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The problem of ensuring the sovereignty of EU members states in modern legal and public discourse

Yevhen Novikov*

Doctoral Student

Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University

61024, 77 Hryhorii Skovoroda Str., Kharkiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6085-8258>

Abstract

This study presents a theoretical analysis of the concept of sovereignty and explores some of the peculiarities of its implementation in the policies of European states in the context of regional integration, which is relevant in view of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union and critical assessments of EU policies by Eastern European countries. The purpose of this study was to examine changes in the concept of state sovereignty under the influence of integration processes. The research methodology was based on a critical analysis and systematic review of publications by leading researchers in the field of European politics, law and sovereignty theory, as well as concepts of European sovereignty. This helped to consider different perspectives on the change of sovereignty in the context of the development of supranational and intergovernmental institutions of the EU. In particular, how the concept of "European sovereignty" is used in the legitimization strategies of political actors supporting integration and supranational governance. The results of the study indicate changes in the definition of sovereignty in contemporary European politics. On the other hand, EU member states are facing less control over many national functions through supranational institutions such as the European Commission and the Court of Justice of the European Union, which will lead to partial restrictions on control over certain areas of domestic and foreign policy. Thus, this study has proved that supranational governance is developing as a process that not only expands the EU's sphere of power, but also transforms the traditional concept of sovereignty, making it more dynamic and more adapted to modern political realities. The conclusions drawn can serve to form a new model of integration policy that reflects political and social needs within the framework of European integration and is able to ensure a balanced interaction between nation states and supranational structures

Keywords:

sovereignty; European integration; supranational mechanisms; European politics; legal system; intergovernmental relations; EU member states

Introduction

In the current context of European integration, the concept of state sovereignty has undergone a significant transformation and has sparked much debate in academic and political circles. The EU, as a complex supranational organisation uniting sovereign states, raises a major question for researchers as to how member

states can preserve their independence and autonomy by voluntarily transferring some of their sovereign rights to the supranational level. As criticism of the EU from Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia has intensified, the issue of possible restrictions on the sovereignty of these countries has become the subject of serious

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*Corresponding author



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legal and political debate. The question arises whether these actions are legitimate and whether there are legal grounds for such claims.

R. Bellanova *et al.* (2022) analysed the impact of digital sovereignty on European security integration. The researchers emphasised that digital sovereignty, including both control over digital infrastructure and the use of digital tools for security management, is becoming a central topic in the EU's political discourse. They have conducted a detailed study of digital sovereignty, both in terms of European policy and the rearticulation of sovereign power and digital technologies. N. Jabko & M. Luhman (2020) explored how the Eurozone crisis and the migration crisis have changed the understanding of sovereignty in the EU. The researchers argued that the politicisation of the crisis has led to a revision of the practice of sovereignty, particularly through the search for integration measures. According to the experts, the politicisation of these crises marginalises sovereignty claims without threatening European integration. N. Brack *et al.* (2019) examined the conflicts of sovereignty in the EU, which have been exacerbated by the refugee crisis, the Eurozone crisis, and Brexit. The researchers noted that these conflicts have taken on new manifestations, notably in the form of disputes over parliamentary and national sovereignty, which are part of the democratic tradition. N. Brack *et al.* (2021) also pointed out that the traditional conflict between state and supranational sovereignty is being supplemented by new types of sovereignty, such as parliamentary and national sovereignty, in various contemporary crises, including migration and economic policies.

C. Volk (2022) explored the issue of sovereignty in the context of globalisation. The researcher criticised the conventional concept of sovereignty based on a rigid division between internal and external, national, and global. C. Volk (2022) noted that such a conceptual framework no longer corresponds to the current situation of global relations and transnational changes in power structures, and that the very understanding of sovereignty must be revised to bring it in line with the current reality. B. De Carvalho (2021) explored the historical aspects of sovereignty in international relations. The researcher emphasised the significance of historicising the concept of sovereignty and criticised previous studies for being too Eurocentric and not addressing the broader global context. The researcher also stressed the need to rethink the role of sovereignty in international relations and called for a more critical analysis of current approaches. T. Kuhn (2019) explored the role of identity politics in the European integration. Initially, the integration was elite-driven and less politicised, with identity issues having little influence. With the recent crises such as Brexit and the general politicisation of European integration, collective identity has begun to play a more important role. The researchers analysed how people's self-identification as

Europeans or as exclusively national citizens can influence the pace and focus of integration.

