

Theoretical aspects of improvement of society-business-government cooperation in the context of European integration

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Abstract. Accession to European structures requires the Ukraine to implement reforms in various areas, including politics, economy, human rights, and democracy. Interaction between the government, business and civil society in this context is becoming key to the successful implementation of reforms and achievement of European Union (EU) standards. The main purpose of this study was to analyse, evaluate, and develop recommendations for the effective improvement of the mechanisms of interaction between the actors of the government-business-civil society system in the context of European integration processes. The research methods included a systematic approach, structural-functional, and deductive methods. The paper provides an overview of the current challenges and opportunities arising from globalisation and European integration, which require profound changes in the system of interaction between government, business, and civil society. The study investigated the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in decision-making and implementation, the role of business in promoting sustainable development, and the activities of the authorities in the context of considering the interests of citizens. The paper discussed the main principles and approaches to improving the mechanisms of interaction between government, business, and civil society. The emphasis was placed on the importance of transparency and openness of all stakeholders to the management and

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decision-making process. The study found viable models of cooperation that balance the interests of various parties and contribute to sustainable development. The study also analysed the practices of European countries regarding the mechanisms of interaction in the system of “government-business-civil society” in the context of European integration. The practical significance of this study lies in the development of concrete recommendations for policy actions aimed at strengthening the interaction between government, business, and civil society in the context of European integration. In general, the research and implementation of recommendations for improving the mechanisms of interaction has the potential to positively affect the multifaceted development of society, political stability, economic development, and contribute to the achievement of European standards and goals

Keywords: reform; entrepreneurship; cross-sectoral collaboration; public opinion; globalisation

Introduction

European integration opens new opportunities for economic development and foreign investment. Ensuring favourable conditions for business requires effective interaction between the government and business, as well as ensuring fair competition and promoting democracy, human rights, and civil society. Active involvement of citizens and their influence on decision-making is an essential aspect of this process. The study of the mechanisms of interaction helps to ensure greater citizen involvement in decision-making and control over government activities. In general, the subject of studying and improving the mechanism of interaction in the system of “state-enterprise-citizen” in Ukraine in the context of European integration is key to improving governance, reforming society and achieving the standards required by the European integration path.

Most authors usually limit themselves to particular sectoral aspects of this interaction or analyse the cooperation of only certain civil society institutions with the government or business. Some scholars pay special attention to the aspects of interaction between local executive authorities and civil society, specifically, E.S. Kovriha (2020), who notes that public opinion is an important policy tool that influences decision-making and strategy development. Public opinion research forms an integral part of the political process, especially in a democratic society. One of the key functions of public opinion is to provide feedback between the government and citizens. In a democracy, it is necessary to ensure the existence of mechanisms of public control over the activities of the authorities (Drobot & Yasinskyj, 2023). This helps to ensure the openness and transparency of government structures. Informing the public about the actions and decisions of the authorities is a key factor in the interaction between these two actors. The more citizens know about the activities of the authorities, the more opportunities they must influence decision-making and demand improvements in government actions.

Another group of scholars, O. Sushkova and I. Osadchyi (2021), investigate the interaction between public authorities and business, addressing the fact that as market relations develop, the business sector is playing an increasingly important role in the economy. However, due to the underdeveloped system of interaction between public authorities and business, this sector is currently facing difficulties in effectively performing its functions. This problem has a negative impact on the state’s ability to address both economic and social issues, as well as on the development of civil society in Ukraine. On the other hand, L.M. Denysiuk (2023) proposes to consider the interaction of society, business, and government as a mechanism similar to the concept of a “business process”. The author notes that this mechanism operates in a continuous feedback loop. The

activity of such a “business process” starts with an input product (such as the National Recovery Programme), adds value to it and provides an output product for internal or external customers (Programme implementation). To achieve the efficiency of the “business process” mechanism, it is proposed to fully use the Shewhart/Deming cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) as a model of continuous process improvement.

O. Bardakh (2022) investigates the issue of dimensions of digital interaction in Europe. Considering the experience of digital transformation in the European Union (EU), changes should cover various aspects of public life, including the electoral system, principles of legislative work, control mechanisms, and increasing the responsibility of government authorities towards business and civil society. Transformations in government agencies and local governments are based on the willingness and ability of citizens to use the capabilities of digital technologies, evaluate their benefits and implement them in their daily lives, business processes, social and scientific activities, and education (Begzhan *et al.*, 2021).

