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TRANSFORMATION OF DEFENSE RESILIENCE OF THE LUBLIN TRIANGLE COUNTRIES: ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESSES

The article examines the transformation of defense resilience in the countries of the Lublin Triangle in the context of contemporary European integration processes. The relevance of the study is determined by the growing security challenges in Europe, the need to strengthen national defense capabilities, and the emergence of new mechanisms of interaction between EU member states and partner countries. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the conceptual foundations of defense resilience transformation and to assess its economic trends in the countries of the Lublin Triangle under the conditions of European integration. The study analyses contemporary NATO and EU approaches to the interpretation of defense resilience and defense readiness, as well as the institutional mechanisms of their practical implementation. It is established that within the European security environment defense resilience is increasingly regarded as a multidimensional characteristic integrating military, economic, technological, and institutional components. A comparative analysis of military expenditures and the level of militarization in the countries of the Lublin Triangle during 2014–2025 was conducted, which made it possible to identify the specific features of the transformation of their defense potential under modern security challenges. The results reveal a stable tendency towards increasing defense expenditures in all the countries under study; however, significant differences were identified in the drivers and mechanisms of this transformation. In Ukraine, the key factor is the necessity of ensuring national defense under the conditions of a full-scale war, whereas in Poland and Lithuania priority is given to the modernization of the defense sector, the development of defense-industrial capabilities, and the implementation of long-term security strategies within the frameworks of the EU and NATO. The study substantiates that EU instruments, particularly the mechanisms of the Common Security and Defense Policy, contribute to strengthening national defense resilience and create additional opportunities for the development of defense capabilities.

Keywords: European integration processes; defense resilience; military expenditures; competitiveness; Lublin Triangle.

Fig. 1. Tab. 2. Lit. 19.

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**ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ ОБОРОННОЇ СТІЙКОСТІ КРАЇН
ЛЮБЛІНСЬКОГО ТРИКУТНИКА: ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ ВИМІР
ЄВРОІНТЕГРАЦІЙНИХ ПРОЦЕСІВ**

У статті досліджено трансформацію оборонної стійкості країн Люблінського трикутника в контексті сучасних євроінтеграційних процесів. Актуальність дослідження обумовлена посиленням безпекових викликів у Європі, необхідністю зміцнення оборонної спроможності держав та формуванням нових механізмів взаємодії між країнами ЄС і державами-партнерами. Метою статті є обґрунтування концептуальних засад трансформації оборонної стійкості та оцінювання її економічних тенденцій у країнах Люблінського трикутника в умовах євроінтеграційних процесів. Проаналізовано сучасні підходи НАТО та ЄС до трактування оборонної стійкості й оборонної готовності, а також інституційні механізми їх практичної реалізації. Встановлено, що в європейському безпековому просторі оборонна стійкість дедалі більше розглядається як комплексна характеристика, що поєднує військові, економічні, технологічні та інституційні складові. Проведено порівняльний аналіз військових витрат та індексу мілітаризації країн Люблінського трикутника у 2014–2025 рр., що дало змогу виявити особливості трансформації їх оборонного потенціалу в умовах сучасних безпекових викликів. Виявлено стійку тенденцію до нарощування оборонних витратів у всіх досліджуваних країнах, однак визначено суттєві відмінності у причинах та механізмах такої трансформації. Для України ключовим фактором виступає необхідність забезпечення оборони держави в умовах повномасштабної війни, тоді як для Польщі та Литви пріоритетного значення набувають модернізація оборонного сектору, розвиток оборонно-промислового потенціалу та реалізація довгострокових безпекових стратегій у межах ЄС і НАТО. Обґрунтовано, що інструменти ЄС, зокрема механізми спільної політики безпеки та оборони, сприяють підвищенню рівня оборонної стійкості держав і формують додаткові можливості для розвитку їх оборонного потенціалу.

Ключові слова: євроінтеграційні процеси, оборонна стійкість, військові витрати, конкурентоспроможність, Люблінський трикутник.

Statement of the Problem and Its Connection to Important Scientific and Practical Tasks. The deepening of European integration processes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is accompanied by a transformation in approaches to ensuring the economic and defense resilience of states. Against the backdrop of intensifying security threats, rising military expenditures, and the formation of a common EU defense policy, research into the economic aspects of developing states' defense capabilities has become particularly relevant. For the countries of the Lublin Triangle, these processes are of strategic importance, as they combine the goal of strengthening national security with deeper integration into the European political and economic space.