The purpose of this study was to theorise the impact of political, social, economic, and technological factors on the shaping and development of the idea of sovereignty within the EU.

Literature Review

I.V. Yakoviyk *et al.* (2018) considered the issue of the EU's influence on the sovereignty of candidate countries and neighbouring countries. The researchers analysed how supranational governance organisations can influence national sovereignty through direct sanctions, considering the national interests of each country, regardless of the EU's political aspirations. M. Avbelj (2014) investigated the relationship between the concept of sovereignty and European integration. The researcher concluded that the most successful concept of European integration is based on pluralistic sovereignty. N. Walker (2020) analysed the concept of 'sovereignty surplus' as a mechanism by which states adapt their sovereignty to new subnational and supranational contexts. This study emphasised that sovereignty can be changed and redistributed, and it is a flexible approach to maintaining political power. K. Huhta (2021) analysed the EU's energy powers, focusing on the provisions that enable each country to determine its energy resources. It was found that such an interpretation limits the EU's capabilities in energy policy.

L. Monsees & D. Lambach (2022) focused on the concept of digital sovereignty and analysed its impact on the reproduction of European identity through initiatives such as 5G and Gaia-X. They pointed out that Europe's digital sovereignty is weak and is a security issue for the EU. F.M. Ferrara & H. Kriesi (2022) investigated crisis phenomena and their effects on the European integration process. The researchers proposed an original theoretical approach to the analysis of various crises, such as Brexit and COVID-19. M. Riddervold *et al.* (2021) stressed that the EU has demonstrated the ability to adapt to crises while maintaining key institutions. This means that crises can act as catalysts for change rather than prevent it.

J. Edler *et al.* (2023) analysed the issue of technological sovereignty in the context of innovation policy, particularly the role of technological sovereignty in ensuring national competitiveness. J. Carver (2024) analysed the impact of digital sovereignty on EU foreign policy through initiatives such as the cyber diplomacy toolkit, external capacity building initiatives, and the 5G toolkit, showing the varying degrees of success of these programmes. H. Roberts *et al.* (2021) emphasised the significance of policy-making in this area for preserving the EU's identity and autonomy, pointing out that digitalisation requires innovative approaches to governance. The researchers identified tensions between rights, free markets, and geopolitics. They point

to three trends: the use of internal market policies to gain geopolitical influence, foreign policy imperatives for internal markets, and a new hybrid digital policy that combines internal and geopolitical issues.

T. Kostakopoulou (2024a) examined the issues of European political integration, specifically EU citizenship and migration policy. The researcher analysed the community-building process in the EU through the lens of the politics of inclusion and exclusion, using normative political theory to study socio-political membership, European identity, and immigration issues. C. Eckes (2020) explored the concept of autonomy of the EU legal system, arguing that despite the lack of sovereignty under international law, the EU acts as a sovereign entity due to the autonomy of its legal order, which is protected by the Court of Justice of the EU. M.R. Madsen *et al.* (2022) examined the negative reactions to the CJEU judgments and found that sovereignty concerns often outweigh the judgments themselves. This suggests that the concrete outcome of a judicial review is more important than the role of judicial review in the EU legal system. D. Leuffen *et al.* (2022) analysed European integration and differentiation in multiple policy areas in their book, explaining why some countries opt out of certain EU policies while other policy areas are deeply integrated. T. Christiansen & A. Verdun (2020) investigated the impact of past institutional decisions on current processes in the EU, using the concepts of path dependence and tipping point to explain the sustainability or change in European integration.

S.K. Schmidt (2021) examined British parliamentary sovereignty and its conflict with EU constitutional provisions, which was one of the major reasons for Brexit. C. Bickerton (2021) explored the transformation of the UK's sovereignty during EU membership, emphasising legal changes and the lack of public scrutiny. After the 2016 referendum, the UK faced a new constitutional structure that exacerbated conflicts over sovereignty. J. Agnew (2020) explored how Brexit affected the perception of the UK's territorial sovereignty. The researcher argued that the referendum highlighted the contingency of sovereignty and the complexity of controlling territory.

F. Negri *et al.* (2021) investigated the relationship between euro adoption and European identity. This study found that the use of the euro reduces the proportion of people who identify exclusively with their country, thereby contributing to the development of a European identity. C. Shore & A. Black (2021) focused on the impact of the European Commission's activities on the sense of community among Europeans and on the development of new leaders for the development

of European identity. They argue that the active role of institutions in the political process is key to strengthening a common identity. Overall, these studies highlighted the necessity of adapting the EU to modern challenges, particularly in the areas of digitalisation and migration management, to preserve its values and institutional integrity.