An interesting study by M. Hryshchenko (2020) identifies and evaluates the ways in which civil society organisations interact with each other and local authorities, as well as the place of business in this structure. These studies demonstrate the growing interest in the problems of interaction between different actors and provide new perspectives on the joint activities that take place in the sphere of government and civil society. However, the study of the situation and potential of Ukrainian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during the period of transition is still an understudied area. Most scholars do not pay enough attention to analysing the development of these institutions and identifying effective mechanisms of their interaction with the state, as well as solving problems that complicate such interaction, especially in the context of the European vector of development.

The main purpose of this study was to analyse, evaluate, and develop recommendations for effective improvement of interaction between the actors of the government-business-civil society system in the context of European integration processes. The study on enhancing the interaction mechanisms within the “government-business-civil society” system in the context of European integration encompassed tasks such as analysing the current state and studying European practices, identifying priorities, and developing recommendations, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive exploration of these dynamics in Ukraine’s European integration context.

Materials and methods

The object of this study is the interaction between the key actors – the state apparatus, business and civil society in

Ukraine. The study covers the analysis and evaluation of the interaction of these components in the context of European integration processes. The following materials were used for the study: scientific sources and articles on the effectiveness of interaction between the government, business, and civil society in the context of European integration. Strategic documents and programmes of Ukraine on European integration that reflect plans to improve the interaction of these actors. These include the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1155-p “On the Approval of the Communication Strategy on European Integration of Ukraine for the Period Until 2026” (2022), Association Agreement Between Ukraine, on the One Side, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, on the Other Side (2014). Furthermore, particular country cases were used to highlight the experience of Latvia and Germany, which have undergone the European integration process and successfully improved their interaction mechanisms.

The study employed the structural-functional and deductive methods, as well as the method of systematisation and system analysis. The application of the systematisation method in the study of the subject helped to develop concrete steps (defining key terms and concepts, identifying the main components of the system, analysing the current state, identifying challenges and opportunities, developing recommendations, defining an implementation plan) for organising and analysing information. The systemic analysis method helped to explore the complex interrelationships, influences, and changes in the government-business-civil society system in the context of European integration. The study found which elements of the system interact with each other and how these interrelationships can affect the dynamics in the system. This method helped to identify key variables that affect the interaction between government, business, and civil society. In general, the system analysis method helped to consider the subject under study as an integral system, identify key factors and dependencies, and develop balanced and effective improvement strategies.

The use of the structural-functional method in the study helped to analyse this system in terms of its components (structure) and their functions. First, the main structural components of the government-business-civil society system in the context of European integration were identified. For each structural component, its functions and role in the system were defined. The structural-functional method also helped to assess the integrity and harmony between contrasting functions and structural components. Concrete recommendations for improving the efficiency of functions and the alignment of interactions with expected outcomes were developed based on an analysis of structural components and their functions in the context of European integration. The structural-functional method helped to model the impact of changes in one component of the system on the others, to expand the understanding of the interaction between the components of the system, to identify the strengths and weaknesses of this interaction, and to develop practical recommendations for its improvement in the context of European integration. The use of the deductive method in the study helped to identify the general principles of interaction between the government, business, and civil society in the context of European integration. These principles can be based on democratic values, principles of European

integration, principles of partnership. Based on general principles, hypotheses were formulated on how more effective interaction between actors can be achieved in the context of European integration. Considering the general principles, concrete conclusions were drawn on the need and opportunities for improving and enhancing the mechanisms of interaction. In general, the deductive method helped to logically analyse data based on general principles and theories and draw specific conclusions and recommendations for improving the mechanisms of interaction between government, business, and civil society in the context of European integration.

Results

General state of interaction in the system of “government-business-civil society” in the context of European integration. The modern world requires innovative approaches to the interaction between public authorities, business, and civil society. The specific features of the newest mechanisms of this interaction include the introduction of innovative approaches, a more profound consideration of the interests of all parties and a common desire to achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of life. European integration processes are changing the face of the new society. In this context, it is important to consider how public authorities, business, and civil society interact to jointly promote development and achieve goals.

