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Historical significance of Germany, France and Belgium in the creation of the European Union

Abstract. The relevance of the study is conditioned by the need to analyse the positive experience of European countries for its use in Ukraine's foreign policy when participating in international associations, in relations with the member states of the European Union. The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of the foreign policies of Germany, France, and Belgium in the development of the European Union, and to conduct a thorough assessment of the results of such policies. To achieve this goal, such methods as dialectical materialism, factor discourse analysis, deduction and induction, analysis and synthesis, system analysis, structural and functional analysis, and the comparative method were used. The paper examines the goals and objectives, the role and place of three states: Germany, France, and Belgium in the history of the creation of the European Union. The interests of each of the states are characterised, the specifics of their national policy and its impact on the deepening of European integration are determined. The approaches of countries to the organisation of the European Union, their common and distinctive features are analysed. The specifics of relations between Germany, France, and Belgium in the process of their cooperation are determined. It is stated that these countries have become the leading initiators of deepening integration in Europe. The study shows that relations between France and Germany in the late 20th century became an example of cooperation in European security issues. It is established that France is the author of successfully implemented projects and approved laws and regulations in the European Union. It is noted that despite the small territory, Belgium exerted significant political influence, and the Benelux Union became an example of economic unification in the process of creating the European Union. The conclusions obtained contribute to solving practical issues related to the development of Ukraine's own integration processes and the protection of its own interests in building foreign policy. The material can serve as a basis for the educational process in the training of political scientists, international specialists, and in the work on scientific literature

Keywords: union, foreign policy, European integration, international organisations, influence

Introduction

The idea of a "united Europe", the unification of European countries into one organisation aimed at building not only financial and economic relations, but also close relations in virtually all spheres of life, has a long history. At the same time, its dissemination and processing by researchers, philosophers, and politicians has caused a different vision of the integration process on the part of European states. The only one among the countries that supported the creation of the union was a common goal – to increase the influence of European countries in the political and economic spheres not only in Europe, but also around the world (Pichler, 2020).

Currently, the European Union is a powerful, influential association that includes 27 states. In particular,

countries such as Germany, France, and Belgium played a special role in the initial stages of its establishment, which makes it necessary to turn to their policy on European integration issues in the historical aspect (Sánchez, 2020).

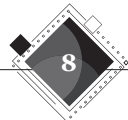
The vision of French, German, and Belgian politicians regarding the model of interaction between states, the totality of constituent documents, and their content marked the beginning of the implementation of the idea of a "united Europe". It was at the initiative of France and Germany that 12 states signed the Maastricht Treaty (Agreement No. 994_017..., 1992), which founded the European Union, making Europe a stable and strong political player, and the example of Belgium's participation in the Benelux Union allowed building a strong economic union. Considering the above, a deep study of the history of the

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creation of the European Union and the role of the states that founded it is also caused by the need to investigate the prospects for Ukraine's entry into the European Union, integration into the European community, and attracting support from the founding countries of this association.

Some issues of historical significance of Germany, France, and Belgium in the organisation of the European Union were considered by researchers (Becherucci, 2020; Patel, 2020; Emigh et al., 2022). Thus, A.O. Boyar comprehensively considered the main stages of European integration, identified the main interests of Germany and France in creating the Union, coming to the conclusion that now the European Union is one of the most successful European integration associations (Boyar et al, 2020). The history of participation of France and Germany in the transformation processes of Europe and the process of creating powerful international associations was studied by O.P. Valion (2019). The role of individual countries in European integration was described by I.I. Hrushko (2020). Problematic issues of participation in integration processes were considered in the dissertation of V.Ya. Savka (2021), which investigated the political interests of France, Germany, and the Benelux countries in the creation of the EU, their common and distinctive features; in the dissertation of A.Yu. Poltorakov (2004), which identified the reasons for the active European policies of France and Germany, and their impact on European integration. At the same time, the topic of the historical role of Germany, France, and Belgium in the creation of the European Union has not yet been the subject of a separate, in-depth study. In the above-mentioned research papers related to the topic under study, this issue was considered only in fragments.

