

DOI: [10.55643/fcaptop.5.52.2023.4161](https://doi.org/10.55643/fcaptop.5.52.2023.4161)
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Received: 02/09/2023

Accepted: 17/10/2023

Published: 31/10/2023

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# DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE BORDERLINE TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES OF UKRAINE WITH THE EU COUNTRIES UNDER MARTIAL LAW

## ABSTRACT

In the article, international cooperation of territorial communities of Ukraine is defined as a strategic direction to attract financial resources and implement their investment projects. The authors name prerequisites for completing the reform of decentralization in Ukraine. It is stressed that the full-scale russian invasion of Ukraine and declaration of martial law have caused structural transformations in the parameters of performance of the local government bodies. The study is devoted to the theoretical and applied aspects of the organization and development of international cooperation among the territorial communities in Ukraine. The paper describes the methodology developed to study the international cooperation of territorial communities. The authors make an assessment of the conditions of international cooperation of territorial communities bordering the European Union countries and present results of the questionnaire conducted amongst managers of the border territorial communities of Ukraine in order to identify parameters of the international activity development. The analysis was conducted to clarify peculiarities of establishing cooperation of the bodies of local government of Ukraine with foreign partners and to find out restrictions and challenges influencing the communities' opportunity to implement international initiatives and cooperation in conditions of the russian-Ukrainian war. The researchers have developed a complex of measures necessary to improve the efficiency of the international cooperation between Ukrainian local territorial communities bordering the EU and foreign partners by carrying out a promotional campaign among the representatives of the local government bodies and developing a complex system of advanced training for the staff employed at the local power authorities in the field of international activity. It is also needed to enhance the institutional basis regulating the international activity of the territorial communities of Ukraine, to upgrade the financial and economic basis of the international cooperation implementation, as well as to accelerate the rates of development of the border infrastructure objects.

**Keywords:** territorial community, international cooperation, cross-border cooperation, martial law

**JEL Classification:** F50, R10

## INTRODUCTION

The implemented administrative reform has resulted in the establishment of territorial communities in Ukraine as separate subjects of economic relations at different hierarchy levels of the national economy administration. That subjectivity is determined by the opportunities to implement a personal strategy and policy of the territorial community development, to make projects of its industrial and sectoral structure, to create local budgets of development, and to identify priority expenditures depending on the community's primary goals. In compliance with the implemented applied principles of the policy of territorial communities' independence in Ukraine, they have recently had the opportunity to significantly increase their scale and volume of international cooperation, particularly in the area bordering on the EU member-states. It contributes both to the

accomplishment of the advanced European practices of economic activity and development of local governments, activation of the processes of European integration and growth of cross-border cooperation and also to diversification of the sources of revenues to the local budgets of territorial communities by implementing joint projects, involving funds of international grants, stimulating the development of business entities on the borderline area. The importance of the last is especially relevant in the condition of martial law declared in Ukraine after the start of the Russian full-scale aggression. Ukraine's national economy has been lately experiencing a decline in the GDP at the level of almost 30%, significant underperformance and deficit of the budgets of all levels, high rates of internal and external migration of human resources, transformation of the proportion of the industrial and sectoral structure of economic complexes, as well as reorientation of the national economy capacities into the military demands. International cooperation of the territorial communities of Ukraine is also an effective tool to promote the Ukrainian brand in the context of the current information hybrid challenges faced by the national economy. Thus, a complex of all these aspects proves the relevance of a system analysis of international cooperation of the borderline territorial communities of Ukraine with the EU countries, identification of idle reserves which are not engaged in their growth and development, as well as substantiation of the effective measures on the cooperation enhancing.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Different aspects of international cooperation of territorial communities, including rural ones, are studied in economic literature. Thus, the issues of local area development in Ukraine are studied in the context of decentralization by N. Davydenko, N. Wasilewska, S. Boiko, and M. Wasilewsk. In their works, the researchers represent two hypotheses about the enhanced development of local communities in Ukraine and the impact of decentralization on their development by providing them with equal opportunities [7]. Some authors study the development of territorial communities through the strategy, tactics, and tools of implementing the regional policy of the state [11, 15]. Vaskivska K., Pelechatyj A., Galimuk J. and Lozinska L. prove the necessity of territorial communities' cooperation in conditions of financial decentralization [24], whilst Bondarchuk M. et al. have elaborated theoretical, methodological and practical approaches to assessing the financial income of the communities' different participants [2]. Rusnak A. and Aleschenko L. mention that some territorial communities lack finance and qualified staff for preparing investment projects to gain finance from the state and international funds [19]. Nevertheless, the authors don't consider the opportunity of using tools and taking measures to supply financial support for the area, including the activation of international cooperation.

Some issues of territorial community development are studied by Belei S.I. The researcher specifies aspects which can increase the efficiency of the decentralization policy by involving additional non-budget sources, including cooperation with foreign municipalities. In that case, the development of rural territorial communities should be supported by the elimination of asymmetry and disproportion, tackling social and economic depression and enhancing the living standards of rural populations [3].