Public authorities play a key role in setting the rules and creating the regulatory framework for development. However, in the context of European integration, interaction mechanisms require greater transparency, openness, and accountability on the part of public authorities (Kozhyna et al., 2022). Effective cooperation with business and civil society helps to avoid corruption, ensure equal conditions for all players and ensure the performance of public responsibilities. Business is the engine of economic development. However, today’s realities require greater responsibility of business structures towards society. The concept of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility are becoming a necessity. Mechanisms of interaction with public authorities and civil society help to ensure an effective balance between profitability and social responsibility. Civil society plays the role of a monitor and initiator of change. Active citizenship encourages the government and business to act for the benefit of the community. Civil society organisations make proposals, take part in decision-making, and monitor their implementation.

The analysis of European integration processes clearly reveals the tendency to change the traditional roles in the relationship between the state and business. Large companies that used to be controlled by the state are now becoming active actors that influence interstate relations, economic and social processes, as well as international and regional politics. They use their resources and capabilities to achieve their goals. In the context of European integration, in the near future, big business, especially transnational and trans-regional corporations, may even prevail in influencing the global and regional economy (Lipin & Husieva, 2021). This may include not only economic influence, but also latent influential management of state and regional authorities, political parties, and NGOs.

Notably, these trends are developing in the context of relatively passive participation of civil society itself. The latter observes these events from the side-lines without

actively influencing them. This situation is conditioned by the fact that Ukraine still has an underdeveloped civil society that could clearly define and actively pursue its priorities and interests and communicate with the state and business. Considering the growing complexity of relations between society, the state, and business, it is important to find approaches to building an effective mechanism for their interaction (Zaslavska *et al.*, 2020). This mechanism should be based on the creation of a system of common interests for all three subjects of interaction, which requires compliance with the principles of mutual social responsibility. This task can only be solved by applying the fundamental principles of a system-approach to managing complex socio-economic systems.

In this context, it should be emphasised that society plays the key role in the society-state-business triad. It is a complex social system whose main element is people with their relationships, connections, and interactions. The state, as one of the key subsystems of society, acts as an organisational form of its functioning, playing the role of a governing structure. Business is a vital component of society that ensures the production of goods and services to meet the needs of the population and ensure its development (Bouri *et al.*, 2023). Such a mechanism of interaction should be flexible and allow for mutual cooperation, exchange of information and resources between society, the state, and business. It is important to consider the needs and interests of all parties, adhering to the principles of openness, transparency, and mutual use of the achievements of social development.

Given that the state and business are important components of the socio-economic system – society – the implementation of reasonable forms of relations between them is possible only through the recognition of the priority of system-wide goals and interests. These system-wide goals should factor in the interests of business, the state, and the entire society in a balanced manner. Such a compromise approach requires mutual understanding, openness, and willingness to cooperate from all parties. Within the framework of this approach, it is important to create mechanisms that facilitate effective interaction between the state and business, ensuring the completion of common goals and positive changes in society. Interaction should be based on mutual trust, consideration of interests, and the ability to compromise. Cooperation can help to achieve more balanced economic development, social justice, and a favourable environment for innovation and improved quality of life (Maslov, 2021). In this context, promoting interaction between the state and business involves defining common goals, establishing the role of each actor, creating legal instruments to protect the interests of all parties, and supporting initiatives aimed at sustainably improving the quality of life of citizens and ensuring the sustainable development of the entire society.

Society plays a role in creating favourable conditions for the effective joint functioning and development of the state and business, considering the interests of society and achieving its main development goals. This requires society to perform two essential functions: the first is to set development targets for the state and business, and the second is to exercise close control over the activities of both state authorities and business structures. Therewith, the state and business will be unable to effectively solve this problem in terms of systemicity. Under a free regime, these actors in society may be dominated by their own objective interests, which may not always coincide with the general interests of

society. This situation is confirmed by global experience and the practice of Ukrainian events in recent years.

Therefore, to achieve harmonious interaction and joint development of the state, business, and society, it is important to establish mechanisms that would help solve system-wide problems based on recognising and protecting common interests. In this context, society should act as a regulator capable of coordinating and guiding the actions of the state and business to achieve important development goals and ensure the sustainable well-being of all members of society. Thus, there is a need to create consolidated structures that include different components of civil society and can influence the activities of government and business. These structures can coordinate interaction and cooperation between public authorities and enterprises, as well as ensure the convergence of their opinions to address common problems of social development. One of the ways to achieve this is to delegate some of the responsibilities and powers of civil society to non-governmental non-profit organisations (Chen, 2020; Pan *et al.*, 2022). These organisations can help build partnerships between the state and business, facilitating the search for joint solutions to problematic situations in social development.