Materials and Methods

The research methodology included an analysis of scientific literature that helps to better understand the legal mechanisms for protecting and implementing the principles of sovereignty at the European level. The analysis of the EU integration process included a study of the 1951 Treaty¹ and attempts to create a Military Community Treaty and a Political Community Treaty. The content analysis confirmed the trend of supranational governance in the EU, particularly in terms of interaction between member states. The study covered the key stages of the development of the concept of sovereignty, starting with the signing of the first EU international treaties and ending with current challenges and transformations, especially after Brexit and the 2008 financial crisis. Various theoretical approaches have been used to analyse the issue of sovereignty and political integration in the EU. A variety of theoretical frameworks were used, including the contributions of leading researchers in the field of European politics, law, and concepts of sovereignty. This helped to summarise and structure various approaches to sovereignty studies in the EU context. Furthermore, historiographical analysis was employed to trace the development of the concept of sovereignty in the context of European integration. This helped to demonstrate the evolution of the EU's political and legal structure and the changing approach to sovereign power. The methodology also included an analysis of the scientific literature, which helped to clarify the political and gain a deeper understanding of the legal mechanisms for protecting and implementing the principles of sovereignty at the European level. In any case, the content analysis confirmed the trend of supranational governance in the EU, especially in certain aspects of relations between member states.

The methodology was also based on a sequential analysis of the development of the concept of sovereignty in the EU from the time of the Treaty of Rome² to the current events, which allowed tracing how the integration stages affect the perception of sovereignty by the Member States. The study started with an analysis of the Treaty of Rome³, signed by the founding countries (Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, and France), which sought to create a single

¹ Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (Paris Agreement). (1951, April). Retrieved from https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/treaty_establishing_the_european_coal_and_steel_community_paris_18_april_1951-en-11a21305-941e-49d7-a171-ed5be548cd58.html.

² Treaty of Rome. (1957, March). Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/treaty-of-rome>.

³ Ibidem, 1957.

European space. The study also explored the impact of the Maastricht Treaty¹, which transformed the European Economic Community into a political union, establishing the foundations of the Economic and Monetary Union, European citizenship, and a common foreign policy, which severely limited national sovereignty due to the requirement to adapt national legal systems to EU norms and expand the powers of the European Parliament. The analysis also included a consideration of the Treaty of Lisbon², which created the posts of President of the European Council and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and established the European External Action Service. This approach helped to examine how successive stages of integration complicated the structure of relations between member states, prompting them to gradually transfer sovereignty to the EU. All these research methods enabled a theoretical analysis of sovereignty issues in the EU, conducted through a definitive study of the available data without the use of empirical research. This helped not only to systematise the key theoretical approaches to sovereignty, but also to take a fresh approach to understanding political processes in the EU.

Results and Discussion

The concept of 'European sovereignty' is one of the central political guidelines of modern European integration. Various approaches to this subject in the scientific literature are useful for analysis, as they highlight both internal (national) and external (supranational) factors of influence. In his book, P. Buhler (2023) emphasised the role of European sovereignty in safeguarding the values and interests of the EU. The author used the works of Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to analyse the conceptual roots of sovereignty and emphasised the indivisibility of sovereignty as a fundamental principle of state power. P. Buhler's (2023) study provided a detailed picture of the emergence of European sovereignty as a mechanism capable of protecting European interests in the context of globalisation. According to the researcher, only the EU can be a guarantor of its existence and unite countries to confront global challenges.

T. Kostakopoulou (2024b) examined the impact of identity politics on the emergence of the Jewish project. The researcher viewed European identity not as a static given, but as a dynamic process emerging from institutional practices of cooperation and integration. This study showed that European identity is the result of political design, where public participation in the political process is a key element. J. Grzybowski &

H. Černý (2023) proposed a psychoanalytic approach to understanding nationalism and sovereignty. The researchers examined the changing perceptions of the state and sovereignty, specifically, how they affect the state-building process. The focus was on conceptual changes in "sovereignty", especially through the lens of international politics and the right of peoples to self-determination. The study showed that modern sovereignty is becoming a performative phenomenon based on the interaction of national and supranational actors.