The growing importance of territorial communities is the focus of such scientists as Storonianska I., and Pelekhatyj A. They note that territorial communities should focus their efforts on the effective use of their internal potential to establish external relations and a favourable position in the regional system [21]. Rossoha V. and Plotnikova M. write that under current conditions it is of urgent necessity to create stimuli for the territorial economic development, extension of the powers of local authorities, public administration, and self-government [18]. Some researchers stress because of the importance of appropriate positioning of the bodies of local government in the competitive relationship with others [16] and establishing effective communication with community residents [12].

In the scientific environment, much attention is paid to the identification of the structural and functional threats to the development of economic complexes of territorial communities, including rural ones. In particular, they identify the main sources of the origin and specificity of the destabilizing impact of those threats on the development of the economic processes, provide detailed characteristics of them and substantiate priorities to combat those threats in the context of strengthening the economic security in rural areas [5].

Analysis of the political and legal conditions of communities' cooperation is provided in the work of Ahafonov H.S., Irkha K.O., who mention inter-territorial cooperation within the framework of internal (between territorial communities) and international (with regions and settlements abroad) directions. The research identifies the main barriers hindering the cooperation of territorial communities. Among them, the authors distinguish significant disproportion of the territorial communities' budgets, insufficient development of local initiatives, etc. The scientific works prove a heavy impact of the factors, including the Russian invasion, on the reorientation of the international cooperation of communities from cultural, educational and informational, as well as ecological directions to humanitarian and infrastructural ones, which are totally

subordinated to the wartime needs [1]. Economic stimulation of territorial communities' development is among the main aspects considered by scientists in the works devoted to the impact made by the administrative and territorial reform (Dziamulych M., Petrukha S., Dobrianska N., Vechtomova H. and others). The studies confirm that general trends of administrative reform and budget decentralization should contribute to increased investments in the development of territorial communities and thus, stimulate their social and economic development [8, 17].

Importance of the international technical assistance in the development of territorial communities' cooperation is assessed in the work of Uzun Yu.V., who identifies that the main task of Ukraine's territorial communities is to recognize the effectiveness of the strategy of community amalgamation in order to improve their financial capacity and activate their cooperation [23].

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the scientific research is to analyze the current state of development of international cooperation between the territorial communities of the borderline regions of Ukraine and the countries of the European Union and to substantiate the priority measures to improve such activities, taking into account the conditions of the martial law of functioning of the national economy. To achieve established goal, the following tasks were identified: determining the prerequisites for carrying out the decentralization reform in Ukraine and providing the united territorial communities with broader powers in terms of conducting international cooperation with the subjects of the European Union countries; conducting a survey of managers of borderline territorial communities with the European Union regarding study of the current state of development of their international cooperation, identification of the challenges of this activity in the conditions of martial law, and determination of managerial aspects of the organization of such activities at the level of territorial communities; identification the main problems that hinder development of international cooperation of borderline territorial communities with the European Union; development of a set of priority measures aimed at intensifying international cooperation of borderline territorial communities with the EU in conditions of martial law.

## METHODS

Achievement of the set goal required the development of the expedient and adequate methodology of the research.

To study primary documents related to the initiatives of international cooperation of the bodies of local government bordering on the EU, to understand motifs of those initiatives and the way of their implementation in practice, the authors conducted an analysis of the primary documents, approved programs and signed agreements. A principal share of analytical materials was obtained from the semi-structured interviews of the representatives of 118 territorial communities located in the regions of Ukraine bordering on the European Union states on the issues of current practices and challenges of international cooperation of the territorial communities caused by the martial law, as well as their vision of the prospects of that activity at the local level. The survey was organized in several stages. The expert group developed a questionnaire which was discussed with the representatives of the bodies of local authorities. After some corrections and improvements, it was distributed among the territorial communities. Finally, 62.1% of all communities in the examined regions answered the set questions that were confirmed by official letters.

The available data were organized by means of thematic analysis and descriptive statistics in order to identify current key problems. To determine the regularities of the territorial communities which are different in size and geographic location, the method of statistical grouping was used. In particular, all communities were grouped according to their location in one of the three borderline regions (Volyn, Zakarpattia and Lviv regions) and the number of population (under 10 thousand, from 10 to 20 thousand, and above 20 thousand residents in a community as of 1 January 2022).

To substantiate and to develop effective mechanisms of improvement of the efficiency of international cooperation conducted by the territorial communities which have better potential as compared to other areas, especially those which have been significantly damaged due to hostilities, strategic planning has been used.

## RESULTS

Before the decentralization reform was launched in Ukraine in 2015, the system of local government was represented by village, settlement, city, city district, regional, Kyiv and Sevastopol city councils and their officials. However, the actual powers were exercised by the state administrations of the corresponding level. Thus, until 2020, when one of the reform

stages was completed in Ukraine, local governments were mainly characterized by declarative international cooperation at their levels. Since 2021, however, it has got a new institutional content, i.e. territorial communities have appropriate powers to support adequate performance and development of their area. According to Ukrainian legislation, today local authorities have the power to make decisions on the majority of issues and to provide sustainable development of their community.

