stage of economic integration aimed at: Reducing customs duties, tariffs, quantitative restrictions; Creating a common market that deepened and expanded economic integration in the EU. Countries begins to coordinate their economic policies, free competition is formed; The customs union is formed due to which the free movement of goods, the free movement of economic factors: workers, services and capital, and within which the general rules of competition;[[10]](#footnote-10) Nowadays, this treaty is called – The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which is the most important and system-forming treaty in the European Union.

Since integration processes have been launched in Europe a number of economic agreements have emerged between the European countries. The issue of managing these processes has become important. Thus, the next stage of integration in Europe was the intertwining of economy and politics, namely the creation of the European Parliament which is a representative body of the European Community and acted according to the terms of the Rome Treaty. The European Parliament consists of 705 deputies which elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of five years. The European Parliament has three main functions: Legislative - Adoption of laws in cooperation with the EU Council and the European Commission, decision-making on European issues, ratification of international agreements, etc; Supervisory – Supervision of all EU bodies and the election of the president or chairman of the EU, approval of financial statements, control of the EU monetary policy, etc; Financial: Participation in the budget formation together with the Council, approval of the long-term EU budget.[[11]](#footnote-11) It is important to note that the European Parliament does not have independent legislative powers, it only participates in the development of what is called “European Law” – the rules by which the Community is guided in its activities.

The process of integration of European countries was in full swing both economically and politically. However, to deepen it, another important stage took place, border-free Europe, namely the Schengen Area. The purpose of the treaty was to create a Europe without borders, a more cohesive Europe: As in terms of economic cooperation through the free movement across their common borders of various kinds of goods, etc; As well as social unification due to the free movement of people across the common border of the Economic Union; It is important to note that some countries have not become members of the Schengen Agreement because there are criteria, the common set of Schengen rules: Control the internal and external borders of land, sea and air; Police and law enforcement agencies cooperation’s; Issuing of visas;[[12]](#footnote-12)

As a result of various treaties, the European Community has integrated in all areas and has become more united, not only economically. The final stage and the beginning of the dawn of a united Europe was the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht on European Union in February 7, 1992. The purpose of this agreement is ambitious, namely, the unification of all previously signed agreements into the one whole, the creation of the European Union. The Treaty on European Union set new directions for European integration, which included the creation of economic, monetary and political unions, and further reform of the legal mechanism of the European Communities. Thus, according to this treaty, the European Union was to consist of three components: the European Communities; Cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy; Cooperation between the police and the judiciary;[[13]](#footnote-13) It was a very ambitious symbolic treaty, as it demonstrated that the goals of Europe’s integration process are not limited to the economic component but start with it.

Europe has come a long way of integration and as a result, from economic agreements has come to the level of the highest integration association in the world in the sphere of economy, politics, and society. In this regard, the European Union is unique. With the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, a complex mechanism for the legal regulation of Eurozone integration was formed. The so-called Maastricht criteria.

## **1.4 European Union and Eurozone criteria**

Since the Maastricht Treaty led to the formation of the euro and launched a three-pillar structure: Economic and Socio-Political Principles, General External and Security Principles, Legal and Internal Principles. The integration process is becoming standardized and the criteria and principles for entry are emerging. Which are regulated by the Accession criteria are better known as (Copenhagen criteria) in case of European Union integration and Convergence criteria (Maastricht criteria) which is the economic basis for joining the Eurozone.

To be part of the European Union, a candidate must fulfill certain conditions political and economic – namely, a functioning democracy with the rule of law and a competitive market economy. Moreover, to apply the state must be able to implement the reforms to meet the set criteria. [[14]](#footnote-14)

In addition, for deeper economic integration, the country may become a member of the Eurozone. To join the Eurozone, the candidate must meet certain conditions of financial and economic performance which are studied using: indicators of public debt, deficit; dynamics of inflation, exchange rate, GDP rate and etc: These candidate indicators are used to study whether their economies meet the standards necessary for admission and stable functioning with other participating countries.[[15]](#footnote-15) It is should be pointed out that some member countries of the European Union are not included in the Eurozone because they have not fully met all the above criteria and have not adopted the euro or do not want to become part of the eurozone, but are full members of the European Union.

That is, considering the European Integration, we can conclude that European society exists on the principles of economic stability, democracy and the rule of law, if a country wants to be a part of this society and sees itself as a part of Europe not only geographically. It is necessary to make reforms and steps in these directions. Develop economic indicators, fight inequality, fight corruption. In order for the country to have a fair law, citizens were protected both socially and economically. These are the basic principles for the European integration of the country.