It was found that right-wing populists use the concept of sovereignty as a means of promoting a monocultural and ethnically homogeneous model of the state. In their study, S.I. Bora & L. Schramm (2023) emphasised the growing influence of France in the EU. The researchers argued that France's political strategy from 2017 to 2022 was aimed at strengthening the country's position in the European arena. France's political system and bilateral relations with Germany have become significant factors in the fulfilment of France's interests. The researchers' conclusions emphasised the role of crisis moments for changes in EU policy and France's involvement in these processes. S.I. Bora (2023) analysed the discursive strategy of French President Emmanuel Macron to actively promote the idea of European sovereignty. S.I. Bora (2023) actively argued that this discourse is a tool for legitimising France's economic interests. The researcher examined the mechanisms of implementation of this idea in European politics through the analysis of 72 interviews with political experts and public speeches.

Thus, studies by various researchers show that the concept of sovereignty in Europe continues to be a dynamic and complex phenomenon. The political strategies of EU countries, especially France, right-wing populist movements, and the EU demonstrate diverse ways of interpreting and using this concept in the context of current geopolitical challenges.

From the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 to the creation of the EU in 1992³, the idea of sovereignty has undergone major changes. This period was fundamental to the integration process in Europe and influenced the understanding of national sovereignty and interaction with new supranational institutions, such as the European Court of Human Rights, established in 1959.

On 18 April, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands signed the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (Paris Agreement)⁴ establishing the European Coal and Steel

¹ Maastricht Treaty. (1992, February). Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/maastricht-treaty>.

² Treaty of Lisbon. (2007, December). Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12007L%2FTXT>.

³ Maastricht Treaty. (1992, February). Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/maastricht-treaty>.

⁴ Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (Paris Agreement). (1951, April). Retrieved from https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/treaty_establishing_the_european_coal_and_steel_community_paris_18_april_1951-en-11a21305-941e-49d7-a171-ed5be548cd58.html.

Community. The 50-year agreement came into force in July 1952 and was the first step towards European integration. The purpose was not only to restore the economy after the Second World War, but also to strengthen peace by combining the extraction and processing of strategic coal and steel resources. This community became the basis for further integration processes and marked the beginning of the creation of a common supranational structure. Thus, one of the key reasons for the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community was the desire to prevent the recurrence of military conflicts like the two World Wars. The relinquishment of sovereignty in the sphere of control over critical industries was viewed as a crucial step towards ensuring peace and stability in Europe.

On 25 March 1957, two important Treaties of Rome¹ were signed: The Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Dir, 2024). These agreements formed the basis for further European integration. According to the Treaty on European Economic Community, the six founding member states sought to create a common market, providing for the abolition of tariff barriers, the introduction of common tariffs, a common trade policy towards third countries and the expansion of cooperation in this area. Particular attention was paid to agriculture and transport. The Second Treaty of Rome established the European Atomic Energy Community to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The purpose of the European Atomic Energy Community was to support research and industrial development in this area, and it was also a vital step in European cooperation.

During this period, the debate on sovereignty centred on the extent to which national governments were willing to transfer their powers to the new European institutions. This issue has become particularly relevant in the context of economic policy, where countries are expected to work together to achieve their common goals. The famous French politician Jean Monnet advocated the unification of European countries based on economic and political cooperation to ensure stability and peace on the continent (Jean Monnet and..., 2024). Monnet viewed European integration as a way to avoid conflict and build a new international order after the devastating consequences of World War II. Monnet's core idea was to transfer control of major industries (such as coal and steel production) to a commonwealth open to other European countries, consolidating their interests and strengthening economic ties. It also supported the creation of a common market, a single currency system, and other attempts to create a political and economic union among European countries. Through the United States of Europe Action Committee,

which he founded, Monnet worked to promote the idea of a Council of Europe, the formulation of common policies, and the eventual general election to the European Parliament, as represented in the Schuman project. In the project, Monnet initially supported the idea of a European federation, which is clearly reflected in the 1950 Schuman Declaration, which he helped to draft. In this document, integration was defined as a means of gradually uniting European countries into a federation to ensure lasting peace and economic development. However, as the integration programme evolved, Monnet changed his perspective on the idea of sectoral integration, focusing on the gradual integration of common sectors such as coal and steel. Monnet believed that this approach was more effective in creating interdependence between countries and gradually paving the way for political integration.

The European Court of Human Rights (2023) was established in 1959 to ensure respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. Although the Court was not a part of the EU, it played a significant role in shaping the legal sphere of Europe. The European Court of Human Rights was one of the first instruments to influence national legal systems and force Council of Europe member states to adhere to common human rights standards.