Territorial communities gained a wide range of powers in different fields of living, particularly in the field of communal services, education, medicine, culture, sport, tourism, land resource management, etc. Apparently, adequate performance of all these spheres, especially humanitarian and social directions, needs large investments. One of the important directions of the decentralization reform in Ukraine is to conduct budget decentralization which suggests a significant autonomy of territorial communities in the field of finance management. The experience confirms that the distribution of revenues is of extreme importance for some countries, but the internal and especially external revenues can be used inappropriately, stagnating efforts on the area development [9]. Therefore, following the example of the EU countries, Ukraine conducted "democratization of management and shift of the power balance from the central level to a local one; providing better administrative, functional, material, financial independence and establishment of independent bodies of local government, an increase of the level of their responsibility for decision making" [20, p. 38].

Nowadays, it is difficult to properly estimate conditions of the strategic management of communities because the majority of newly established territorial communities got such a level of power and responsibility less than two years ago, including a year of the full-scale russian-Ukrainian war. Moreover, communities are greatly differing in their indicators and conditions. This fact causes territorial disproportions that should be balanced [4]. To understand the scale of the newly established territorial communities, the authors of the research have analyzed their size and the number of them in Volyn, Zakarpattia and Lviv regions, which are geographically located on the borderline with the European Union (Table 1).

**Table 1. Groups of territorial communities of the regions of Ukraine bordering on the EU member-states by the number of residents as of 1 January 2023.** (Source: calculated based on [22])

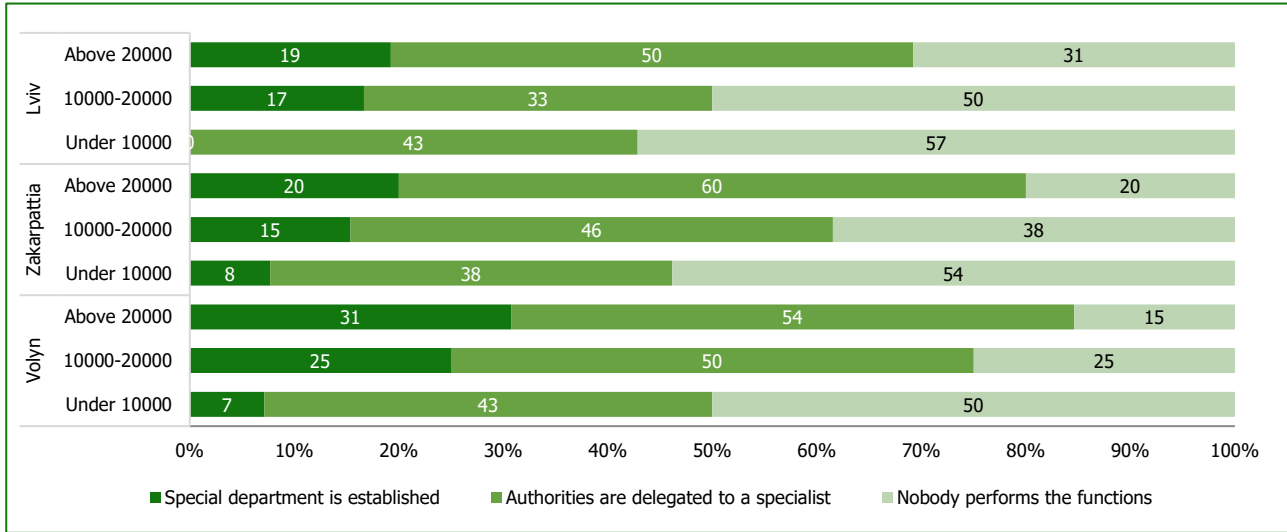
Region	Indicator	Groups by the number of residents in a community, people			Total
		Under 10 thousand	10-20 thousand	Above 20 thousand	
Volyn	Number of communities	27	8	19	54
	Residents, people	6951	14239	53578	20096
	Area, km <sup>2</sup>	234	367.4	562.2	370.9
Zakarpattia	Number of communities	24	23	17	64
	Residents, people	7664	14490	43113	19533
	Area, km <sup>2</sup>	163.7	194.6	254.7	199
Lviv	Number of communities	10	34	28	72
	Residents, people	8184	14596	40678	23846
	Area, km <sup>2</sup>	134.2	247.9	419.8	298.9

In the examined regions of Ukraine, the newly established territorial communities significantly differ by size, particularly by the number of residents and area. Thus, in the Volyn region, 50% of territorial communities are small by size, whilst, in the Lviv region, almost the same number of communities are of medium size. There is also a great area difference between Volyn and Zakarpattia regions. In general, one can note that communities are not equal by the number of residents. Hence, in the Volyn region, there is the Serekhovychi territorial community which has a population of 3.2 thousand people, whereas the Drohobych community in the Lviv region has a population of 121 thousand people. Logically, potential opportunities for the international cooperation of those communities are rather different.