# **2. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE**

## **2.1 Historical ties between Ukraine and European Union**

The historical ties between Ukraine and European countries date back to the historical events of the Kievan Rus legacy. Well describes the events of that time and connects them with the events of the future in the article of Timothy Snyder. Through the analysis of which one can draw up the historical background of Ukraine in the context of its relationship with Europe. History is twist with such state formations as the Kingdom of Galicia-Volhynia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Throughout its history, the lands of Ukraine have been the object of rivalry between Moscow and European countries of the tine. At the time, Moscow tried to control and spread its influence in Kyiv by considering itself the heirs of Kievan Rus. However, Kyiv remained under the control of Vilnius and Warsaw for a long time, which also repeatedly considered themselves the heirs of Kievan Rus. Since then, Ukraine has been part of the European associations of that time. Historically, Ukraine is intertwined with European society. However, over time, Europe has lost control of the current lands of Ukraine. After the establishment of Moscow’s control, difficult times of infringement have come for Ukrainian identity. Kyiv was under the influence of Moscow for a long time. However, the leadership of any formation of the current Russia faced the same problem that is relevant for them in our time. Despite all the attempts of the Russians to destroy the Ukrainian identity, it cannot be broken, and the people of Ukraine, feeling their historical ties with Europe, are clearly aimed at European integration, which in the future will lead to many events one of them namely the Euromaidan.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Legally, relations between Ukraine and European Union began after the recognition of Ukraine as an independent state by the EU government, namely The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, as the representative of the EU Presidency, in his letter on behalf of the European Union officially recognized the independence of Ukraine.[[17]](#footnote-17) In the next years, Ukraine is heading for European integration and confirms this in “The Strategy for Ukraine’s Integration into the EU”[[18]](#footnote-18) and “The Program for Ukraine’s Integration into the EU”[[19]](#footnote-19) These documents were created to develop an EU integration strategy and adopt legislation accordingly. It proclaimed a long-term strategic goal – Ukraine’s European integration. The process of negotiating new agreements and deepening integration through an instrument such as the Association Agreement, which is based on the pillars of political and economic association, is beginning. In accordance with the agreements reached between the participants, an association plan and certain developments in this direction are being developed. However, at that time Ukraine was still under Russian political influence and was economically very dependent on the Russian market and minerals. Which played a huge role in Russia’s attempts to disrupt the process of Ukraine’s deepening into the European economy and politics.

The turning point and the beginning of a full-scale integration process in Ukraine were the results of The Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius which lasted two days on November 28-29. Objectives of this summit is: Firstly, summing up the agreements of the previous Warsaw Summit; Secondly, the expansion of the integration and cooperation of the European Union with the Eastern Partnership countries participating in the summist; Despite the fact that agreements and preparations were in full swing by EU for Ukraine to sign the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the EU and Ukraine. The pro-Russian government was not interested in integrating into Europe. So, peaceful protests began, many people, mostly students, went to the “Maidan Nezalezhnosti” (Independence Square – central square in Kyiv) in support of the European choice of Ukraine. Due to the fact that authorities did not prepare the bills in the parliament which is necessary for signing the association.[[20]](#footnote-20) Even so, the pro-Russian President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych would not interested in strengthening of cooperation with Europe and looked in a different direction. Based on that, on evening of November 28, Ukrainian delegation did not sign the agreement and would suspend the process of integration and cooperation with the European Union. The summit declaration speaks of this decision by the Ukrainian government to suspend this process, as well as the unprecedented public support for Ukraine’s political association and economic integration with the EU.[[21]](#footnote-21) After this summit, a series of events will begin that paved the way for Ukraine to Europe namely Revolution of Dignity (Euromaidan).

As stated earlier in the summit declaration, Ukraine’s political association and economic integration with the EU have a huge society support. Consequently, the government’s decision to abandon the association agreement in Eastern Partnership summit caused dissatisfaction among the Ukrainian society. Even more people joined the protester on the Maidan, who were very disappointed with Yanukovych’s decision in Vilnius. Moreover, Europe was also disappointed with Yanukovych’s decision. Dissatisfaction and disappointment can be seen in the statement of Lithuania President, the rotating EU presidency of that time Dalia Grybauskaite – “Europe is open for [the] Ukrainian people, but not necessarily for this government. This government is not signing because it doesn’t want to sign, credibility is already lost.”[[22]](#footnote-22)

On the night November 29-30, a many people gathered on the Maidan – peacefully protested, sang patriotic song, the national anthem of Ukraine and cheered each other on. The actions of the pro-Russian authorities, as well as their curators from Moscow, were obvious: the violent dispersal of protests. In the morning police units surrounded the Euro activists and launched an offensive, forcibly dispersing people from the Maidan with maximum atrocity. The brutal beating of students on the Maidan stunned not only Ukrainians but also the world community. The events of November 30 were a turning point in the Ukrainian protests of the end of 2013, shifting the focus of the protests from pro-European to anti-government, anti-corruption, anti-Russian influence, as well as adding mass to them.