The practical significance of this study stems from the need to assess the impact of European integration processes on the dynamics of defense spending, the level of militarization, and the development of the defense-industrial potential of the countries of the Lublin Triangle.

Analysis of Recent Studies and Publications. In assessing the implications of Russian aggression for the security of the EU, B. Przybylska-Maszner emphasizes that the

war in Ukraine has accelerated the transformation of the EU's common security and defense policy, noting the strengthening of defense cooperation, the expansion of financial support instruments, and the development of new mechanisms for security cooperation [13].

D. Fiott argues that the Russia-Ukraine war served as a catalyst for deepening integration processes in EU's security and defense sectors, and maintains that it was precisely after 2022 that the institutionalization of EU's common defense policy accelerated and coordination among member states in the security sphere intensified [4].

A comparative analysis of the economic stability, competitiveness, and structural and institutional factors influencing the development of the Visegrad Group countries in the context of contemporary global challenges is presented in the work by Y. Umantsiv and co-authors [19].

A. Kancs notes that, amid growing external threats, defense readiness increasingly depends on economic mobilization, the development of the defense-industrial complex, and the level of integration of states into a common defense space [11].

A. Mazaraki and the co-authors of the academic publication "World Economic Forum 2026" concluded that the implementation of European integration priorities in the countries of the Lublin Triangle is accompanied by uneven dynamics of the energy transition, while security factors are increasingly determining the sustainability of their socioeconomic development [12, p. 18–19].

In their paper "Stimulation of Regional Competitiveness" V. Humeniuk and A. Betlej justify the role of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania in overcoming spatial disparities and enhancing regional competitiveness [8, p. 62–71].

In their paper "Ukraine's Environmental Transformation in the Context of European Integration and Sustainable Development: The Challenges and Prospects for Adapting to EU Standards", Ye. Sheketa and co-authors argue that adaptation to EU standards is an important prerequisite for the country's sustainable socioeconomic development [17, p. 283–284].

At the same time, an analysis of the existing scholarly literature reveals a lack of comprehensive studies specifically devoted to the transformation of the defense resilience of the countries of the Lublin Triangle in the context of European integration processes. The impact of European integration processes on the development of Ukraine's defense resilience remains under-researched. It is precisely this gap in the literature that underscores the relevance of this study.

Formulation of the Research Objectives. The purpose of this article is to substantiate the conceptual foundations of the transformation of defense resilience and to assess its economic trends in the countries of the Lublin Triangle in the context of European integration processes.

Presentation of the main results and their justification. According to NATO's approaches, "Resilience is the individual and collective capacity to prepare for, resist, respond to, and quickly recover from shocks and disruptions ..." [16].

"A Strategic Compass for Security and Defense" sets out the conceptual framework for strengthening the EU's defense resilience through the implementation of four transformational pillars – Act, Secure, Invest, and Partner—and provides the basis for deepening security and defense cooperation with Ukraine [1].

The document “A New European Defense Industrial Strategy: Achieving EU Readiness through a Responsive and Resilient European Defense Industry” states that “EU defense readiness can be defined as a steady state of preparedness on the part of the Union and its Member States to protect the security of its citizens, the integrity of its territory and critical assets or infrastructure, and its core democratic values and processes. This includes the ability to provide military assistance to its partners, such as Ukraine” [9].

One of the practical mechanisms for implementing these approaches in Eastern Europe is the Lublin Triangle – an intergovernmental platform for economic, political, security, and regional cooperation among Poland, Lithuania, and Ukraine [10].

The dynamics of defense sector funding serve as an economic reflection of the transformation of these countries’ defense resilience, since the level of defense spending determines the capacity to develop military capabilities, modernize weaponry, and support the defense-industrial complex. With this in mind, to assess the transformation of the defense capabilities of Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania, we analyzed the trends in military spending from 2014 to 2025, taking into account their share of GDP (Table 1).