Community size is of principal importance in the formation of the management structure and functional load on the staff employed in the executive committee of the corresponding local government body. Most communities which have larger budgets have additional opportunities to create separate subdivisions to exercise specific functions or to attract professional specialists. Organization of international cooperation requires special knowledge and competencies and therefore, maximum efficiency of that kind of activity can be achieved by involving proper specialists.

According to the active national laws, the organizational structure of the executive bodies of territorial communities is determined by the head and approved by the corresponding board. Thus, communities differ by exercising the functions of international cooperation. To analyze the current conditions of the international cooperation organized by the bodies of

local government in the regions of Ukraine bordering on the European Union, 118 territorial communities were examined (Figure 1).

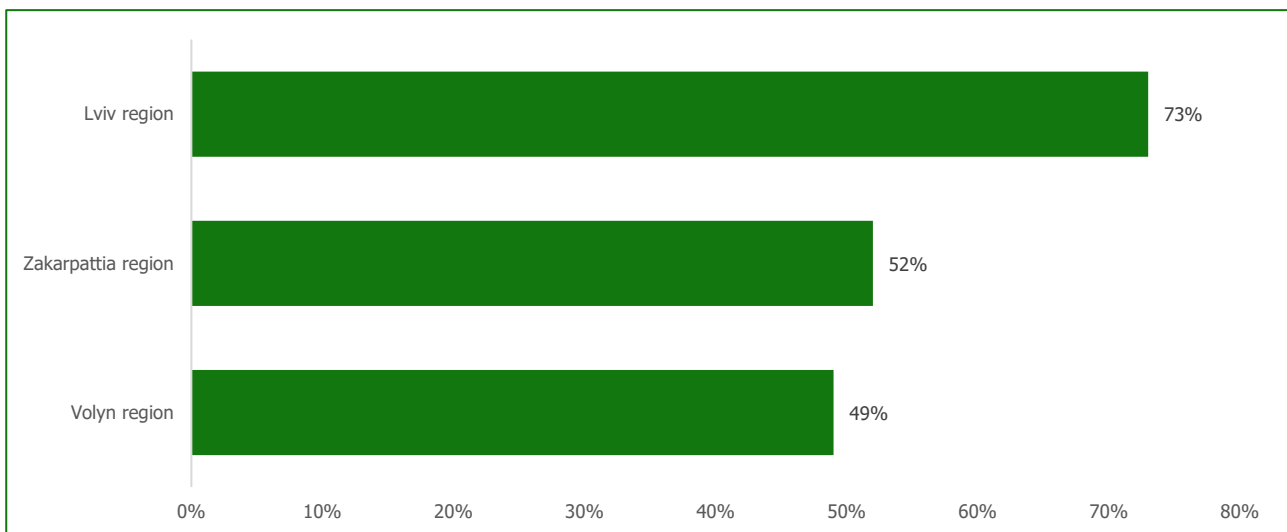


**Figure 1. Structural distribution of territorial communities of the borderline regions of Ukraine by the managerial powers in the field of international cooperation (as of 1 January 2023).**

The presented data confirm that general regularities in the studied regions are mostly the same. In particular, almost 50% of small communities (under 10 thousand residents) have no separate structural departments and none of the specialists is in charge of international cooperation. In some communities, such a situation is caused by a lack of finance, but in most cases, it is because of an underestimation of the direction of work and its contribution to the general sustainable development of the area and the well-being of the population. Comprehension of the population's well-being determines the focus of changes at the local level and the development of the area in general [25].

Even among relatively large communities (above 20 thousand residents), there are some in which nobody is in charge of inter-territorial cooperation. Thus, in the Volyn region, the number of large communities which do nothing in that direction is estimated at 15%, in the Zakarpattia region – 20%, and in the Lviv region – above 30%. The positive aspect is that above 50% of large territorial communities of the examined regions have specialized structural departments which take responsibility for international relations according to their job descriptions.

At the local level, foreign relations are usually established on a contractual basis. Local governments of different countries signed cooperation agreements. Such agreements are normally of declarative character and cover different spheres of cooperation. However, even such agreements are signed only by a share of the territorial communities (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Share of examined communities of Ukraine bordering on the EU and that have signed agreements on cooperation with foreign municipalities (as of 1 January 2023).**

The conducted studies of the territorial communities which are the closest to the European Union prove that only about half of local managers realize the necessity of running international cooperation.

The situation is principally different in the Lviv region, where almost 75% of communities have legally formalized their relations with foreign partners. However, the Zakarpattia region takes a leading position by the average number of contracts per one community, i.e. 40% of communities have more than 10 signed agreements on cooperation and thus, the average index is 8 contracts per territorial community. A different situation is observed in the Volyn region, where the average index is less than 2 contracts per community cooperating with foreign partners.

Generally, the arranged geography of cooperation of the bodies of local government is rather broad and is characterized by regional specificity.