At the same time, the processes of globalisation, the development of a single European policy determined the relevance of the chosen research topic. An in-depth investigation of European integration processes is of great importance for the development of a successful foreign policy of Ukraine. Identifying the specific features of the establishment of the European Union, the historical significance of the countries that have become the locomotives of European integration, showed a significant initiative in its creation will contribute to a thorough investigation of the experience of European countries in the development of a successful international association, the establishment of a holistic view of the detailed features of the process of creating the European Union, which, in general, will provide an opportunity to use this knowledge of Ukraine in the process of participating in various integration processes.

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively define the historical role of Germany, France, and Belgium in the creation of the European Union, their direct influence on the emergence of a common European policy, which resulted in the establishment of this international organisation. The task is to characterise the course of European integration under the influence of the foreign policy of these states and assess the impact of their actions and cooperation in the creation of the European Union.

Materials and Methods

Guided by the purpose of the study, the author used both general scientific and special scientific methods, in particular, political science. Thus, dialectical materialism contributed to the analysis of the establishment of the European Union in the historical aspect and helped investigate international unification at the stage of its initial development. In the course of the study, the political processes that took place in Europe in the second half of the 20th century were considered through the prism of dialectics of the relationship between the economic, social, and ideological spheres of life in Germany, France, and Belgium, considering their contradictions and development.

Moreover, when preparing this material, a systematic approach was used, which provided an opportunity to fully and comprehensively study the cooperation of the above-mentioned states in various areas. The analysis of the speeches of political figures was carried out on the basis of a discursive approach. The comparative method contributed to the comparison of the goals and role of European states in the establishment of a new international organisation.

The study of legal documents of the European Union, the formulation of the main scientific provisions was carried out using general scientific methods of logic: deduction and induction, analysis and synthesis. Thus, in the study of political phenomena that gradually emerged in the second half of the 20th century in Germany, France, and Belgium, the method of analysis was used by dividing the phenomenon into separate elements in order to study it more deeply. The author analysed scientific articles, speeches of political figures, legal acts, and concluded agreements in the field of European integration.

The synthesis helped identify the interrelationships of these phenomena that occurred both in one country and in three states as a whole, and to investigate in detail the aspects of their interaction in the political, economic, military, cultural, and other spheres, which allowed forming a complete picture of the political reality of the above-mentioned period. The methods of analysis and synthesis were used in their combination, as a result of which the roles of Germany, France, and Belgium in the history of the European Union were established. The description reflects historical events, among which the European Union was established, and describes the results of scientific research and the results achieved.

The method of generalisation helped identify common features in relation to the European integration of various Western European countries, and the reasons that led to the slowdown in the course of this integration. In addition, the comparison revealed different approaches of states to the issues of integration processes, their similar features and differences. The comparative historical method identified three stages of European integration, features at each stage, and the influence of Germany, France, and Belgium at each historical period.

Using the induction method, the results of the study were summarised and the corresponding conclusions were

drawn. The individual contributions of Germany, France, and Belgium to European integration, and their interaction and joint contribution, were also considered, as a result of which the international associations established by them were studied in the chronology of their creation. Moreover, this method was also used to study certain concepts of European integration and their impact on the European Union, and the reflection of the developed theories in the mechanism of functioning of the international association.

Using the method of deduction, the author identifies the prerequisites for integration processes, the factors that slowed down integration, and the historical conditions in which close interaction between Western European states was established. The study examines the specific actions of political figures in Germany, France, and Belgium who have contributed to the deepening of international cooperation. The method of analogy helped identify similar trends in the conduct of foreign policy of different states and draw appropriate conclusions. The systematic approach revealed the reasons for the dependence of Western European states on one another, the reasons for the beginning of their greater cohesion, helped identify different aspects of their interaction, and provide a generalised description of it. With the help of a systematic approach, the political processes of Europe in the mid-20th century were considered as an integral system, in its multidimensional nature, and in the dynamics of the development of historical processes. European integration processes were also considered using a systematic approach in terms of the influence of the United States and the USSR on Europe.