Table 1. Trends in Military Spending in the Lublin Triangle Countries,
compiled and calculated by the authors based on data from [18]

Year	Ukraine			Poland			Lithuania		
	billion U.S. dollars	Growth rate, %	% of GDP	billion U.S. dollars	Growth rate, %	% of GDP	billion U.S. dollars	Growth rate, %	% of GDP
2014	3,96	100,0	2,97	10,35	100,0	1,91	0,43	100,0	0,88
2015	3,50	88,4	3,85	10,21	98,7	2,13	0,47	110,4	1,13
2016	3,42	86,4	3,67	9,16	88,6	1,94	0,64	148,8	1,48
2017	3,64	91,8	3,24	9,98	96,4	1,89	0,81	190,2	1,71
2018	4,76	120,1	3,64	12,04	116,4	2,02	1,06	247,5	1,95
2019	6,26	158,0	4,07	11,77	113,8	1,95	1,09	256,2	1,98
2020	6,84	172,7	4,40	13,71	132,6	2,26	1,17	275,0	2,05
2021	6,84	172,7	3,43	15,28	147,7	2,22	1,31	306,1	1,95
2022	41,54	1048,5	25,64	15,34	148,2	2,20	1,82	425,3	2,56
2023	65,30	1648,2	36,03	26,46	255,8	3,26	2,26	529,7	2,84
2024	64,77	1634,8	33,96	34,46	333,1	3,75	2,69	629,8	3,14
2025	84,11	2123,5	39,56	46,76	452,0	4,50	2,95	691,6	3,08

An analysis of the data in Table 1 reveals significant differences in the scale and intensity of the transformation of the defense capabilities of the countries in the Lublin Triangle during 2014–2025. Despite their shared geopolitical space and the intensifying security challenges in the region, the trends in military spending among the countries under study were shaped by various factors.

The most extensive transformations occurred in Ukraine. While military spending amounted to \$3,96 billion in 2014, it reached \$41,54 billion by 2022 and \$84,11 billion in 2025. At the same time, the share of military spending in GDP during the study period of 2014–2025 increased from 2,97% to 39,56%.

Poland is characterized by a gradual and consistent increase in defense spending. During the period under review, defense spending rose from 10,35 to 46,76 billion U.S. dollars, and its share of GDP increased from 1,91% to 4,50%. These changes reflect the implementation of a long-term policy to modernize the armed forces and strengthen the country's defense capabilities in line with the strategic priorities of NATO and the European Union, as well as support for Ukraine's defense potential.

Lithuania has also been consistently increasing its defense funding. The country's military spending rose from \$0,43 billion in 2014 to \$2,95 billion in 2025 – an increase of nearly sevenfold. The share of military spending in GDP during this period rose from 0,88% to 3,08%, confirming the country's focus on strengthening its own defense capabilities amid growing regional security risks.

To characterize the structural and functional transformation of the security and defense sector in the countries of the Lublin Triangle, it is advisable to use the Global Militarization Index (GMI) [7].

To assess the transformation of the defense sectors in Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania, it is useful to analyze the trends in their positions in the global GMI ranking from 2014 to 2025, which makes it possible to track changes in the level of militarization amid rising geopolitical tensions and intensifying security challenges (Table 2).

Table 2. Dynamics of GMI of the Lublin Triangle Countries, compiled and calculated by the authors based on data from [5, 6, 7]

Year	Ukraine				Poland				Lithuania			
	GMI		Sub-index		GMI		Sub-index		GMI		Sub-index	
			MP*	HW**			MP	HW			MP	HW
	score	rank			score	rank			score	rank		
2014	153	34			0,6	1,8			126	51		
2015	168	21	0,8	1,8	130	49	0,5	1,6	120	59	0,8	1,5
2016	165	21	0,8	1,8	127	51	0,5	1,6	128	50	0,8	1,6
2017	161	22	0,8	1,8	127	52	0,5	1,6	134	47	0,9	1,6
2018	165	19	0,8	1,8	130	46	0,5	1,6	145	32	1,0	1,6
2019	171	19	0,8	1,8	129	49	0,6	1,6	148	27	1,0	1,7
2020	183	17	0,5	1,8	130	49	0,5	1,6	151	28	1,0	1,7
2021	171	19	0,5	1,8	130	50	0,5	1,6	152	27	1,0	1,8
2022	316	1	1,3	1,8	126	48	0,3	1,6	161	21	1,0	1,8
2023	351	1	1,5	1,9	142	32	0,3	1,5	177	21	1,1	2,0
2024	351	1	1,4	1,8	ND	32	ND***	ND	ND	21	ND	ND
2025	338	1	1,7	2,0	ND	26	ND	ND	ND	20	ND	ND

*MP – Military personal; **HW – Heavy weapons; ***ND – No Data.

An analysis of the data in Table 2 allows us to identify key trends and characteristics of the militarization of the countries in the Lublin Triangle.