Current EU studies focus on various aspects of economic, political, and social integration, as well as on the regulation and impact of EU decisions on global processes. D. Fiott (2023) examined the EU's response to the war in Ukraine and its impact on European defence integration. The researcher analyses how the priorities of EU member states have changed under the influence of the war and emphasises the strengthening of intergovernmental and supranational defence cooperation mechanisms. This study showed that crises such as wars can be a catalyst for deepening European integration in certain areas, such as defence. Comparing this study with the one by F. Stoeckel *et al.* (2024), it is worth pointing out that the former researcher analysed macro-political processes at the level of defence integration, while F. Stoeckel *et al.* (2024) considered the micro level and explored how citizens use EU policies. The study found that respondents with more nationalistic outlooks were more likely to have a distorted view of the EU's powers and believe that Brussels has too much power over national governments. In contrast, citizens who consider themselves Europeans have become better informed about the true scope of the EU's powers.

An analysis of integration support in the current social and educational context revealed many challenges and opportunities for the successful integration of different population groups. Supporting integration includes not only legal and administrative measures,

¹ Treaty of Rome. (1957, March). Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/treaty-of-rome>.

but also changing cultural and social attitudes that may limit the participation of minorities in public processes. Raising public awareness and capacity on the significance of tolerance and mutual support is also an essential factor.

In Germany, support for European integration reached 67.5%, making it one of the countries with the highest support for European initiatives. This result can be explained by many factors. Germany is one of the most economically developed countries in Europe, and it benefits greatly from the European single market and the absence of trade barriers. Furthermore, as noted above, Germany's political stability and leadership in important EU decisions contribute to increased public confidence in the integration process. An example of Germany's leadership role is its activities during the Eurozone crisis (2010-2012), when the country played a major role in providing financial support to Greece and other countries facing economic difficulties. Thanks to their efforts and cooperation with other EU member states, steps were taken to stabilise the economy and overcome the crisis, reinforcing public confidence in European integration (Leleka & Shylina, 2022). These factors encouraged Germans to perceive the EU not only as an economic project, but also as a platform for ensuring political stability and security in the region. Furthermore, German citizens' support for European integration is driven by a shared sense of responsibility for the European project, especially considering Germany's leading role in addressing the EU's financial and migration crises (Gurkov & Sydorzhovsky, 2016).

In France, support for European integration is slightly lower than in Germany at 62.3%, but rejection is also noticeable at 25.5%. As one of the key founding members of the EU, France stays committed to the European project, but internal socio-economic problems such as rising unemployment, immigration issues, and growing nationalist sentiment are putting a lot of pressure on public opinion. The growing popularity of right-wing nationalist parties in France, such as the National Alliance, is also affecting public perceptions of integration. Many French people have expressed concern that their national identity and sovereignty will be lost in the European project. At the same time, a considerable part of the population, especially young people and urban residents, views the EU as an opportunity for economic growth and stability (Avramenko, 2011).

Italy has one of the lowest rates of support for European integration among the major EU countries – 54.8%. Over 31.3% of respondents oppose integration, indicating a growing scepticism towards the EU among Italians. The consequences of the 2008 economic crisis and the 2015 migration crisis, which led to a deterioration in attitudes towards European institutions and resulted in major cuts in public spending, lower employment, and higher poverty rates. A smaller proportion of the population (30%) believes that the EU did not

support Italy enough during the crisis, leading to a rise in Euroscepticism. However, over half of the population still supports the idea of European integration and recognises its significance for the country's economic stability (Proboev, 2017).

Poland is one of the countries with an extremely high level of support for European integration – 74.9%. This can be explained by several factors. First, Poland benefits greatly from EU membership, particularly through financial support in the form of structural funds. Secondly, the EU plays a role in ensuring internal democratic norms and the rule of law, which is critical considering the internal political conflicts between the government and the opposition. Despite some differences between Warsaw and Brussels on political issues, the overall support for European integration among Polish citizens is still remarkably strong. Poland's integration into the EU has been successful due to systemic reforms, consistent measures, and the involvement of all state bodies. The training of advanced specialists and support of civil society institutions for European integration played an integral role. These measures contributed to solid economic growth and political stability in Poland and served as an example of effective coordination of European integration policy for the candidate country (Merkotun, 2023).