Results

Attempts to implement theories about the creation of a united Europe were made in the middle of the 19th century. However, it was only after the end of the Second World War that ideas about the unification of Europe, such as the United States of America, began to spread actively. Every year this movement became even more active. The period of the "Cold War", the partial failure of the Council of Europe to perform its functions, the fear of Europeans before the idea of spreading Soviet communism, and the propaganda of the military threat from Germany led to a clear identification of the strategic interests of European countries. Jean Monnet, one of the brightest supporters of the establishment of the Union of European states, pointed out that Europe was periodically gripped by the "psychosis" of the inevitable war and the presence of danger from Germany (Palahniuk, 2021).

The interest of European countries in security led to the search for a way to avoid new conflicts – it should be an organisation where the most important decisions would be made together. In addition, the union would aim to counter both threats such as the spread of communism and the economic influence of the United States. The establishment of a common market and the implementation of policies aimed at improving trade were in line with the European dream of stability and economic well-being. Europeans began to dream of their continent as a significant

centre that could influence the course of world events, which would also be able to protect itself and dictate its own values. In fact, it was about creating a powerful international organisation as a separate influential subject of political activity. France, Germany, and Belgium at one time made considerable efforts to implement this project and, being at the centre of historical events, made a huge contribution to such a political structure as the European Union, which was the result of their dialectical interaction in Chile (Ferens, 2019).

Integration provided for the construction of many ties between different nations in Europe, including a single policy, unified legal acts, primarily in the economic sphere. The country that already had such experience and a long history of participating in international associations was Belgium. Thus, back in 1921, the Belgian-Luxembourg Economic Union was established. Since then, this state has gradually participated in European integration, and Benelux has become a prime example of it. In 1944, its participants: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg abolished mutual customs payments on imports and introduced a single customs tariff for other states. Thus, in 1948, the Benelux customs union was established, uniting Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg and becoming evidence of active processes of economic integration. This association – Benelux – became an example of an economic union already during the establishment of the European Union.

After the Second World War, the country experienced a decline that affected all spheres of life, including the economy. J. Arnason (2019) noted that Belgium has been and is a source of tremendous strength in the integration process, especially given that it is one of the main courses of its foreign policy. Given its small territory, European integration has become an effective way for it to influence other countries. Belgium joined the European Coal and Steel Association in 1951 and the European Economic Community in 1957. In 1968, Belgium initiated the extension of cooperation between European states on a number of issues, such as defence, currency, technology, and foreign policy. In addition, Belgium became one of six countries, including Germany and France, to establish the EU (Ferens, 2019).

Germany, on the other hand, had virtually no political power in the second half of the 20th century. Its economy was in decline, its territory was under occupation for a long time, and since 1949 two separate hostile states began to exist here at once – the Federal Republic of Germany (hereinafter – Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Therefore, the decision to actively participate in European integration was made by all political figures who came to power in Germany. The study suggests that it was precisely the circumstance of Germany's loss in the Second World War that led to its activity on the world stage regarding joining a new powerful international organisation. Regardless of which party came to power in Germany, the trend of expanding the country's participation in integration processes continued in the future. German politicians have actively advocated the creation of an EU

armed force to participate in peacekeeping operations (Arnason, 2019).

Thus, as indicated by A.V. Hrubinko, even after the unification of Germany in 1990, its policy of creating unions in Europe remained unchanged, as did the support of the idea of European unity by its citizens. It is characteristic that France reacted to the unification of Germany as its own threat due to the growth of the economic potential and population of the latter. Therefore, the establishment of the European Union has become a guarantee for the two countries of their security and the avoidance of wars in the future (Hrubinko & Martynov, 2021).

In France, ideas about European integration were formed over many centuries, but in practice, they began to be implemented in the second half of the 20th century. Initially, they were based on the idea of establishing a supranational organisation on the European continent, to which states would transfer some of their powers. Subsequently, two main concepts were actually developed – “supranational power” and “Europe of Fatherlands”. The first provided for the gradual development of a supranational federation with the establishment of appropriate institutions that would make binding decisions, which were subsequently implemented during the creation of the European Union. At the same time, the second concept, which received detailed development, provided for the creation of a European confederation, and because of the idea of the inviolability of national sovereignty, it was more successful. Moreover, at the end of the 20th century, the concept of the “three pillars” developed by the French, which later became the basis for the functioning of the European Union, became known in Europe.