Ukraine's GMI score in 2014–2021 fluctuated between 153 and 183 points, corresponding to 17th–34th place in the global ranking. The start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine triggered a sharp rise in the index in 2022 to 316 points, placing Ukraine first in the world. In 2023–2024, the index reached 351 points. This trend can be attributed to the large-scale mobilization of human and material resources, as well as increases in the military personnel (MP) sub-index from 0,5 to 1,7 and the

heavy weapons (HW) sub-index to 2.0. Consequently, the security and defense sector became one of the key drivers of the national economy.

Lithuania has shown a consistent trend toward increasing its level of militarization during peacetime. Between 2014 and 2025, the GMI score nearly doubled—from 96 to 177 points — and the country's ranking in the global index improved from 82nd to 20th place. This trend indicates the implementation of a long-term strategy to strengthen defense capabilities, accompanied by an increase in military personnel (MP rose from 0,7 to 1,1) and the modernization of heavy weaponry (HW rose from 1,2 to 2,0).

Poland's ranking remained relatively stable from 2014 to 2022 (46th–52nd place, with an index score of 126–130 points). Starting in 2023, the country's ranking has improved significantly, reaching 26th place. Despite relatively modest MP subindex values—due to the size of its economy and population—Poland is actively building up its defense capabilities by modernizing its armed forces and implementing large-scale programs to procure high-tech weapons, thereby strengthening its role as one of the key security hubs on NATO's eastern flank.

In the context of the transformation of the European security system and the growing existential threats on NATO's eastern flank, the key factor in ensuring the defense and economic resilience of the countries of the Lublin Triangle is their involvement in the EU's specialized supranational instruments and programs.

The institutionalization of the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) has taken on a qualitatively new meaning in recent years, transforming from a predominantly declarative format of cooperation into practical mechanisms for financing defense capabilities, developing the defense-industrial complex, and implementing joint arms procurement programs. To systematize the key elements of this transformation, define the architecture of institutional support, and substantiate its impact on the formation of aggregate defense capabilities, a structural-functional model has been developed (Fig. 1).

An analysis of the structural-logical diagram allows us to identify the key vectors of functional synergy between EU instruments and the defense sectors of Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania. The European Defense Fund (EDF) acts as a catalyst for the innovative modernization of the defense-industrial complex by involving national economic entities in cross-border research consortia [14].

For Poland and Lithuania, this means direct access to capital in high-tech sectors (in particular, cybersecurity, robotic systems, and REB capabilities). For Ukraine, institutional alignment with the EDF is a critical element in integrating the domestic defense-industrial complex into European value chains.

The European Defense Industry Program (EDIP) aims to overcome the fragmentation of the European arms market [2]. Through EDIP mechanisms, the groundwork is being laid for localizing defense production directly within Ukraine, expanding the capabilities of the Polish defense-industrial complex in the manufacture of heavy armored vehicles and artillery ammunition, and developing logistics and maintenance hubs in the Baltic region.

The European Peace Facility (EPF) functions as an off-budget mechanism to ensure the stability of European countries, thereby relieving financial pressure on the national budgets of partner countries [3].