Civil society can act as an intermediary that helps to unite and coordinate the interests of different parties – the state, business, and society itself. This will contribute to balanced development, improved governance, and the well-being of all segments of the population. One of the modern methods of interaction between the state, business, and the public, an effective tool for representing interests and implementing public policy in democratic countries, is government relations (GR), a specific approach used by non-profit organisations or enterprises to establish effective and long-term relationships with the authorities to achieve not only mutually beneficial but also useful results for society (Meyer, 2022). Ukraine is still developing the practice of GR-management, while the relationship between different parties (government and business, government and the public, business, and the public) is being actively developed. Admittedly, the state has traditionally been the dominant party in these relations. It takes various initiatives and has the necessary resources and powers to determine the nature of the relationship and to select the individuals who will be active participants.

Ukraine is characterised by the preservation of an informal institutional system in the relations between the government, financial and political groups, and society. This system created unclear rules of the game, which allowed for additional benefits. However, the situation has now changed. Despite considerable financial and human resources, especially due to the active involvement of business representatives in government structures, the influence of big business on politics has considerably decreased. This was due to a range of factors such as Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, occupation of territories, active hostilities in most regions of the country, changes in global market conditions, and the need to restructure and modernise enterprises. At the same time, thanks to political and economic opportunities, the influence of big business interest groups on domestic political processes is still significant. Thus, in the current conditions of interaction between the government, business structures, and society in Ukraine, the introduction of GR – management of relations with the authorities – is becoming relevant (Distel, 2020; Wolfschütz, 2020).

This mechanism should be based on the effective use of systemic principles, such as reaching a consensus between the government, business, and society in determining the strategic vectors of the state's economic and social policy. Of importance are also the institutionalisation of relations between business, society, and government through strengthening the role of public councils, lobbying structures, and other organisations representing different interests; involvement of large financial and industrial groups in the socio-economic development of local communities through public-private partnerships; maintaining transparency of relations between the state, business, and civil society; ensuring democracy in making important strategic decisions; expanding social responsibility as a business. Therefore, within the framework of the development of the public sphere, where private and public interests coexist, GR management promotes cohesion between government, business, and society based on consensus, and rationalises the costs incurred in achieving common goals. It combines private interests and turns them into joint efforts for the benefit of society.

The interaction between civil society, business, and the state involves multilateral influences: the state influences business and civil society, and civil society influences the actions of the state, and business influences civil society. In a developed democratic state governed by the rule of law, the government performs the functions defined by civil society. However, there is an important relationship between a democratic state and civil society that cannot be achieved without the latter's autonomy (Fig. 1). The democratic government can direct and coordinate the activities of civil society but has no right to determine its direction (Peterson, 2019; Rukanova *et al.*, 2022). Thus, the various components of civil society should seek a legal status that ensures their autonomy from state bodies, while preserving the state's right to govern and its role as a peacemaker in the public interest. It is important to emphasise that the level of democratic processes is determined by the effectiveness of civil society institutions, not just the degree of their recognition or support by the authorities.

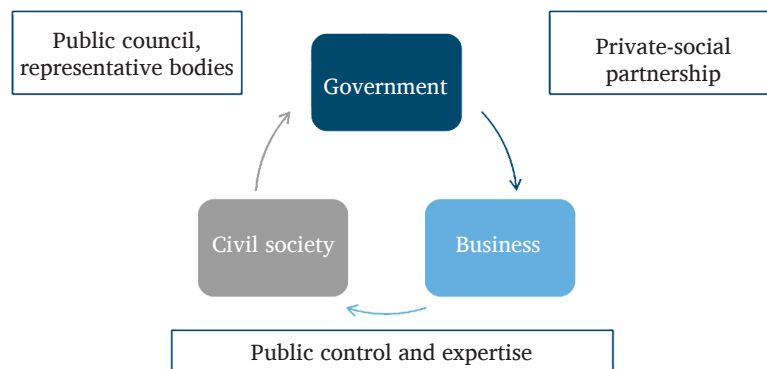


Figure 1. Components of the trilateral institution partnership and forms of interaction between its participants

Source: compiled by the authors

It is important to understand that the number of civil society institutions does not directly reflect the effectiveness of their influence on social processes. This is conditioned by several factors. The same active citizen can be a member or participant of several civil society institutions at once, which can lead to duplication of efforts or division of attention. The results of the activities of civil society institutions can have diverse social significance. For instance, a political party and a fishermen's association operate in distinct areas and have different numbers of members, which affects their contribution to social development. In general, the number of civil society institutions is not a direct indication of their effectiveness. It is important that these institutions have clearly defined goals, functions, and effective mechanisms to influence social processes. It is also necessary to ensure their autonomy from state authorities to ensure their independence and effectiveness.