The second half of the 20th century revealed the need for a radical change in relations between France and Germany. A.O. Boyar came to the conclusion that after the two World Wars, the existence of nationalist power in the governments of these countries began to feel the need for close economic cooperation, which also became a guarantee of the dominance of peace in Europe. France began to build relations with Germany with the goal of achieving reconciliation, but as a result, their contractual relations laid the foundations of the European Union (Boyar et al., 2020).

Thus, since the mid-20th century, France began to adhere to the plan developed by it for a united Europe and at the same time develop cooperation with Germany. Thus, the Monnet Declaration of 1950 provided for joint French-German management of the metallurgical and mining industries with their exemption from customs duties. Notably, the active cooperation between Germany and France in the field of integration began in 1950, as a result of which, on the initiative of these two states, the European Coal and Steel Association was established (Agreement..., 1951). This treaty created guarantees to avoid wars between France and Germany, and later four more countries joined it.

In 1957, the European Coal and Steel Association was transformed into the European Economic Community (Agreement no. 994_017..., 1957), which at one time became a significant subject of political relations. In addition, on 04/08/1965, by entering into a merger agreement, the above-mentioned communities together with the European

Atomic Energy Community were merged into one organisation that had joint management bodies and a budget (Savka, 2021). Members of the above-mentioned community – France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg – established a customs union in 1968, eliminated customs tariffs in individual states, and introduced a single customs tariff (Boyar et al., 2020). As noted by O.I. Shapovalova (2020), integration has covered even more areas of economic activity. In fact, a common market was created by the member states of the community. From now on, as enterprises began to be actively located in foreign countries, the war against them simply became unprofitable, which contributed to ensuring security on the continent. Further rapprochement between the French and German relations took place in 1963 after the signing of the Elysee Treaty, which provided for periodic meetings, consultations of heads of state, and their joint actions in the field of politics, defence, and culture.

Despite the close cooperation, there were still contradictions between France and Germany. Thus, Germany saw the United States as its ally and did everything possible to help the state increase its military influence in Europe, while France was against such a policy. In addition, France tried to build relations with the Soviet Union against Germany, which was its rival. It is also worth paying attention to the different vision of each of the states regarding the role of the EU in the field of politics, economy, and security. As noted by V. Lypov (2019), there were factors that slowed down integration. Among them: the variety of resources and technologies used in individual states; different approach to conducting economic activities; differences in the structure of the economy; territorial conditions; different levels of economic development. It is seen that these factors also caused contradictions that arose during the interaction of countries such as Germany, France, and Belgium.

Summing up the above, it is worth noting that France had the goal of establishing peace with Germany, and strengthening the influence of Europe against the United States, increasing its potential in the field of finance, industry, and defence through the established international organisation. Its goal was also to increase the competitiveness of French enterprises on the world stage.

It is characteristic that France has become the author of many projects on European integration and the development of its basic principles. For example, French politicians promoted the idea of creating a European army, a “European defence community”, the Treaty of which France, however, did not ratify. After these two initiatives failed, France’s public policy focused mainly on economic integration. Many of the projects developed by the French remained at the level of theory, also due to the lack of support from allies and agreement within the country.

A significant role in strengthening France’s position on the European continent belonged to its president Charles de Gaulle, who made efforts to create a nuclear power out of it, strengthen the country’s influence in Europe and on a global scale. In the future, subsequent French presidents also held the position of the need to unite Western European states for the security and prosperity of their country. For example, F. Mitterrand made the main efforts in the

field of integration in the sphere of economy and social life, hoping that at some stage the interaction of European states will lead to the issue of foreign policy and security strengthening.

The efforts of France's political leaders were aimed at ensuring the security of the state, consolidating a single economic and monetary policy of Europe, which would bring prosperity to its citizens. France's foreign policy has remained the same at the present time, with one of its

areas of increasing political convergence, including to ensure its security. Economic crises and strained relations with the United States have accelerated the process of unification of states. As a result, the European identity policy was adopted in 1970, and the declaration on European identity was adopted in 1973 (Hrubinko, & Martynov, 2021). In view of the above, it can be concluded that European integration was gradual, went through separate stages, and included both political and economic aspects.