**Table 2. Geography of cooperation of territorial communities of the borderline regions of Ukraine with the EU countries as of 1 January 2023**

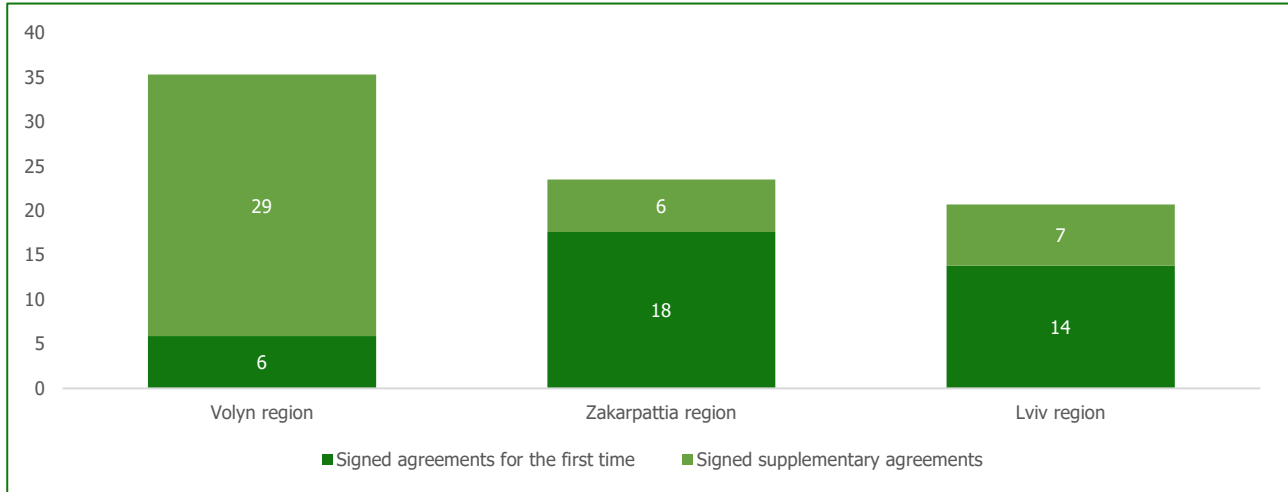
Volyn region		Zakarpattia region		Lviv region	
Country	%	Country	%	Country	%
Poland	75.0	Hungary	37.4	Poland	75.2
Germany	9.4	Czech Republic	19.0	Germany	10.5
Canada	9.4	Slovak Republic	18.4	International organizations	2.9
International organizations	3.1	Poland	10.9	Lithuania	1.9
Lithuania	3.1	Romania	7.5	Latvia	1.9
		Serbia	2.0	Georgia	1.9
		France	1.4	Slovak Republic	1.0
		Netherland	0.7	Croatia	1.0
		Germany	0.7	Slovenia	1.0
		Macedonia	0.7	China	1.0
		Croatia	0.7	Denmark	1.0
		Slovenia	0.7	Southern Korea	1.0

Thus, communities of the Volyn region cooperate with municipalities from 4 countries, including Poland which takes the largest number of all contracts, i.e. 75%. Representation of international partnership is much broader in Lviv and Zakarpattia regions. History of the cooperation development is different in terms of communities. Some of them, which are established on the basis of former district centres or cities, especially of regional significance, have long-arranged partnership relations, which have been extended in the newly established communities. Many territorial communities have their centres in settlements, usually villages, which had no appropriate infrastructure and partnership relations, especially international ones. Therefore, they have been actively looking for foreign partners to cooperate and implement joint projects.

Since 2014, Ukraine has been suffering from the effect of russian aggression. However, until 24 February 2022, hostilities took place only in the area of some districts in Donetsk and Luhansk regions and local governments were able to exercise their powers approved by the Constitution and laws of Ukraine. The full-scale russian invasion of Ukraine has both caused general economic, social and humanitarian crises in the country, as well as reduced the local bodies' capacities to provide services for citizens and attract foreign investments. Moreover, it has increased risks of safety and led to complications of cross-border cooperation and work with foreign partners.

Unstable situations and lack of confidence in the achievement of the expected results due to objective realities are the main problems faced by local communities on the way of international cooperation under martial law. Although foreign partners realize the situation in the country, they still are not sure about the possibilities to implement joint projects during the war. Moreover, communities suffer from a lack of financial resources required for the implementation of local development projects because of reduced foreign investments and limited funding provided by the national power authorities. The problem is that newly established Ukrainian communities are not aware of the potential opportunities provided by cross-border cooperation with their neighbours from the European Union.