Experience of European countries in the “government-business-civil society” interaction in the context of European integration. European countries have vastly different dynamics in the interaction between civil society institutions, business, and government, which is consolidated even at the constitutional level and implemented in practice, not just formally. For example, the Basic Law for

the Federal Republic of Germany (1949) in Article 20, paragraph 2, states that “All power is derived from the people”. This power is based on the rights of citizens consolidated in the constitution and their obligation to contribute to social order and take part in problem-solving. In this context, the key concept is ownership, which goes far beyond the expression of will through elections. In European countries, including Germany, many citizens are involved in civic activities for many hours each month. These activities cover various areas, including sports, leisure, work with children and youth, church affairs, healthcare, social services, culture, and education. The growth of civic activity is also accompanied by a change in its form – from large unions to small self-organised groups and projects. This demonstrates that in these countries, the interaction between civil society and the government is truly partnership, active and practical, aimed at achieving concrete results and promoting social development.

Germany actively supports the importance of the role of active citizens both domestically and internationally. It is well-known that problems such as hunger, human rights violations, and environmental pollution are not limited to borders. For this reason, the Federal Republic of Germany supports the involvement of non-governmental organisations as equal partners in international conferences and organisations

where they can take part and contribute. This is especially true for human rights and environmental groups such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International, which have long been recognised as “global players” (Guercini & Ranfagni, 2021). The activities of these organisations receive great attention and influence at the global level, their voices are considered in important decision-making, and their actions are aimed at solving important global problems. This is an example of cooperation between the state, business, and civil society.

In the context of European integration, Ukraine faces its own problems and challenges in improving the mechanism of interaction in the government-business-civil society system. Corruption and lack of transparency in decision-making can undermine the trust of citizens and businesses in the government and the system of interaction. This can lead to failures in the implementation of European standards and requirements. Ukraine still has large monopolistic structures that can exert undue influence on decision-making and reduce competitive equality in markets (Denysiuk, 2023). This can limit the development of small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurial initiatives. Interaction with civil society is not always effective and constructive. Often, NGOs have a limited ability to influence decision-making and be involved in processes. Different interest groups (government, business, civil society) may have different opinions on development priorities and directions (Grant, 2022; Send *et al.*, 2023). The lack of clear and effective legislative regulation of the interaction between the government, business, and civil society can lead to unclear or ambiguous situations. Insufficient awareness of European standards, processes, and practices among the participants of the government-business-civil society system may also complicate their effective cooperation. Political instability and changes in power can lead to interruptions or changes in the interaction between different parties (Kim & Manoli, 2021; Bressan *et al.*, 2023). To overcome these issues, it is important to develop effective cooperation mechanisms, improve legislation, engage experts, and monitor the impact of decisions on society and business.

Improving the mechanism of interaction in the government-business-civil society system in the context of Ukraine’s European integration is a major task for ensuring the country’s sustainable development and its integration into the European community. Practical steps that can help improve this mechanism.

Preparation stage. It is necessary to investigate the best practices of EU countries in terms of interaction between government, business, and civil society. Research of their programmes, laws, initiatives, and approaches. Setting of concrete goals and objectives for the implementation of the practices. Outlining what aspects of the interaction need to be improved. The next step is to set up a working group, which should include representatives of all parties responsible for planning and implementing the changes.

The stage of developing an implementation plan. Selection of specific best practices and methods from the EU experience that would be useful for Ukraine. Consideration of their adaptation. Creation of a detailed plan that includes steps, deadlines, responsible parties, and resources for implementing best practices. Selection of a particular area to implement best practices as a pilot project.

Implementation stage. First, it is necessary to mobilise resources. This means ensuring that sufficient human, financial, and material resources are available for the successful

implementation of the plan. This is followed by a pilot project phase, where best practices need to be implemented on a limited scale to test their effectiveness. It is important not only to implement the changes, but also to monitor the process and results of this pilot, collecting data for further analysis. The last but not least is the communication and reporting stage. Ensuring the effective communication between all parties. Regular informing of the parties on the progress of the project and the results achieved. Transparency in reporting helps keep trust and understanding between all stakeholders.