Mass protests began, on December 1, more than half a million people protested throughout Kyiv. The rally was so massive that the police retreated from the Maidan and let the protesters to occupy it. It is noteworthy to mention, at that time Ukrainian society was supported by the European society and authorities some of them took part and supported people who took part in mass protests and supported the desire of the people to live in the European democratic society. Even in difficult times for Ukraine, one can feel great support from the fraternal people of Poland. For whom the European future of Ukraine is as important and beneficial as for Ukrainians. This message is clearly seen in the statement which made at the Kyiv on Maidan during protest by Jaroslaw Kaczynski – “I hope that the desire of Ukrainians to join the European Union will come true because everyone will benefit from it: Ukraine, the EU and Poland. It is very important for us Poles to be together with Ukrainians.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

In addition to representatives of politics and diplomacy, ordinary Poles also supported the people of Ukraine during the revolution. The memories of the Polish journalist Pavel Bobolovich, who was a participant in the Maidan, are very interesting. In his description of those events is very clearly traced the understanding of: the scale of the revolution, the unity of the Ukrainian people and his sympathy for the people. It is clearly seen in his statement – “It became clear that this was a revolution, a great force of Ukrainians had already emerged. I had the feeling that the whole Kyiv was on the streets.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Moreover, Poles have always stood for European Ukraine, even at that time Poles understanding the contribution of Ukrainians in defending European society and the principles of democracy in the heart of Europe this is also seen in Bobolovich statement – “My feeling as a person who came from Europe – Europe was not with those people. Europe did not really respond to the fact that they risked their lives and later actually laid down their lives for European values.”[[25]](#footnote-25)

The events around the revolution were gaining momentum, despite the peaceful protest, the security forces continued to use atrocities against the protestors, the confrontation grew into a serious conflict between the protesters and the police forces namely the most famous special force “Berkut” who were puppies of the authorities of that time. Yanukovych and his parliament did not want to hear the protestors, or to compromise and used any cruelty in order to disperse people. As a result of the clashes, a lot of people died. According to the Ministry of Healthcare of Ukraine since November 30,2013 during mass rallies in Kyiv 106 people have died.[[26]](#footnote-26) Later, the victims of this revolution were called Nebesna sotnya (Heavenly Hundred). Subsequently, the following events that will take place for several month will be called “Winter that changed us”. After several months of confrontation and unsuccessful attempt at negotiations. The events of the revolution end on February 21-22.

The capitulation of the current government and the escape from Ukraine of Yanukovych. After the president’s escape, parliament removes him from power. The decision was taken by a majority of parliament namely 328 deputies voted. Moreover, the Parliament voted to call new presidential elections.[[27]](#footnote-27) It became obvious that Russia would achieve nothing in Ukraine. The slogan “Ukraine is Europe” are not just a words. Later, Moscow will begin its military invasion of the Donbass region and proceed with annexation of Crimea, having occupied the territory. Justifying these actions with the Protection of the Russian-speaking population in the east of Ukraine and the Request of the “legitimate President Yanukovych” to send the Russian troops and stop the “so-called coup”[[28]](#footnote-28). However, it was obvious to all Europeans that Kremlin had lost influence in Ukraine and were organizing a one-man theater. A clear position of Europe can be seen in the statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland at that time, Radoslaw Sikorski he tweeted – “No coup in Kiev.Gov.buildings got abandoned. Speaker of Rada elected legally. Pres. Vyanukovych has 24h to sign 04 Const. into law.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

Summing up, victims of this revolution did not die in vain. This revolution has become a key to the start of full-scale integration of Ukraine into the EU and the return of our society to Europe. This course of history sounds good with the statement of the Yale University professor of History Timothy Snyder – “Ukraine has no future without Europe, but Europe also has no future without Ukraine. Throughout the centuries, the history of Ukraine has revealed the turning points in the history of Europe”[[30]](#footnote-30)

## **2.2 European Union-Ukraine Association Agreement**

Subsequently to the revolution of dignity, Ukraine took a full course towards European integration. This is a conscious choice of the Ukrainian society, which is natural and logical. Historical ties between Europe and Ukraine, ethnic closeness, cooperation, and the fear of becoming a Moscow satellite, have become the key factors.

To start with, an association agreement is an agreement between the EU and a third country. The the next step in the integration process by: Expanding political economic cooperation; Access to the internal market of the EU; Adaptation of legislation to EU standards. The agreement is multi-level, includes a bunch of nuances and conditions as well as covers all areas of cooperation between the European Union and the other party to the association agreement. As a result of signing and successful operation is the basis for the next stages of integration up to full membership in the EU.[[31]](#footnote-31) Accordingly, the development of such an agreement takes many years for both sides.

Since 2007, the EU and Ukraine have been negotiating and are jointly developing a draft association agreement. The whole process up to the moment of signing took seven years in case of Ukraine.[[32]](#footnote-32) Also, for this process several negotiating groups required, which worked on the project in different pillars of association: On political direction; On democracy development; On economic issues; Conspicuous that as a result of negotiations in the economic sphere, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area was developed. This agreement is a step towards economic integration by: mutual access to each other’s market as well as favorable conditions in different areas, depending on the terms of the agreement. It is a powerful tool for beneficial economic unification of the market.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The next stage of association is the inscription of the agreement, which was suspended at the Vilnius summit and continued in Brussels. In the case of Ukraine, the signing took place in two stages. Namely – the signing of political and economic regulations. The division into two stages took place because Europe was ready to sign only the political part of the agreement. This can be explained by the instability of the situation in Ukraine at that time: Firstly, after the events of the revolution, there was no incumbent president in the country, but only the acting president at the time – Oleksandr Turchynov; Secondly, Russia occupied a part of Ukraine’s territory;