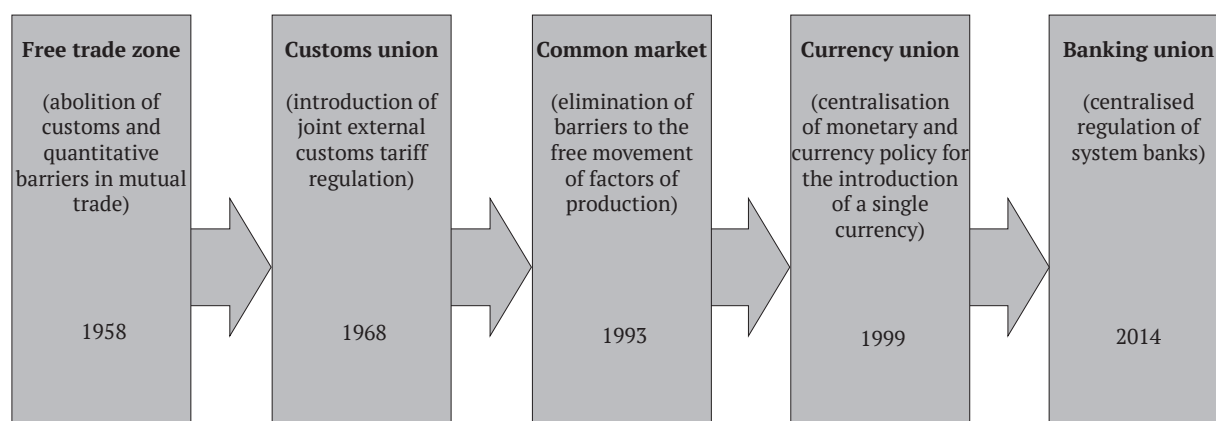


Figure 1. Gradual economic integration in the European Union

Source: Agreement..., 1951

However, as noted by A.O. Boyar, when the European Union was founded, it was the political aspect of integration that was paramount, and only later it was economic reasons that began to strengthen it (Boyar et al, 2020). The unification of European states accelerated the process of creating a united Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union. At the initiative of German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, a draft was developed, according to which the states signed the "Solemn Declaration on European Union" in June 1983 (Savka, 2021).

It was at the suggestion of Belgium, made in 1990, that a conference was held, the purpose of which was to develop principles for even greater political rapprochement of countries and the adoption of a single currency. This conference ended on February 7, 1992, with the approval of the Treaty establishing the European Union. The terms of this document were developed as a result of the adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 (Boyar et al, 2020). Due to the efforts of such states as Germany, France, and Belgium, the foundations of a new order in Europe were laid and an influential, strong superpower was actually established. For example, in 2021, the EU's GDP was EUR 14.45 trillion (Good Distribution Practice of...). According to studies conducted on its territory, both the standard of living of Europeans and economic indicators are gradually increasing (Key figures..., 2019).

Discussion

Based on the analysis of scientific studies and the contractual framework of the European Union, it can be concluded that the active participation of Germany, France, and Belgium in the integration processes began in the middle of

the 20th century and successfully ended with the establishment of an influential international organisation. The impetus for it was the end of the Second World War, the economic crisis, decline, and disillusionment with nationalist ideologies. Based on the analysis of these historical conditions, they became a prerequisite for the development of new ideas about mutual assistance of European states, ensuring their unity against two influential superpowers – the USSR and the United States.

A.O. Boyar expressed the opinion that the driving force at this stage was political figures (Boyar et al., 2020). For example, Jean Monnet, an active figure in the field of gradual economic integration and the creation of supranational institutions, who is also called the "Father of Europe" for a reason.

The analysis of scientific sources allows shows that the strongest influence at the initial stage of European integration was exerted by French-German relations. The study suggests that the success of their cooperation is confirmed by the entry of other states into the European Coal and Steel Community as well. It has also become a form for testing new ways of interstate interaction. Successful integration in the selected sector of the economy has created the foundation for expanding European integration processes. Already with the participation of Belgium, the creation of the European Economic Community was recognised as appropriate and necessary, which actually continued the implementation of the policy of creating a common market.