Evaluation and analysis stage. The pilot project implementation process includes several key stages. First, data collection is carried out, where all relevant information about the project implementation needs to be accumulated. The next step is to analyse the results. It explores how the implementation of best practices influenced the interaction between project participants and the achievement of planned goals. This analysis helps to find positive changes, identify shortcomings, and conclude on the effectiveness of measures. The last step is to evaluate the effectiveness. By comparing the data before and after implementation, it is possible to determine how successful the pilot project was and whether the planned indicators were achieved.

Scaling and distribution stage. Determination of a strategy for scaling best practices to a larger volume or other areas of interaction. Involvement of more representatives of government, business, and civil society in the implementation of new projects and initiatives. Development of a draft law that meets the requirements and objectives of implementing best practices, as well as defines the purpose and changes to the existing strategy.

The next step is training and professional development. Approaches that can be taken to ensure professional development:

- development of training programmes and seminars aimed at developing cooperation, communication, leadership, and management skills. They can include interactive sessions, practical exercises, and experience sharing;
- organisation of trainings and workshops with experts who have experience in improving interaction between actors. This will help to gain practical knowledge and skills;
- partnerships with educational institutions, namely, to establish cooperation with foreign universities, training centres, and other educational institutions to develop specialised courses and programmes;
- implementation of joint training projects where representatives of different spheres, such as government, business, and civil society, can jointly study and analyse problems and opportunities for cooperation;
- continuous organisation of the exchange of experience and best practices between different countries, regions, and sectors. This will help to adopt successful approaches;

Thus, improving the mechanism of interaction in the government-business-civil society system in the context of Ukraine’s European integration requires comprehensive efforts and cooperation of all parties. This will help to improve the quality of governance, ensure sustainable development, and raise the living standards of citizens.

Based on the research and analysis of improving the mechanisms of interaction in the government-business-civil society system in the context of European integration, a set of recommendations is presented below. It is recommended to organise regular dialogues, roundtables, public

consultations involving all branches (government, business, society), which facilitates the exchange of ideas and identification of common approaches. It is recommended to create an online platform for collecting public feedback. It is important to consider adapting best practices and tools from EU countries to the Ukrainian context. Organise the exchange of experience and study of best practices through field visits and seminars. It is recommended to create advisory bodies that bring together representatives of different sectors to discuss strategic issues together. They should include experts and representatives of civil society. It is recommended to organise systematic educational events, trainings, and workshops for representatives of all sectors with a focus on cooperation, communication, and leadership skills. These recommendations will help improve the interaction between government, business, and civil society in the context of European integration.

Discussion

Interaction between politically active citizens who consciously contribute to social development and responsible and trustworthy government institutions is a crucial factor in influencing social progress (Adam, 2020; Tejedo-Romero *et al.*, 2022). This interaction helps to bring about changes that meet the expectations of most citizens and contribute to improving the quality of life by giving people a more positive outlook on the future. Ukraine is facing an important problem – the lack of effective interaction between the state authorities and public institutions (Zaslavska *et al.*, 2020). This lack of harmonious interaction between them is one of the key difficulties in public administration. Addressing this problem is essential to overcome negative phenomena in the government, such as corruption, bribery, and influence of financial and industrial groups, lack of transparency and accountability, and an amateurish approach to government duties (Pickard & Smith, 2022; Coen *et al.*, 2022). The solution to this problem will also determine the level of trust in the government and its legitimacy. On the other hand, the use of civil society's capabilities can help improve the effectiveness of management decision-making and solve social problems.

In this context, it is difficult to deny the opinion of S. Lukashchuk *et al.* (2022), who note that civil society means an association of citizens with a prominent level of social skills, and through various forms and methods of public self-organisation, they influence the development and implementation of important decisions of general importance based on democratic principles of partnership and interaction between the organised public sector, government agencies, authorities, and all citizens. However, this statement is controversial, as in Ukraine, formally, civil society has an influence on the creation and implementation of key decisions that are important for the entire society, but in practice, apart from the electoral process, citizens do not take part in solving governmental issues (Sannikov, 2017).