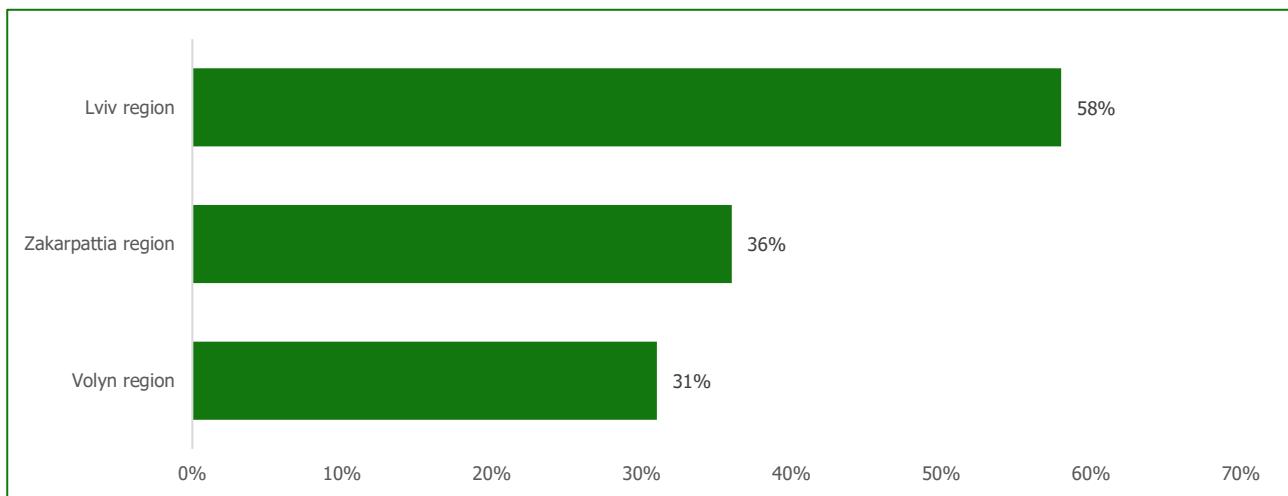
In conditions of the active phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war, problems of Ukraine and Ukrainians are the focus of developed countries and therefore, local territorial communities have got better chances to change the declarative character of their international cooperation to a more effective one. In Ukraine, a lot of communities have made efforts to use the potential opportunities provided by international cooperation which is confirmed by the data obtained in the conducted research (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Share of territorial communities of the regions of Ukraine bordering on the EU countries which have signed international cooperation agreements after 24 February 2022, %.**

Analysis of the data obtained from the carried-out interview proves that territorial communities of the examined regions demonstrate different behaviours and activities in the direction of concluding international cooperation agreements. Thus, one-third of the local communities in the Volyn region signed contracts on cooperation with foreign municipalities after 24 February 2022, including 29.4% of those which had never had such contracts before. In Zakarpattia and Lviv regions, which had a better percentage of cooperation of their communities with foreigners before 2022, local authorities were less active in searching for foreign partners, whilst those, which concluded supplementary agreements had already had the previous experience of such cooperation.

Cooperation between municipalities is normally initiated for the preparation and implementation of joint projects to attract international technical assistance. However, the current realities of Ukrainian territorial community performance do not contribute to the development of such projects in the long run. Thus, during the first six months, the main tool of cooperation with foreign partners was to get needed humanitarian aid. A detailed analysis of the data obtained after studying the territorial communities proves that the previously established foreign contacts fueled the fast obtaining of the necessary support in emergency situations (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Share of territorial communities of the regions of Ukraine bordering on the EU countries which have received international support after the imposition of martial law in Ukraine, %.**

Before 24 February 2022, above 70% of the territorial communities in the Lviv region had already had foreign partners, and after the start of the full-scale military invasion, another 13.8% signed a contract on cooperation and thus, 57.5% of existing communities in that region gained the needed aid during the first year of the war. In contrast, territorial communities of the Volyn region were less active in the development of international cooperation and their index was much lower. Among all examined communities, the aid was obtained only by those who had previously concluded contracts with foreign partners. The only exception was the Solotvyno community of the Zakarpattia region, which received humanitarian aid from abroad having no foreign partners.

In spite of the current active hostilities in the area of Ukraine, territorial communities of the regions bordering on the European Union are able to implement both social and humanitarian projects and work on the projects of development of their infrastructure and energy efficiency.

To tackle all the challenges of martial law in Ukraine and to contribute to successful international cooperation between Ukrainian local territorial communities bordering on the EU and foreign partners, it is necessary to take the following urgent measures:

- to launch a complex information campaign both at the national and regional levels on the promotion of the benefits and opportunities from the implementation of international projects among representatives of territorial communities of the regions of Ukraine bordering on the EU countries by involving mass media, organizing specialized conferences, round tables discussions, seminars, meetings of the bodies of state power and representatives of local government to clarify specificities and peculiarities of international activity, as well as to raise awareness about that sphere;
- to shape a system of learning managerial and professional competencies of the staff employed in the local government bodies of territorial communities, who are in charge of organizing and running international activity, by providing regular training and courses to improve their qualifications, including the resources of higher education establishments, international training agencies and consulting companies, to advance competences in the field of applying for international projects, their administration and assistance, to raise managers' awareness about the expediency and importance of international cooperation, to stimulate establishment of specialized international departments in the organizational structure of the community administration;
- to improve the institutional basis which regulates the international activity of Ukrainian territorial communities by adopting corresponding laws on clear regulation of powers, duties and responsibilities of the subjects at the international level, by raising institutional confidence of potential international partners in the accomplishment of the cooperation projects with the national territorial communities, by implementing best practices of the advanced world experience of international project fulfilment at the level of territorial communities, by bringing the national standards and regulations of international activity in compliance with the international standards;
- to improve the financial and economic basis of international cooperation conducted by the territorial communities which are located on the borderline area of Ukraine by means of subsidy support provided by the national and regional power authorities, implementation of international projects, stimulation and attraction of financial and economic, as well as banking institutions to take part in the joint funding of international activity of territorial communities, motivation of business representatives to implement large-scale international projects;
- to accelerate the development of a network of infrastructure objects within the territorial communities located in the area of Ukraine bordering on the EU countries, including the establishment of new international border crossing points, improvement of logistic supply for international cooperation development, opening of logistic hubs, inclusion of the national road and transport system in the international transport corridors, development of a network of objects of the investment and innovative infrastructure in the regions bordering on the EU countries.