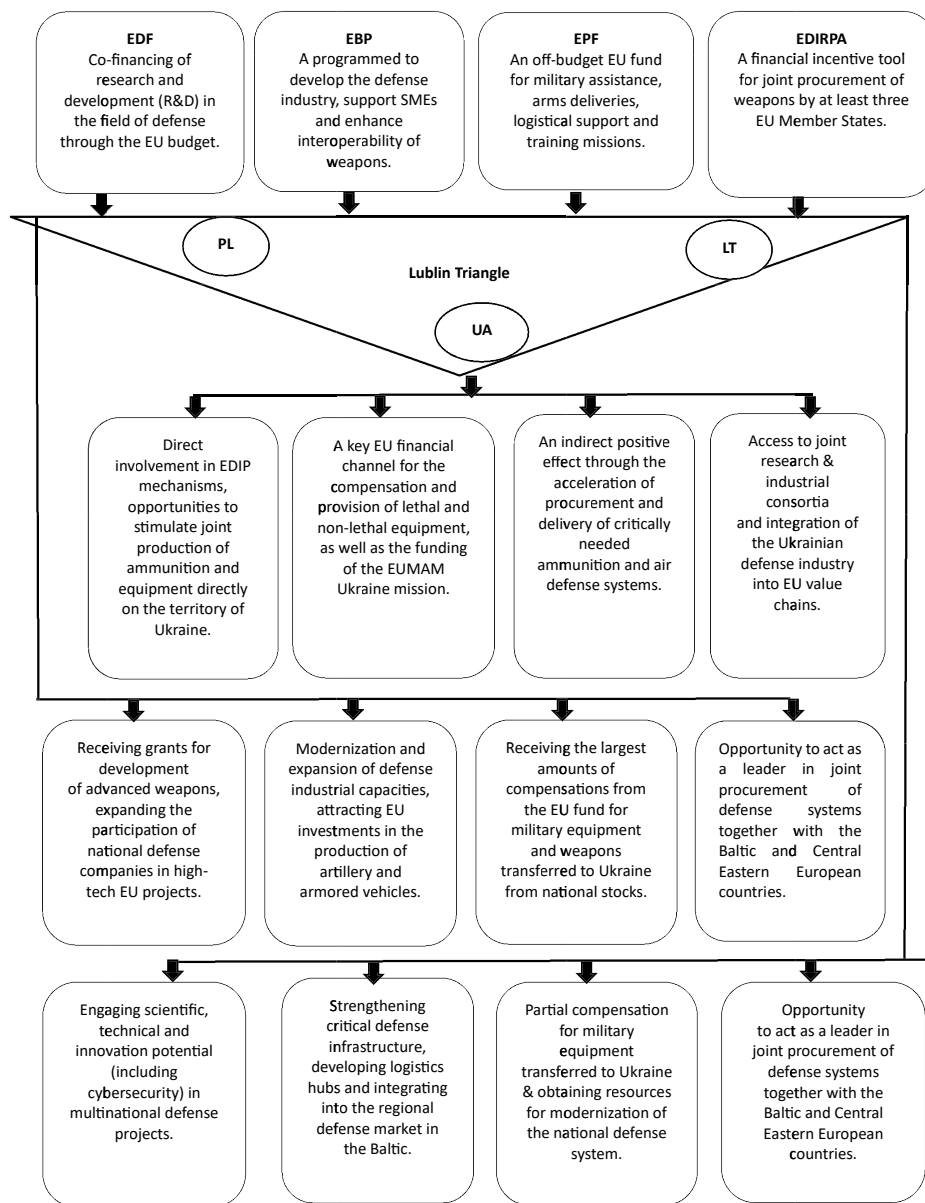


Fig. 1. A conceptual model of the impact of EU defense integration instruments on the transformation of the Lublin Triangle's defense resilience, compiled by the authors based on [2, 3, 14, 15]

It serves as the primary financial instrument for pooling and redistributing resources to meet the critical needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, while simultaneously allowing Poland and Lithuania to receive financial compensation for equip-

ment transferred to Ukraine from their own stockpiles and to allocate these funds toward the planned modernization of their own armed forces.

The European Defense Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) is designed to level the playing field among EU member states competing for limited resources in the arms market [15]. The instrument encourages the consolidation of procurement orders, enabling Poland and Lithuania to reduce transaction costs and optimize prices through economies of scale when purchasing Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) systems and ammunition.

Taken together, the use of these instruments produces a comprehensive macro-economic and security impact. This leads to the harmonization of defense industry standards, improved operational interoperability among armed forces, and the creation of a unified European defense space.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research. This study has shown that the transformation of the defense resilience of the countries in the Lublin Triangle is influenced by a combination of security and European integration factors. The conceptual foundations for building defense resilience in the European security space are based on the approaches of NATO and the European Union, according to which defense readiness is viewed as the comprehensive capability of states to ensure the protection of their populations, territorial integrity, critical infrastructure, and democratic institutions.

A comparative analysis of military spending and the level of militarization has revealed a common trend toward building up the defense capabilities of the countries in the Lublin Triangle; however, the mechanisms driving this transformation differ significantly. For Ukraine, the key factor is the need to ensure national defense in the face of armed aggression by the Russian Federation, whereas Poland and Lithuania are implementing a policy of systematically strengthening their defense capabilities within the context of European and Euro-Atlantic security mechanisms.

It has been established that the European Union's security and defense instruments create additional opportunities for modernizing the defense sector, developing the defense-industrial base, and enhancing the defense resilience of these states. In this context, the Lublin Triangle serves as an important institutional mechanism for coordinating security cooperation and implementing shared European integration priorities in the defense sector.

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