Spain has an optimistic attitude towards the EU. The level of support for European integration in Spain also continues to be high, at 68%. After overcoming the economic crisis and reducing unemployment problems, most of the population considers the EU to be an indispensable tool for the country's economic and political development. The Spaniards, according to A.O. Khmel (2021), consider the EU an effective mechanism for cooperation in security, economic and social development. Thanks to stable economic growth and declining unemployment, public opinion. Spain continues to support European integration. Spain has also viewed its security through the lens of its relations with the EU and NATO and adapted its national strategy to the new threats of the 21st century.

According to N. Tsounis (2018), the Greek economy suffered from unemployment, declining incomes, and social tensions, which led to a negative attitude towards the EU. The Greeks believe that the EU not only failed to help overcome the economic crisis, but, on the contrary, further complicated the situation by imposing strict conditions for receiving financial aid. However, a part of the population is still convinced that EU membership is necessary to ensure political stability and access to financial resources. Greece's experience after joining the EU showed that it had a positive impact on the economy and trade. It was also found that 86% of gross trade turnover is internal trade, while 84% of total trade diversification is foreign trade diversification, results that are consistent with the customs union theory. However, the dynamic impact was limited. Positive changes

occurred in only two-thirds of the economy's sectors, while the overall integration effect was minimal.

In the UK, approximately 38% of the population oppose European integration, while 50.5% support it. This reflects the consequences of the 2016 referendum, when most Britons voted to leave the EU. Many respondents believe that leaving the EU will give them more autonomy, particularly in matters of immigration and trade. This sentiment is reinforced by prevailing narratives that emphasise national identity and sovereignty. Brexit has had many consequences for the UK, which can be divided into positive and negative aspects. The UK gained the opportunity to formulate an independent trade policy by concluding agreements with countries outside the EU, opening new markets for exporters. The countries can adapt their laws and regulations without adapting to European standards, potentially promoting innovation. According to I. Martusenکو (2023), leaving the EU has also saved money previously spent on contributions to the European budget, enabling central governments to spend these funds on internal needs. However, Brexit also brought major challenges. The economic costs were self-evident: investment and economic growth declined as many companies moved their operations to the EU to avoid tariffs and regulatory hurdles. Trade barriers created by the exit made trade with the EU more difficult, leading to delivery delays and higher prices. The services sector, particularly financial services, also faced barriers to accessing European markets, limiting opportunities for UK banks. The socio-political impact of Brexit has increased political polarisation in the country, fuelled the rise of nationalism, and renewed calls for a referendum on Scottish independence. Finally, changes in immigration policy have made it more difficult for EU citizens to obtain visas, which has caused concern in industries that rely on labour mobility. Brexit has created both opportunities and challenges for the UK, but the outcome will depend on the country's future political and economic strategy.

In Hungary, European integration is supported by 53%, but there is also a clear opposition – 34.8%. This indicates a split in Hungarian society in terms of support for the EU. The policies of Viktor Orbán's government, particularly his criticism of Brussels, have led to a rise in nationalist sentiment and distrust of European institutions. Many Hungarians believe that the EU does not provide sufficient support on issues such as immigration and internal security, and opposition sentiment is growing. However, a sizeable part of the population also recognises the value of EU membership for economic development and stability. As O. Volianuk (2024) noted, in the context of the EU, Hungary is characterised by a particular political system that poses challenges to European identity and international security. The current political situation in Hungary is characterised by growing authoritarian tendencies that lead to the emergence of elected dictatorships and

hybrid regimes, and the gradual establishment of a "privatised" state. One of the greatest challenges Hungary has faced before joining the EU is the violation of the principle of academic freedom, which adversely affects the level of education in the country. In recent years, Hungary has undergone extensive changes in education and science, which resulted in a decline in academic freedom, which is considered the lowest in the EU. To overcome these challenges, political and patriotic education has been strengthened, which may contribute to a return to European values. The isolation of the Hungarian information space increases the relevance of propaganda-free educational products and systematic educational approaches. Thus, Hungary is recognised in the EU as a country that needs extensive reforms to ensure compliance with European values, especially in the context of democracy and academic freedom.

The Czech Republic demonstrates moderate support for European integration – 61.4%. This suggests that most of the population considers EU membership to be a positive factor. However, 26.7% of respondents expressed opposition to integration, which indicates a certain level of distrust of European institutions. The Czechs believe that EU membership will contribute to economic development, but they are also concerned about the growth of bureaucracy and restrictions on national sovereignty. Many Czechs want to preserve their national identity and autonomy, but at the same time believe that it is important to stay a part of the European community.

