

INTEGRATION TO EU: CHALLENGES FOR UKRAINE

Urgency of research. Nowadays, every single student, factory worker, businessman or politician – mainly, everyone is discussing and analyzing perspectives the European integration of Ukraine. The idea of the European integration unites the Ukrainian society and requires the further development of the state.

Study results. In the sphere of foreign policy, Ukraine has chosen strategic course towards the European integration, which remains unchanged and is considered to be the absolute priority for both domestic and foreign policy of Ukraine. It is the people of Ukraine who determine the relevance of this topic today. The Process of European Integration has a specific pragmatic aim for our country. Reformation and modernization processes in Ukraine are closely related to EU integration. Ukraine brings into accordance state legislation and carries out the transformations in different areas of state machine to be relevant to the provisions of the Association Agreement, to be executed by any country, which is ready to enter the EU.

It has been found out that a great number of online sources describe summits and meetings of Heads of State on the theme of the Ukrainian Euro-integration, and also their views on each step of realization of this difficult plan. In the recent years lots of projects and mass public events have been conducted in support of integration among ordinary Ukrainian citizens.

It goes without saying that Ukraine is an European country. However, this ‘continental’ belonging to the territory does not by itself remove the question, whether we are welcome into the union the leading European countries. According to the statistical research, which was conducted in 2016, 55.2 percent of people support the European integration.

Experts that are competent in the matter strongly believe that the majority of EU member-states at present tend to distance themselves from Ukraine as a “problematic” country. Such judgments essentially influence the present of Ukraine and cause problems related to the further perspectives.

It has been established that the present level of development civil society is still far from the European criteria. Ukraine was blamed for suppressing freedom of press, election campaign violations, non-fulfillment of commitments required by the Council of Europe, etc. Although democratic institutions have significantly expanded range of freedoms, which was largely influenced by the Euromaidan events.

The research shows that the quality of the Ukrainian goods still remains low, which, in turn affects the competitiveness of exports (mainly comprised of raw materials and semi-finished goods) and domestic production has an extremely high level of energy consumption. Among other economic reasons, the inadequate regulatory and legal support for business in Ukraine, the underdevelopment of the fundamental economic institutions, and the high risk of investing are to pointed as well. It is clear that above-mentioned list of negative factors gives even fewer reasons for optimism.

The road to the EU turned out to be long and difficult. What is more, it is characterized both internal and external problems. The main problems of Ukraine moving along this road are related to internal situation – first of all, to the inconsistency and slow pace of socio-economic and political-administrative reforms and changes. The main negative factors are as follows: the low level of economic development, slow pace of reforms, and the high level of corruption, the inadequacy of the tax policy, and non-transparency and instability of economic legislation. What

catches the eye in this list of disadvantages is that the Ukrainian elite pays much less attention to such problem areas as: non-compliance of Ukraine's democracy level with the European standards, problems related to the intellectual property rights protection, and state debt problems. Furthermore, algorithm of the further steps toward Europe has been defined to obtain "market economy" status, to create free trade zone, to associate membership in EU. First of all, the legislation of Ukraine differs from common regulations in Europe. Secondly, the basic sectors of Ukraine's industry (light industry, agro-industrial complex) have found no niche on the European market so far. Thirdly, most domestic non-competitive enterprises are bound to go bankrupt or to be taken over by powerful European companies. Finally, in short run, Ukraine is believed to stay unable to bear financial burden of the EU contribution.

Conclusions. The main strategic directions of the activities are defined as follows: the strengthening of Ukraine's position regarding European integration, specifically the acceleration of the pace of reforms, the fight against corruption, building of civil society, and improvement of economic legislation; decreasing limitation on export-import operations with EU countries; Ukraine's participation in mutual economic projects with the member-states.

In conclusion, if the EU is serious about helping Ukraine, both parties should focus on the country's main problem which is justice and the power of law.

References

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