Another group of scholars, M. Andrienko *et al.* (2022) investigated the issue of optimising ways to improve the interaction between civil society institutions and public authorities and concluded that NGOs and businesses jointly create a system of partner organisations, coalitions, and networks to protect their rights and interests. From this standpoint, civil society institutions that take part in the adoption and implementation of management decisions on important public issues should be regarded as subjects of public

administration along with public authorities. It is advisable to develop regulatory changes. The authors note that it is necessary to regulate business incentives for financing civil society institutions by reducing the tax burden and simplifying the permitting and licensing systems. Furthermore, public initiative in public administration processes should be active and perceived by public authorities as a direction for action. However, these principles can only be implemented if they are legally consolidated. One cannot but agree with the scholars' opinion since building Ukraine as a state governed by the rule of law and civil society is possible only through decentralisation of power and development of local self-government. Local self-government bodies, receiving powers and financial support from the state, should act as intermediaries between state authorities and civil society institutions. Effective modernisation of public administration in the context of European integration should result from the conscious and comprehensive involvement of public authorities, local governments, civil society institutions, and businesses in cooperation (Çifligu, 2023).

Á. Kövér (2021) notes that in countries with a long-standing democratic experience, although the relationship between civil society, business, and government may be threatened from various directions, the autonomy of civil society and business is fundamentally guaranteed and their involvement in governance is supported. Their attempts and contributions are recognised, and they play a substantial role in society and contribute to the formulation and implementation of social policy, as well as to the improvement and day-to-day implementation. Businesses in democratic countries can operate in a favourable environment thanks to the regulatory role of the government. Government agencies create a legal framework and regulatory mechanisms that allow businesses to operate within the legal framework, protect property rights, and ensure free competition. The government interacts with business and society by making policy decisions that consider the interests of all parties. By implementing reforms and developing the economy, the government is promoting the business environment, ensuring social protection, and creating equal opportunities (Shubalyi, 2023). Society acts as an active participant in the interaction, expressing its needs and demands through public organisations, movements, and initiatives. Public pressure, discussion of public issues and active involvement in decision-making ensure a balanced approach to solving socio-economic problems. Thus, one should agree with the scientist, as the interaction between business, government, and society in democratic countries is based on mutual understanding, mutually beneficial relations and dialogue, contributing to sustainable development, and the democratic process.

The study by C.-H. Ho *et al.* (2022) is also relevant, as they believe that when discussing the circular economy, companies seem to underestimate the importance of civil society's influence in the transition to this approach. The researchers propose their own model of engagement, in which civil society organisations (CSOs) have an impressive ability to understand the conflicts between sectors and levels that underpin this transition and to resolve them by finding possible compromises and promoting best practices in the circular economy. Therefore, the authors emphasise the importance of companies formally and informally recognising the role of CSOs and considering their requirements and needs. They also believe that CSOs can be a source of knowledge,

experience, and initiatives for change for both companies and the entire state. It is worth agreeing with this study because cooperation with CSOs can also have a positive impact on the internal culture of companies, as employees and suppliers become more involved and agree with the strategies and mission of enterprises, which will have a good trend for the growth of the state's economy.

A study by A. de Soysa (2022) examines the impact of globalisation on non-profit NGOs. The author suggests that globalisation processes have led to an increase in the number and influence of NGOs in different countries, including at the international level. International NGOs and NGO alliances are becoming increasingly important actors in international decision-making, and the roles they may play in the future are being analysed. Scholar have focused on whether the emergence of domestic and international NGOs as important political actors will strengthen or weaken future democratic accountability. In their study, the authors propose several models of cooperation between civil society, government, and business in governance issues. Thus, improving the mechanisms of interaction in the government-business-civil society system in the context of European integration plays a key role in creating sustainable and effective governance and decision-making mechanisms. The implementation of European standards and norms in this area enables countries to have a positive and productive impact on the development of national economic, social, and political systems. The conditions of European integration demonstrate the need to establish constructive cooperation between government, business, and civil society (Kidalov *et al.*, 2020). It is important to ensure that all parties are equal and involved in decision-making and implementation. Transparency and accessibility of information are key aspects in the interaction between the government, business, and citizens. Effective communication helps build trust and common understanding (Chen *et al.*, 2023). The conditions of European integration require the development of joint strategies and action plans to address important social and economic issues. This helps to avoid duplication of efforts and create synergies.

According to the aforementioned scholars, civil society should be actively involved in shaping and evaluating decisions made at various levels of government. This helps to ensure democratic legitimacy and adapt decisions to the needs of citizens. Furthermore, the conditions of European integration dictate the need to increase the responsibility of all parties for their actions and decisions. This applies to the government, business, and civil society.