## DISCUSSION

The research substantiates the strategical importance of the processes of international cooperation of the territorial communities of Ukraine as it is an effective tool for both diversification of the sources of revenues to the local budgets, and stimulation of the processes of their social and economic development, enhancing the living standards of population, developing a network of objects of the infrastructural support, balancing the disproportions of spatial and regional development, and planning the processes of sustainable development. Under martial law introduced after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the results of the study are crucially important because international support today is highly needed for Ukraine to be able to oppose the aggressor. The relevance of the topic is confirmed by the previously conducted studies aimed at identifying the internal and external parameters of cooperation and integration of territorial communities at the international level [14] to forecast the strategically important role of international cooperation in activating the processes

of social and economic development at the local level [3], to implement the advanced world practices of stimulating the international activity of territorial communities in the process of decentralization [6]. Moreover, the majority of scientific works are devoted to the issues of intensification of the financial components needed to provide for the processes of decentralization and development of territorial communities. The mentioned aspects are studied by Havkalova N. [10], Khirivskiy R., Petryshyn L. and Pasichnyk T. [13], Krainyk O. and Fedorchak O. [14]. In contrast, the resources necessary to implement international projects are considered in the development of territorial communities on a residual principle. Nevertheless, in conditions of the limited financial funds of local budgets, they can be involved in expanding the processes of social and economic development and improving the living standards of the local population. The present research is therefore focused on developing effective tools to stimulate the international activity of the border territorial communities of Ukraine in the context of strengthening their resource and functional capability and overcoming the massive destructive impact caused to the territorial community development by the war in Ukraine. Unlike the earlier works, the study tends to outline the actual scales and volume of international activity of Ukrainian territorial communities bordering the EU in conditions of martial law. It is fulfilled by analyzing personal data of the conducted sociological survey enhancing the uniqueness of the study results as compared to other works. The organizational and economic tools for promoting the international activity of territorial communities of the border regions of Ukraine are created to provide complex information support of such activity, to improve its managerial and organizational components, to enhance the institutional supply of international cooperation at the level of territorial communities, to strengthen the financial and economic basis for implementing the joint international projects and developing a network of the proper infrastructural objects.

## CONCLUSIONS

International cooperation of territorial communities is an effective method to establish mutually beneficial relationships between the power authorities. Such cooperation has become of great importance for local territorial communities because, on one hand, globalization has facilitated interaction between municipalities and, on the other hand, the reform of decentralization in Ukraine has provided local authorities with more powers and opportunities to establish cooperation at different levels. Expansion of the managerial and budget powers of local authorities is the prerequisite for promoting decentralization reform in Ukraine. Territorial communities have gained more powers for implementing investment and infrastructural projects, distributing funds from local budgets, and satisfying the needs and interests of their residents. Implementation of the decentralization reform has fueled the social and economic processes at the local level, stimulated business activity, and balanced the structural disproportion of spatial and territorial development. International cooperation of territorial communities has both general features related to different factors including cultural differences, language barriers, legal and political judgements, as well as specific ones, which are characteristic of each specific territory. The Russian-Ukrainian war has a significant impact on conditions and directions of cooperation of the domestic territorial communities with foreign partners. In the pre-war period, their international cooperation was mostly of declarative character, or involved joint training and implementation of the projects of international technical support, whilst under martial law, the previously established contacts contributed to the more active attraction of humanitarian aid from abroad. Hostilities on the territory of Ukraine have stimulated international cooperation of the territorial communities bordering the European Union that is determined, on one hand, by the managers' attempts to diversify the sources of attracting financial and economic, as well as investment resources, and, on the other hand – by the foreign partners' wish to implement complex measures of supporting Ukraine in conditions of military action and aggravation of the social and economic problems (decline in the GDP of Ukraine by 30%, substantial budget deficit, high rates of migration, rise of unemployment level, and others).