Despite the justified fear of Europe to sign the economic part, the EU was determined to sign the political part and declared that in the future they undertake to sign the economic part, which was announced during the meeting of the European Council on March 20-21, 2014. Moreover, assistance and support for Ukraine in the current circumstances was also discussed.[[34]](#footnote-34) As a result, the political part of the agreement was signed. While the signing of the full agreement took place on 27 June. Newly elected President Petro Poroshenko, together with President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barrosa and heads of all EU member states, had signed an agreement on the association of Ukraine with the EU.[[35]](#footnote-35)

The association process entered the next stage, namely the ratification of the agreement. According to procedure the agreement had to be ratified by several parties: As a supranational body of the EU – the European Parliament; EU countries as one party to the agreement; Ukraine as the other party to the agreement; The European Parliament and the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the agreement simultaneously at September 16,2014. This was a serious step in the ratification which showed the strong desire of Europe and Ukraine to get closer. Also, aloud a manifestation of empathy and support for this decision on the part of the Polish side, which can be seen in the statement of the of the deputy of the European Parliament Jacek Saryusz-Wolski – “Through this ratification, Ukraine’s European choice will be institutionalized and will bind the futures of the EU and Ukraine together. Ukrainian society has paid the highest price for its European aspirations”[[36]](#footnote-36)

Based on simultaneous ratification by European Parliament and Ukraine, for full ratification, the consent of all EU member states remains. In the case of Ukraine, the ratification process in the majority of countries proceeded fairly quickly, but there is always a but. Thus “but” means one of the representative states, the Netherlands. The country adhered to consultative referendum, the result of which were majority voted against the ratification of the association agreement. Such result can be explained by the fact that the values of unification integration, joint development and supranational regulation are not supported by Eurosceptic segments of the population, so the results are logical despite the fact that part of the voters did not vote against Ukraine, but for supporting their own political views. It can be added that the Euroskeptics in the Netherlands used Ukraine as a tool to get people to vote against, spreading various rumors and imposing an opinion about cons of this process as well as stereotypes about Ukrainians.[[37]](#footnote-37) This referendum complicated the situation and delayed the process of ratification.

However, it gave a clear understanding of which countries supported Ukraine’s future in the EU. An example is Lithuanian position, in which expressed disappointment with such results of the referendum, as well as support for the Ukrainians. The president of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaite addressed the Ukrainians in her statement – “No one can stand in Ukraine’s way to Europe, because Ukraine has always been in Europe and will always remain there”[[38]](#footnote-38)

After several rounds of negotiations, the EU was able to agree with the Netherlands on the ratification issue. The point of contact was the EU assurance that the association does not guarantee Ukraine the status of an EU candidate country, as well as military assistance obligations.[[39]](#footnote-39) As a result of these agreements, the ratification process in the Netherlands was launched and ratified on June 1, 2017.[[40]](#footnote-40)

The final chord was September 1,2017, when all EU member states ratified the association agreement, and as a result, it fully entered into force. The process of implementing the agreement has begun, in other words, the development of the pillars of European integration. Namely reforms in the spheres: political, economic and judicial. To develop the principles of democracy in the country as well as economic growth.[[41]](#footnote-41) For Ukraine, the implementation of the Association Agreement with the European Union has become a key task for raising the country’s economy and democratic reforms. This entire process was aimed at moving towards the Candidate criteria for the European Union Membership.

## **2.3 Ukrainian reforms towards joining the EU**

Since the association with the European Union was ratified, the process of implementation has begun. This stage is important because the results have a direct impact on the integration process and will be a marker for the European side about perspectives of Ukraine. Based on those reforms have started in many areas, changes in Ukraine remained a matter of time and realization. Meaningful impact rendered by the Polish cooperation and support for Ukrainian reforms in the areas that are necessary for the implementation of association agreement and the adaptation of Ukrainian standards to EU standards. According, to Poland, the most significant reforms are local self-government reforms (Decentralization in Ukraine), Anticorruption Reforms and Educational Reforms. Therefore, they provided all kinds of support and assistance in these spheres.

Local self-government reforms were one of the key reforms in Ukraine which started on April 1,2014. The beginning of reform was the order of the Government of Ukraine “On approval of the Concept of reforming local self-government and territorial organization of power in Ukraine”[[42]](#footnote-42) Due to this order, the reform process was put into effect. The aim was to achieve a self-government of society at the local level as well as systemic increase in the standard of living in the regions. Since management powers were transferred from state bodies to local self-government bodies, as well as finances which will be managed directly by local self-government bodies. The main concept is principle of effective self-government to keep the money in place of origin as a result any self-government can manage and distribute the money for the needs of the local population. This goal and concept are shaped by the “European Charter local self-government”[[43]](#footnote-43)

After the adoption of the legislation and the introduction of the necessary documents, the decentralization reform began to actively develop by Ukrainian authorities along with international aid funds from the EU. One of the EU Accountability and Local Government Development in Ukraine (U-LEAD) which is one of the main programs in this field. Program began operating on January 1,2016 and the expected completion date is December 31,2023. Funded by the EU and participating states of the program, one of them is Poland, which as a partner of Ukraine, supported this process of decentralization through this program. The budget of the program is 152.3 million euros in assistance to Ukraine. U-LEAD is focused on improving the administrative services in self-governments through education of basis management and various training for local authorities. Fund had also developed an online learning platform.[[44]](#footnote-44)

The decentralization reform turned out to be a success and various indicators at the end of 2020 testify to this. For clearer awareness the data provided by the infographic report of U-LEAD must be presented. According to the infographic data from 2014 to 2021 The revenues of local budget increased from 101.1 to 377.9 billions of UAH[[45]](#footnote-45) Such an indicator of 3,5~ fold growth is an indicator that the reform is successful and moving in the right direction, fostering of economic means of subsistence of the population of local communities.