In Ukraine, support for European integration stands at 59.3%, which is quite remarkable considering the context of political and economic changes in the country. Ukrainians increasingly perceive European values and standards as essential elements of their development. Many Ukrainians believe that integration with the EU can help the country overcome internal challenges, improve the economic situation, and ensure stability. Despite this strong level of support, there is also a certain proportion of the population that expresses scepticism regarding the possibility of real integration with the EU due to political and economic challenges. Nevertheless, the overall attitude towards European integration in Ukraine is still positive, reflecting the hope for change and positive progress in the country's development.

Thus, the data collected during the survey underlines the diversity of attitudes towards European integration in different countries, highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of the integration process. This suggests that successful implementation of integration policies must address the diverse socio-economic contexts and cultural characteristics of each country. European integration, as a process of comprehensive economic, political, and cultural integration of European countries, has created new conditions for the functioning of the sovereignty of EU member states. Since the beginning of this process, the sovereignty of

national states has been seriously redefined, as each member state had to transfer part of its sovereignty to the level of supranational EU institutions. This process has fundamentally changed not only the structure of power, but also the public perception of the role of national governments and their ability to solve important problems. Conventional notions of sovereignty as the absolute control of national governments over territory, economy, and security have changed and are becoming increasingly conditional in the current environment. European integration is one of the processes that directly contributes to this rethinking, as cooperation within the EU requires a strong level of trust and willingness to compromise.

The Jean Monnet project also conducted a survey on the European integration process in Ukraine. The survey involved 387 respondents from the local communities of Shostka, Konotop, and Sumy. Age composition of the survey participants: 44.4% were young people aged 15-25, 29.2% were aged 25-45, 24.4% were middle-aged citizens (46-65), and 5% were older. This suggests that there is a considerable proportion of young people among the respondents, which significantly influenced the findings. Regarding foreign policy choices, 60.5% of participants supported the idea of Ukraine joining the EU. This indicates that most respondents believe that European integration is the best path for the country. However, the data also showed that a considerable part of the population has differing views on foreign policy, which may be conditioned both by historical factors and the influence of the current political situation in Ukraine.

In recent years, researchers have been actively exploring issues related to the concepts of European sovereignty, digital sovereignty, industrial policy, and citizenship in the EU. The reviewed studies address not only theoretical aspects but also practical implications for the political, economic, and social spheres. J. Roch & A. Oleart (2024) investigated how pro-European factions in France, Spain, Germany, and at the EU level use the concept of “European sovereignty” to justify their political strategies. Their analysis showed that the role of “European sovereignty” in the rearticulation of EU policy is changing, especially under the influence of Emmanuel Macron. The researchers argued that this sovereignty is influencing geopolitical studies and shifting the focus of European political debate. Compared to the present study, the focus of J. Roch & A. Oleart (2024) was on the transformation of notions of sovereignty and political legitimacy. S. Heidebrecht (2024) analysed the EU’s transition from market liberalism to more active state intervention in the context of digital sovereignty.

The digital single market reflects a desire to control the digital sphere more, particularly through demonstration services and data protection regulation. The researcher’s findings showed that interests and authority are more deeply involved in a governance process

that focuses on the educational and social aspects of developing language skills in children with special needs. This is somewhat different from the present study.

V. Jaeschke (2024) analysed how the principle of subsidiarity became a means of removing resistance to European integration in the late 1980s. The researcher examined archival data showing that countries around the world have different understandings of this principle. The European Commission views complementarity with the Federation as the basis, Germany views it as part of the European concept of “regional Europe”, the UK uses the renationalisation of the European Community, while France views it as the basis for a strong Federation. This study explored how different policy actors can interpret the same concept in different ways.

T. Kostakopoulou (2024a) analysed citizenship and migration policies in the EU and proposed a new theory of European citizenship and ideas for institutional reform. The research included issues of European identity and citizenship theory, as well as the politics of “belonging” and “exclusion”. T. Kostakopoulou (2024a) addressed the historicity of the concepts used to define citizens’ rights and responsibilities and how these concepts can be redefined. Although both studies focused on issues of belonging and identity, their contexts and subjects of analysis were different, and therefore the cited study served as a context for the present one. J. Rendl (2024) examined the autonomous treaties as well as the EU legal order and analysed them in terms of the concept of “territory of intervention”. He compared the ideas of Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Weiler and emphasised the transformative nature of European treaties. J. Rendl (2024) seeks to apply a type of international treaty that explains the uniqueness of the EU legal order as autonomous and not subject to international or national law.