The organisation of the customs union, the gradual creation of a single market, the development of a common trade policy towards third countries, the unification

of legislation, and the introduction of a single currency – these measures, including on the initiative of the three countries under study, were successfully implemented step by step to introduce a single economic space.

Although the policy of Germany, France, and Belgium was aimed at rapprochement in many spheres of life, none of the countries sought final unification. The goal of their union was to develop an effective mechanism for resolving key national issues. The unity of Western European states has turned Europe into a strong opponent in the international arena.

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that one of the greatest needs of France, which prompted it to participate in European integration, was the maintenance of security in the world and the creation of the European Union as a strong and independent entity. Some researchers, such as O.I. Shapovalova (2020), pointed out the impact of concepts developed in France on the content of European integration. According to the researcher, this influence cannot be overestimated. Thus, the study suggests that it was the vision of French politicians on the main issues that should be resolved in the unification that was included in the content of the main provisions of both the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties.

The authors disagree with K. Fraser (2007), who noted that in 1970-1992, the goal of national policy was only to avoid contradictions, and not to develop a single policy. Based on the analysis of scientific sources and legal acts, it can be concluded that German-French relations in this period were also aimed at establishing a common foreign policy, joint settlement of economic issues, trade and security issues.

Based on the above, it can also be concluded that the process of European integration has passed through three stages:

1. Initial stage, 1948-1970. This period was characterised by the economic rapprochement of Western European states, the emergence of a clear understanding of the need to create international organisations and, as a result, the establishment of a number of associations, in particular, the Benelux, the European Coal and Steel Association, and the European Economic Community. The main concepts of European integration are being formed, the main authors of which are French politicians, in particular Charles de Gaulle, Jean Monnet. The close economic cooperation between France and Germany had a huge impact on this period, which indirectly laid the foundations for security guarantees on the European continent.

2. Stage of the emergence of a unified foreign policy, 1970-1992. The period of economic crises, the emergence of globalisation processes, and the confrontation with the United States and the USSR became a catalyst for the unification of European states. Since the 1970s, the stage of establishing common trade rules for third countries begins, which included the consolidation of a single customs tariff, a common currency policy, a single contractual regulation, the creation of common export instruments and mechanisms of responsibility in the trade sphere. The European Commission was authorised to deal with this policy. The interaction of states now covered various sectors of the economy. During the Cold War, French politicians

question the US promise to provide assistance in the event of an attack by the Soviet Union, and therefore the ideas of a “European army” appear.

3. Stage that covered 1992 and continues in our time is marked by the formation of a single political and economic environment. It was marked by the conclusion of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and the establishment of the European Union. A unified foreign and security policy was developed, and supranational bodies were created. As noted by A.O. Boyar, after the conclusion of the founding treaty, France unexpectedly began to slow down the integration process, given the UK’s desire to join the European Union and its expressed position against the abolition of limits on imports of French agricultural goods (Boyar et al., 2020). According to the researchers, this once again shows that the national interests of European states have always taken precedence over supranational interests. Moreover, after the creation of the European Union, important work began to unify legal norms and create conditions for the free movement of persons, goods, and services.

The European Union has become a reflection of more than one concept developed in France, but the concept of “three pillars” has become the defining one among them. The first pillar of the European Union is the existing European international organisations, the second pillar is the established coordinated policy in the field of security and international relations. The third pillar of the European Union is the economic and monetary association of states, and the policy on the administration of justice and the solution of internal issues.

In addition, in 1997, the adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty marked the establishment of an influential player in the field of security and defence from the European Union. The result of these processes is also the emergence of integration in the field of culture and at the mental level between citizens of different states. Thus, according to statistics, 72% of people living in the European Union feel like citizens of this association (European Citizenship, 2021).

It is the fact that the positions of the founding countries of the European Union are coordinated that has become the key to successful integration. A common understanding of the defining issues of foreign policy, reducing their inconsistencies, and coordinating their actions contributed to the establishment of a stable and effective union. Active integration processes began with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Association back in 1950, which was a turning point in the development of a unified European foreign policy. In fact, the European Union has become the last step in the integration processes initiated by six countries, including the states whose policies are the subject of this study (Archick, 2022).