Since corruption is a very complex phenomenon, the fight against which has existed and will always be relevant, as politics cannot be done without corruption, it is a natural process. The anti-corruption reform is the most complicated and comprehensive among all others. The anti-corruption is important and difficult reform for Ukraine which started in 2014. The beginning of the reform was the law of Ukraine “On the Principles of State Anti-Corruption Policy in Ukraine (the Anti-Corruption Strategy) for 2014-2017”[[46]](#footnote-46) Due to this order, the reform process was put into effect.

The reform pursued the goal of cutting the degree of the corruption in all spheres of state life. To achieve these goals, during the reform four structures were created: The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU); Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAP); National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC); The Highest Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine; All these structures contribute to the fight against corruption at different levels of interaction.[[47]](#footnote-47) There are cooperation’s with various non-state actors such as the famous civil society organization Transparency International, whose goal is the international fight against corruption.[[48]](#footnote-48) There are also cooperation’s with anti-corruption structures of Poland. Since 2016 NABU and Central Anti-corruption Bureau (CBA) successfully working with each other. Accordingly, many victorious investigations appeared through mutual support and productive cooperation.[[49]](#footnote-49) For example, a high-profile investigation of a criminal group that operated in the automotive sector, which ended in a successful operation by two departments with the assistance of the Warsaw prosecutor’s office. It is noted that this was the first case when such cooperation was realized. This is an indicator of a good level of interconnection between countries.[[50]](#footnote-50)

In the case of Ukraine after seven years, anti-corruption reform remains an open issue today, it cannot be noted as being fully implemented, but there is also some progress on this issue. According to the Corruption perceptions index, in 2014 Ukraine had 26 points, while in 2021 it had 32.[[51]](#footnote-51) Progress of 6 points it’s not bad, however the pace of reform needs to be accelerated.

It is also important to point out that the Poles helped in the reforms through educational process. According to the annual report of the Polish Aid, in 2018 at the National School of Public Administration was a various education and training sessions on public administration were conducted for representative of the Eastern Partnership countries in order to increase the effectiveness of the reform processes in the countries. It is noted that for Ukrainian participants of this project, in addition to the general educational process, were also trainings on combating corruption were also conducted.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Summing up, Ukraine has introduced a huge number of reforms in different areas, the achievements of which are already noticeable today and bring Ukraine closer to EU standards. According to the official report of the reforms 2015-2020, two areas are marked as the most successful namely – Decentralization as well as public administration. There is also a good level of cooperation with EU representatives and various organizations that help in the reform process regardless of progress.[[53]](#footnote-53) In terms of key reforms, Poland provides Ukraine a huge support in the field of cooperation between anti-corruption structures as well as training of civil servants in the context of decentralization, governance and anti-corruption reform. Considering the reforms of Ukraine in general. Most of them have been fulfilled, which is a serious step towards bringing Ukraine closer to the European Union. Thus, leading Ukraine to a new level of integration process.

## **2.4 EU membership application for Ukraine**

Since a huge volume of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union was successfully implemented. The next stage of European integration is the membership application. For Russia, it became obvious that it was losing its influence in Ukraine, and if soft power does not work, the heavy power remains. The trigger in the process of Ukrainian membership application into the EU were the Russian invasion in Ukraine which is started on February 24,2022.[[54]](#footnote-54)

Obviously, a wide discussion of the current situation in Ukraine has begun among the world community. This was an ideal opportunity for Ukraine to start the accession process because Europe is clearly concerned about the situation in the region, thus one of the reasons for the creation of the European Union is peace in Europe. First of all, the importance of this process was understood by Poland as a neighbor and strategic partner of Ukraine. Thus, on February 26, 2022, the President of Poland declared the importance of this process, indicating that is necessary to start work in this direction immediately as well as calling for funding for Ukraine to restore the consequences of invasion.[[55]](#footnote-55) This statement shows who is promoting Ukraine to the EU as a fraternal people.