When conducting the study, the authors interviewed representatives of the managerial staff of 118 territorial communities of Ukrainian regions bordering the EU. It is determined that the share of territorial communities running projects of international cooperation since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has increased in the examined regions, particularly in the Volyn region – from 5.9% to 35.3% (19 communities), Lviv region – from 13.8% to 20.7% (15 communities), Transcarpathian region - from 17.6% to 23.5% (15 communities). Moreover, it is worth noting that before the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, these territorial communities mainly implemented their international projects in the field of social and economic infrastructural development at the local level. However, after the declaration of martial law in Ukraine, the concentration of international cooperation has shifted to the sphere of humanitarian aid from abroad (foodstuff, medication, clothes, footwear, vehicles, household appliances, etc.). For the effective development of international cooperation of the territorial communities bordering the EU, it is necessary to address the challenges of limited resource capacity of the objects of logistic and infrastructural supply on the border areas, corruption, and red tape obstacles in the process of customs clearance of goods, abuse of the access to implementing international projects and importing humanitarian aid to Ukraine by domestic public organizations. It should be mentioned that few territorial communities have received adequate organizational and managerial support for implementing the projects of international activity. Thus, in the Volyn

region, only 20% of territorial communities have specialized departments in their organizational structure, in the Lviv region – 11%, and in the Transcarpathian region – 12%. Among the main problems hindering the development of the international activity of territorial communities of Ukrainian regions bordering the EU, the authors identify limited local budget funds for participating in the projects of grant co-funding; the mainly declarative character of the target programs of territorial communities in the field of international cooperation and no effective mechanisms provided for their implementation and funding; institutional gaps in the field of regulation and administration of international cooperation at the level of local territorial communities; underdeveloped motivation mechanisms and stimuli of the territorial community managers and their poor awareness of the necessity to implement the projects in the field of international cooperation.

Promotion of the international cooperation of Ukrainian bodies of local government bordering the EU is important for the potential opportunities and advantages of such cooperation organizations. In this regard, the researchers have developed a complex of priority measures to promote international cooperation of Ukrainian local territorial communities bordering the European Union member-states. Successful achievement of the set goal requires confidence and trust between the representatives of territorial communities and international partners, as well as the development of competencies of the territorial communities' managers in the direction of the potential opportunities and advantages of such cooperation. Moreover, it is necessary to improve the financial and economic basis of the international project implementation, including the fundamentals of joint grant funding. In conditions of martial law, the development of international cooperation of the territorial communities of Ukraine bordering the EU regions needs a large-scale information campaign promoting the benefits of the international projects implemented in collaboration with foreign partners. It is also important to develop a complex system of advanced training for the staff of local power authorities engaged in international activities. At the national level, it is expedient to improve the managerial basis of the international activity of territorial communities of Ukraine, including powers and responsibilities, to encourage international confidence and adaptation of the world experience to the domestic realities. It is necessary to enhance the infrastructural supply of the territorial communities bordering the EU member-states, including international checkpoints, logistic hubs, overland ports, investment and innovative infrastructure.

The complex implementation of the proposed measures will facilitate the stabilization of the processes of social and economic development of the border territorial communities of Ukraine, creation of new job places, activation of the trading and economic transactions, implementation of large-scale investment and innovation infrastructural projects, diversification of the risks of attracting financial and economic resources under martial law.

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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## РОЗВИТОК МІЖНАРОДНОЇ СПІВПРАЦІ ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНИХ ГРОМАД ПРИКОРДОННИХ РЕГІОНІВ УКРАЇНИ З КРАЇНАМИ ЄС В УМОВАХ ВОЄННОГО СТАНУ

У статті міжнародна співпраця територіальних громад України визначена як стратегічний напрям залучення фінансових ресурсів та реалізації їхніх інвестиційних проєктів. Сформульовано передумови проведення реформи децентралізації в Україні. Установлено, що через повномасштабне вторгнення російської федерації на територію України й уведення воєнного стану відбувалися структурні зміни в параметрах функціонування органів місцевого самоврядування. У статті досліджено теоретико-прикладні аспекти організації та розвитку міжнародної співпраці територіальних громад України. Сформовано методику дослідження міжнародного співробітництва територіальних громад. Здійснено оцінку стану міжнародної співпраці вітчизняних територіальних громад, які знаходяться в регіонах, що межують із країнами Європейського Союзу. Проведено опитування управлінців прикордонних територіальних громад України щодо визначення параметрів розвитку міжнародної діяльності. З'ясовано особливості налагодження співробітництва органів місцевого самоврядування України із закордонними партнерами та визначено обмеження й виклики, що впливають на здатність громад реалізовувати міжнародні ініціативи та співпрацю в умовах російсько-української війни. Розроблено заходи щодо підвищення ефективності міжнародної співпраці між українськими місцевими територіальними громадами, що межують із ЄС, та іноземними партнерами за рахунок реалізації комплексної промоційної кампанії серед представників органів місцевого самоврядування, розробки комплексної системи підвищення кваліфікації працівників місцевих органів влади в царині міжнародної діяльності; удосконалення інституційного базису регулювання міжнародної діяльності територіальних громад України та покращення фінансово-економічного базису реалізації міжнародної співпраці, а також активізації темпів розбудови прикордонних інфраструктурних об'єктів.

**Ключові слова:** територіальна громада, міжнародне співробітництво, транскордонне співробітництво, воєнний стан

**JEL Класифікація:** F50, R10