Conclusions

The study conducted comprehensive research into the current state of interaction between government, business and civil society in Ukraine in the context of European integration. Through analysis of practices, legislation, strategic

documents and policies, it identified significant gaps hindering effective cooperation despite some progress. The research revealed a lack of regular, open consultations between the key actors. Civil society participation in shaping priorities and oversight remains limited. Problems persist with transparency, accountability and inclusion in decision-making processes. This is due to underdeveloped communication channels for dialogue. Another core obstacle is unequal access to complete, timely information for civil society and business. Moreover, robust monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms have not been established. These systemic weaknesses lead to compromised trust, conflicting agendas and ineffective implementation of reforms.

The study underscored that interaction between government, business and civil society is a cornerstone for good governance, sustainable development and achieving European standards in Ukraine. Constructive cooperation based on accountable, transparent and participatory principles is essential but lacking. The traditional roles of these actors are changing due to European integration, requiring new partnership approaches. Although formal dialogue bodies exist, civil society input remains confined. The study found the need to balance interests, ensure openness and communicate across sectors is not adequately addressed.

The research highlighted significant bottlenecks in the legislative and policy framework governing interaction. It revealed shortcomings in current consultation practices and participation channels for non-state actors. Equal rights, access to information and monitoring procedures need reinforcement. Distrust persists due to opacity around decision-making and implementation. Conflicting agendas also arise from imbalanced consideration of priorities. As a result, progress in meeting European norms is stalled. Fundamentally reforming the model of interaction by addressing these systemic flaws through new policies, laws and practices will be instrumental for Ukraine. Successful reforms require optimizing inclusive, accountable and transparent governance.

Further research should focus on enhancing communication channels and mechanisms for civil society participation, with a specific emphasis on overcoming barriers to transparency, accountability, and information accessibility in Ukraine's governance structure. Additionally, a comparative analysis of best practices in other European nations could provide valuable insights into fostering trust and aligning priorities among government, business, and civil society actors to effectively advance European integration objectives.

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Conflict of interest

None.

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Теоретичні аспекти покращення співпраці між суспільством, бізнесом та владою в контексті європейської інтеграції

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Анотація. Вступ до європейських структур вимагає від України проведення реформ у різних сферах, включаючи політику, економіку, права людини та демократію. Взаємодія між владою, бізнесом та громадянським суспільством у цьому контексті стає ключовою для успішного впровадження реформ та досягнення стандартів Європейського Союзу (ЄС). Основною метою даного дослідження є аналіз, оцінка та розробка рекомендацій щодо ефективного вдосконалення механізмів взаємодії суб'єктів системи «влада-бізнес-громадянське суспільство» в контексті євроінтеграційних процесів. Методами дослідження стали системний підхід, структурно-функціональний та дедуктивний методи. У роботі представлено огляд сучасних викликів та можливостей, що виникають у зв'язку з глобалізацією та європейською інтеграцією, які вимагають глибоких змін у системі взаємодії влади, бізнесу та громадянського суспільства. У дослідженні проаналізовано роль неурядових організацій (НУО) у прийнятті та реалізації рішень, роль бізнесу у сприянні сталому розвитку, а також діяльність органів влади в контексті врахування інтересів громадян. У доповіді було обговорено основні принципи та підходи до вдосконалення механізмів взаємодії влади, бізнесу та громадянського суспільства. Наголошено на важливості прозорості та відкритості всіх зацікавлених сторін до процесу управління та прийняття рішень. Дослідження виявило життєздатні моделі співпраці, які збалансовують інтереси різних сторін та сприяють сталому розвитку. У дослідженні також проаналізовано практики європейських країн щодо механізмів взаємодії в системі «влада-бізнес-громадянське суспільство» в контексті європейської інтеграції. Практичне значення дослідження полягає у розробці конкретних рекомендацій щодо політичних дій, спрямованих на посилення взаємодії влади, бізнесу та громадянського суспільства в умовах європейської інтеграції. Загалом дослідження та впровадження рекомендацій щодо вдосконалення механізмів взаємодії має потенціал позитивно вплинути на різнобічний розвиток суспільства, політичну стабільність, економічний розвиток та сприяти досягненню європейських стандартів і цілей

Ключові слова: реформа; підприємництво; міжгалузєва співпраця; громадська думка; глобалізація