Accordingly, on February 28, 2022, the Ukrainian authorities, namely the president, the head of parliament and the prime minister, sign the application for Ukraine’s accession to the EU and send it to the EU authorities in charge of the procedure. The Ukrainian authorities urged to consider the application under a special procedure due to circumstances in the country.[[56]](#footnote-56)

This decision was supported by the joint statement of the President of Central and Eastern European countries in which they backed Ukraine’s quick intention to join the EU in such a difficult situation for the country.[[57]](#footnote-57)

The reaction of the European Union was immediate, on March 1, 2022, at the meetings of the European Parliament, the “Resolution on the Russian aggression against Ukraine” was adopted. According to which – Firstly, support was expressed for Ukraine in all areas including the supply of weapons; Secondly, Russian intervention in Ukraine was condemned and calling for the withdrawal of all troops from Ukraine as well as respect for territorial integrity; Thirdly, was considered the introduction of new and tightening of existing sanctions against Russia; Finally, advocated granting Ukraine EU candidate status.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Despite, the complexity of the situation, progress in the process of membership application is present. On March 8, 2022 in Kyiv the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky and EU representatives Ursula von der Leyen and Josep Borrel held a meeting. During which, the President of the European Commission provided a candidate questionnaire for membership in the European Union. Important to note that the EU representatives was shocked after visiting the place of the war crimes of the aggressor in the city of Bucha. Thus, European Union will continue to strongly support Ukraine in this conflict. Josep Borrell has indicated that, despite the conflict, the European Union Delegation is restoring work in Kyiv. During the meeting, the head of Ukraine expressed his gratitude to the European side and stated that the Ukrainian side would fill out the questionnaire in a week.[[59]](#footnote-59) This meeting is and indicator that parties continue to work together in direction, even though the difficulties. Zelenskyy confidence showed the importance of the process for Ukraine.

European Parliament introduced resolution as a supranational authority while parliament of the member states have joined this process at the state level expressing the country’s position. One of the first was the resolution of the Polish Parliament on March 9, 2022, the Polish Senate unanimously adopted a resolution on Ukraine’s European aspiration. In addition, it called on all EU countries to approve Ukraine’s decision to become a part of the European family as quickly as possible. Quoting the resolution,

“Ukraine’s full membership in the EU is a moral duty of the current generation of Europeans. The values that brought Western Europe 77 years of peace and prosperity are now under threat. The Ukrainian soldier is protecting the whole of Europe, defending the borders of his country”[[60]](#footnote-60)

On April 18, 2022, another meeting was held in Kyiv. During which the completed questionnaire was given to the Head of the EU Delegation Matti Maasikas.[[61]](#footnote-61) This is the prove that the work is continues in spite of difficulties and both parties understand the significance of this process. Since the Delegation work in Kyiv is renewed and Ukraine field the questionnaire in such a short period of time.

To sum up all of the above, at a difficult moment the European Society came together to provide support for Ukraine in such circumstances. Accordingly, the beginning of the accession process will be more loyal for the applicant due to the human factor of fear and empathy. However, tragic circumstances served for this, and Ukraine already faced and will face many challenges. Due to the consequences of the invasion. Even so Ukraine has a powerful allies in the international arena who are helping Ukraine with all their might. One of them is Poland, which has proven itself as a friend due to the volume of aid at all possible levels and areas.

# **3. RELATION BETWEEN POLAND AND UKRAINE FROM 2019 TILL NOWDAYS**

## **3.1 Historical background between Poland and Ukraine**

Correlation, between Ukraine and Poland have been going on for many years. Shared legacy from the time of historical interconnections and joint state formations. Despite that fact that history has controversial moments for both countries. Positive and mutual understanding and assistance prevails in relations between countries. In this matter, the competent thought of the former Minister of foreign affairs of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin.

The article has a very well-placed accents that history is a controversial and complex phenomenon in which countries should focused on developing of relationship through conclusions from the past. Also, an example is the founding of the European Union, despite the events of the past, the countries unite to prevent wars as well as obtain mutual development.[[62]](#footnote-62)

The modern relations between countries began on December 2, 1991, when Poland government recognized the independence of Ukraine. Significant that this was the first country to adopt this.[[63]](#footnote-63) Accordingly, it is seen a desire to establish diplomatic relations with a neighbor and start mutually beneficial cooperation.

As a result, on January 4, 1992, the countries fully established diplomatic relations and began cooperation. In the coming years, cooperation is intensifying, in the areas of economy, policy, culture, science and etc. During the cooperation in the field of policy, many agreements and development strategies was developed. Moreover, important are the agreements aimed at honoring the victims of historical difficulties between countries and finally closing this page in history and moving on to current issues. In the future, interaction between the countries is only intensifying. Since the countries are strategic partners for each other and understand the security challenges in Eastern Europe.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Poland has been supporting Ukraine’s European integration since the very beginning of relations. Thus, Poland’s contribution is significant in supporting Ukraine in the context of the key events of European integration in Ukraine. Namely the Orange Revolution, the Revolution of Dignity and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. As well as the consequences of these triggers – Eastern Partnership program, Association agreement and EU membership application. Accordingly, a large amount of assistance for political and economic transition of Ukraine to EU standards. As well as aid for Ukrainians who have become victims of Russian aggression since 2014. It is confirmed by the Poland report data for 2019, accordingly the total assistance for Ukraine in all areas amounted to – 303,494,008 PLN.[[65]](#footnote-65)