The analysed studies demonstrate the complexity and comprehensiveness of modern concepts of sovereignty, digital development, industrial policy, and citizenship in the EU. They emphasised the value of integrating new approaches to sovereignty into European policy, which can increase Europe’s resilience to modern challenges. A deeper understanding of these aspects will form the basis for further research and practical steps to ensure the stability and development of the EU. Overall, all the studies point to the need for an integrated approach to understanding sovereignty, politics, and citizenship in the EU. Each of the studies reviewed shows how these aspects are interconnected and thus paint a complex picture of European development. The significance of economic sovereignty is emphasised in the context of globalisation, which poses new challenges to nation states. Countries must adapt their policies to stay competitive in the international arena.

Conclusions

This study analysed the impact of European integration on the reconfiguration of national sovereignty concepts

in EU member states and outlined public concerns about this process. The study aimed to investigate how the EU integration process is changing conventional notions of sovereignty. The focus of the study was on analysing the concepts of researchers and the reactions of citizens to such changes. The study showed that although European integration involves the delegation of some national powers to supranational institutions, the overall sovereignty of each country is not compromised. Sovereignty is changing and becoming a multi-level sovereignty, where national and supranational levels interact to achieve common goals. However, public perception of European integration varies depending on the economic and political situation in each country. In some countries, Eurosceptic sentiments prevail, combined with a sense of losing control over their own politics and identity.

Support for European integration is growing in regions with more stable economic conditions and where cooperation with the EU brings tangible benefits, while Euroscepticism is on the rise in countries with economic difficulties and low trust in political institutions. The

key findings of this study also included the fact that citizens of member states often express concerns regarding the loss of national identity of the EU in the context of European integration and regarding the lack of transparency and relevance of European institutions. This is necessary to better inform the public about the benefits and value of the European project and to increase the transparency of decisions at the EU level. Furthermore, European integration is challenged by the issue of balance between national interests and common European goals, which requires constant search for compromises and support for the principle of subsidiarity.

In the future, more detailed empirical studies and concrete cases should be considered to analyse the effects of European integration on the sovereignty of various EU countries.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Забезпечення суверенітету держав – членів ЄС у сучасному юридичному та публічному дискурсах

Євген Новіков

Докторант

Національний юридичний університет імені Ярослава Мудрого

61024, вул. Григорія Сковороди, 77, м. Харків, Україна

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6085-8258>

Анотація

У дослідженні представлено теоретичний аналіз концепції суверенітету, розглянуто особливості її реалізації в політиці європейських держав в умовах регіональної інтеграції, що є актуальним з огляду на вихід Великої Британії з Європейського Союзу та критичні оцінки політики ЄС з боку східноєвропейських країн. Метою цього дослідження було вивчення змін у концепції державного суверенітету під впливом інтеграційних процесів. Методологія дослідження ґрунтувалася на критичному аналізі й систематичному огляді публікацій провідних дослідників у галузі європейської політики, права й теорії суверенітету, а також концепцій європейського суверенітету. Це дало змогу зіставити різні позиції щодо зміни суверенітету в контексті розвитку наднаціональних і міжурядових інституцій ЄС. Зокрема, концепцію європейського суверенітету використовують у стратегіях легітимації політичні актори, що підтримують інтеграцію та наднаціональне управління. Результати дослідження засвідчують зміни у визначенні суверенітету в сучасній європейській політиці. Водночас держави – члени ЄС постали перед проблемою обмеження контролю за різними національними функціями через наднаціональні інституції, такі як Європейська комісія та Суд Європейського Союзу, що призводить до часткового обмеження контролю за певними сферами внутрішньої та зовнішньої політики. У дослідженні доведено, що наднаціональне управління розвивається як процес, який не лише розширює сферу влади ЄС, а й трансформує традиційну концепцію суверенітету, надає їй динамічності та можливості пристосовуватися до сучасних політичних реалій. Отримані висновки можуть слугувати формуванню нової моделі інтеграційної політики, яка відображає політичні й соціальні потреби в межах європейської інтеграції, здатна забезпечити збалансовану взаємодію між національними державами та наднаціональними структурами

Ключові слова:

суверенітет; європейська інтеграція; наднаціональні механізми; європейська політика; правова система; міждержавні відносини; держави – члени ЄС