Since 2019, after the change of leadership in Ukraine. The strategic partnership with Poland in the context of joint development and security in the Eastern European region continued and was developing. During the first meeting of President Andrzej Duda and Volodymyr Zelenskyy on June 4, 2019, in Brussels, the two leaders made statements and exchanged pleasantries. The President of Ukraine expressed his gratitude to Poland for support and assistance for Ukraine at all possible levels in the matter of Euro-Atlantic integration and countering Russian aggression. The President of Poland, in turn, indicated that Poland will always support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Ukraine as well as the restoration of territorial integrity.[[66]](#footnote-66)

In terms of economy, countries are very interconnected. According to the data of Observatory of Economic Complexity for 2020, Ukrainian exports to Poland account for 6.19 percent of total, while imports from Poland account for 10.1 percent of total.[[67]](#footnote-67) Based on these indicators trade between countries is strategic for them in many categories. Moreover, Ukraine is integrating into the European System, which is also a stimulus for economic interaction. It is important to note that part of Ukrainian producers do not meet the EU criteria, so after the modernization is completed, exports will increase.

Despite the challenging factors of 2020, the collaboration and meetings continue. An important one was the visit of Andzej Duda to Kyiv on October 12,2020. During the previous year of cooperation, the rhetoric of the parties did not change, the same questions were raised, and the same successes were noted despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19. Accordingly, with such dynamics, there was also a discussion of steps in strategic directions. Emphasis was placed on discussing security issues in the region. Also Ukrainian side showed a bet on Poland’s presidency of the Council of Europe in 2025, which will be a positive factor and help Ukraine join the EU.[[68]](#footnote-68) Indeed, these circumstances will contribute to the achievement of this goal. However, without continuing the reforms, especially in areas where the pace of reforms is low. For example, anti-corruption reform. Reaching the European Union will be impossible. Also, an important issue is the security in the region, where situation is not clear due to Russian aggression.

Summing up relations between the countries in recent years is friendly and strategic. The relationship of countries is not affected by closed page of ambiguous historical events. Cooperation between countries is gaining momentum in all areas, the number of meetings at various levels up to the highest is increasing, and the necessary reforms for development and integration to European Union are successfully carried out. There is also a huge financial support from Poland to Ukraine. As well as representing the interests of Ukraine in the structures of the EU and NATO.

## **3.2 Lublin triangle**

Interaction is also developing outside of bilateral relations, through regional associations. One of them is Lublin triangle.

Primarily, the prerequisites for regional cooperation and unification were, historical ties between Poland Lithuania and Ukraine. Throughout history, countries have repeatedly integrated with each other due to various state formations of that time. The countries developed thanks to the connection between each other and acted as an incentive for joint development and assimilation of European principles. Accordingly, the decision to develop together at the present time was quite reasonable and logical for economic growth and increased security in the region of Eastern Europe. For Ukraine also in the context of European processes and adaptation to EU standards.[[69]](#footnote-69)

The Lublin triangle has been functioning as a full-fledged alliance since July 28, 2020. On this date, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the participating countries signed the Joint Declaration on the creation of the alliance. Thus, this alliance aims to increase the process of cooperation and integration between the countries through the inter-parliamentary assembly of the participating countries and contacts at all possible levels.[[70]](#footnote-70)

The development of the alliance has just started. However, it is noticeable that the potential of this format is serious. Considering the geographical location of countries, as well as their economic opportunities and experience of interaction with each other. The alliance will develop in the indicated directions it, is only a matter of time and circumstances for implementation.

Since the main goal of this alliance is the issue of security in the region of Eastern Europe. It is important to mention the cooperation within the framework of the joint Brigade within the framework of which joint theoretical training and exchange of experience are carried out. Since Ukraine is striving to join NATO, this training and experience from Poland and Lithuania is useful for the transition to the standards of the organization. The Lublin Triangle was the impetus for additional cooperation, the Brigade reached a new level with large-scale practical exercises since 2021.[[71]](#footnote-71)

Due to the accumulation of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine, the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy requested the summit of the alliance which was in Huta on December 20, 2021. Accordingly, the main topic of the summit was the development of a security sector in the region. Poland and Lithuania as members of the alliance showed unity with Ukraine. Also, the issue of the migration crisis on the borders with Belarus was raised, which also creates security problems in the region. As a result of the summit, the countries signed a joint declaration emphasizing the same directions on which the alliance is working.[[72]](#footnote-72)

The turning point in history was the end of February 2022. It became obvious why the direction of the alliance is primarily devoted to security issues in the region. Accordingly, on the eve of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which at that time was obvious to everyone. Therefore, the presidents of the member countries of the Lublin triangle signed a declaration on February 23, 2022, in Kyiv. In the declaration they condemn the recognition by Russia of the separatist held the Donbass region in the cities of Luhansk and Donetsk which are de facto territories occupied by Russia.[[73]](#footnote-73)

In the context of the following events. The countries of the alliance continued to support Ukraine in every possible way in protecting the territory and provide all possible assistance for this.

Summing up, the development of countries in the region and the factor of their unification is the sphere of security in the region of Eastern Europe. In the other words, the fear factor which speeds up processes of cooperation and association between countries. As a result, close cooperation in the field of security. Moreover, countries are laying the foundation for deeper cooperation in other areas such as politics, economics, culture, science and etc.

## **3.3 Polish reaction and support for Ukraine during the Russian invasion of Ukraine 2022**

There is no doubt that from the first day of the war, Poland providing maximum support to Ukraine in all possible areas – Aid to migrants, financial and military support. As well as the promoting of the Ukrainian issue in NATO and the EU. Furthermore, imposition and promotion of sanctions against Russia.

First things first, the war always caused a huge flow of migrants, respectively, Poland, as a neighbor friend and strategical partner of Ukraine, from the first days of the war, did everything to accept migrants, help them by providing a humanitarian aid, and a worthy transit route for those who move on to the next countries. A huge number of foundations and organizations were created at the state and non-state levels. According to official data Poland accepted 3,396,792 refugees from Ukraine on May 17, 2022. Which in turn requires a huge financial outplay in the amount of 740,671,647 dollars.[[74]](#footnote-74) In addition, to organize such a volume of assistance and great efforts to integrate all refugees, a huge number of volunteers are involved, respectively, most of the are Poles.

Secondly, direct financial assistance is very important during a war because the country’s economy is under high load due to – military spending increases, infrastructure collapses, business ceases to function at full capacity, unemployment increases, prices increases and etc. To prevent the consequences of the war and help the economy of Ukraine. Huge assistance was provided by Poland. Namely, the National Bank of Poland opened a swap line for Ukraine in the amount of 1 billion dollars.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Thirdly, the importance of military assistance is obvious to a howling country, and accordingly armament is essential to defend its territory and its citizen. Poland, like no one else, understood this and from the first days of the war contributed to any military assistance that was possible within the framework of the country’s existing agreements and obligations. Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki summed it up in his statement – “So far, Poland has sent about 7 billion zlotys of military equipment which is more than 1.6 billion of dollars. This equipment saves Ukrainian, Polish and European sovereignty.”[[76]](#footnote-76)

Having analyzed the statement, the help is done because of the respect and gratitude, as well as fears, prerequisites and willing to help.

Fourthly, Sanctions are a powerful tool for helping. However, it is important that sanctions be introduced quickly, and only then they will be effective as harshly as possible. Poland understands this and insists on all possible strengthening of sanctions, since the current sanctions are not as effective as they could be. The issue of abandoning Russian minerals is also raised, meaning other countries, since Poland abandoned Russian raw materials.[[77]](#footnote-77)

Finally, raising the issue of Ukraine in the institutions of NATO and the EU. Poland makes a significant contribution to the promotion of the Ukrainian issue, leaving them relevant.

Summing up, Poland during the Russian invasion of Ukraine once again showed itself as a friend, neighbor and strategic partner of Ukraine. Helping in every possible way. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

# **CONCLUSION**

As a result of the study and the data provided in this bachelor’s thesis, it can be concluded that Poland plays an important role in the process of European integration of Ukraine by providing assistance in every possible way in this matter. Thus, after the analysis, it is obvious that the process of European integration does not stand still, but steadily progresses despite any circumstances.

1. The intergovernmentalism theory within regional integration theory, presented a good basis for the European Union integration processes, and revealed that states are willing to give up a part of their sovereignty to benefit politically and economically in the long term. The aspects of economic, political, and military integration were developed and exploited to reveal the best concept for EU integration history, among which economical was the best.
2. An analysis of the historical relationship between Ukraine and the EU gives a clear understanding that the impulses in the development of the European integration process for Ukraine are turning points such as the Revolution of Dignity, as a result of which the Association Agreement was signed. Ukraine and EU have a long history of cooperation and the relationship only intensified and deepened through extended cooperation programs. As well as the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which became the impetus for filing an application for the EU membership.
3. As a result of description and analysis of the process of implementation of association between Ukraine and EU. It can be concluded that Poland provides Ukraine assistance in this matter by helping to successfully implement comprehensive reforms and adapt to the EU standards. As well as sharing its own experience. The analysis also gives a clear understanding that despite controversial historical events. Poland is a strategic partner of Ukraine that develop cooperation in many areas both in bilateral relations and in regional organizations. Poland helps for Ukraine in: Economical, political, diplomacy, military and social ways in any issues and regardless of the circumstances which is confirmed by the huge amount of aid during the Russian invasion 2022. As well as promoting Ukrainian issues in the international arena as a member of the European Union and NATO. This aid from Poland is an additional incentive for Ukraine integration.
4. The full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, brought EU and Ukraine closer than ever before. European Union provided immense support to Ukraine, especially Poland in form of humanitarian supplies, took in many refugees, and applied harsh sanctions to the aggressor state. At the same time, with impeccable Polish assistance, Ukraine gained a candidate status for EU and already filled out a questionnaire for joining of the EU bringing even closer to a full-fledged membership status.

Summing up, the hypothesis, which was formed in the bachelor thesis is adopted: Poland and Ukraine are strategic partners in bilateral relations and in regional organizations. Poland supports Ukraine in all possible ways and regardless of the situation. Poland plays an important role in the European integration an promotes the Ukrainian issue in the international arena as a member of the European Union and NATO.

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