The policy of France, Germany, and Belgium, which was carried out in the second half of the 20th century, became an impetus for the future establishment of the EU, created conditions for further European integration and the gradual significant expansion of the international organisation. These states have proved by their example that crises, existing contradictions and new challenges of a difficult era are new opportunities for the growth of a united Europe in all spheres.

Conclusions

Summing up the above, the European Union is the result of the most successful attempt to create an international association. The founding of the European Union was at one time a historic turning point. The establishment of the European Union is largely conditioned by the national interests of Germany, France, and Belgium, which determined their foreign policy and the transition of the development of their cooperation to the supranational level. These countries initiated the implementation of the idea of a “united Europe” and the locomotives of European integration.

Integration processes were largely caused by the post-war development of Germany. Its inclusion in international organisations was aimed, among other things, at ensuring the security of European states. The activities carried out by Germany – an active supporter of deepening European integration in order to strengthen Europe in the most important areas: political, economic, military, resulted in an increase in the political weight in the world of both the European Union and Germany itself.

France exerted the greatest ideological influence on European integration processes. The concept of “three pillars” developed in France was implemented in the organisation of the mechanism of functioning of the European Union. French-German relations became a catalyst for European integration, which included the development

of theories, concepts, common positions in the field of foreign policy, and the implementation of joint projects in Europe to create international associations. France and Germany had different views on integration processes in the military sphere, which was also conditioned by the influence of US foreign policy. At the same time, France was the author of the idea of creating a European army, and Germany was an active supporter of it. Belgium’s participation in the Benelux Economic Union was an example of an economic union and was taken as a model in the initial stages of the development of the European Union.

This study examines a topic that was not previously given much attention and achieved the goal and tasks set for it – the role of the three leading European countries in the creation of the European Union is considered and their policies are evaluated, and the tasks set for the study are solved. The findings can be used by employees of state authorities of Ukraine in implementing policies in relations with EU countries. This study will also contribute to further in-depth investigation of European international associations, and can also be used in the preparation of lectures on the problems of the European Union. Questions about the innovations brought by the treaties signed by the member states of the European Union and the problems of their application in practice can become the subject of the following scientific research.

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Історична значимість Німеччини, Франції та Бельгії у створенні Європейського Союзу

Анотація. Актуальність статті зумовлена необхідністю вивчення позитивного досвіду європейських країн задля його використання у зовнішній політиці України при участі у міжнародних об'єднаннях, у відносинах з країнами-учасниками Європейського Союзу. Метою статті є дослідження ролі зовнішньої політики Німеччини, Франції, Бельгії у формуванні Європейського Союзу, а також проведення ґрунтовної оцінки результатів такої політики. Для реалізації цієї мети використовувались зокрема такі методи, як: діалектичний матеріалізм, факторний дискурс-аналіз, метод дедукції та індукції, аналізу та синтезу, метод системного та структурно-функціонального аналізу, компаративний метод. У статті досліджуються цілі та завдання, роль та місце трьох держав: Німеччини, Франції та Бельгії в історії створення Європейського Союзу. Охарактеризовані інтереси кожної з держав, визначені особливості їх державної політики та її впливу на поглиблення європейської інтеграції. Аналізуються підходи країн до організації Європейського Союзу, їх спільні та відмінні риси. Визначаються особливості відносин Німеччини, Франції, Бельгії у процесі їхньої співпраці. Констатується, що дані країни стали ведучими ініціаторами поглиблення інтеграції в Європі. Досліджено, що відносини Франції та Німеччини в кінці ХХ ст. стали прикладом співробітництва у питаннях європейської безпеки. Встановлено, що Франція є автором успішно втілених у Європейському союзі проєктів та затверджених правових актів. Відзначається, що не зважаючи на невелику територію, значний політичний вплив здійснила Бельгія, а союз Бенілюксу став прикладом економічного об'єднання в процесі створення Європейського Союзу. Отримані у статті висновки розвивають політичну науку і сприяють вирішенню практичних питань щодо розвитку Україною власних інтеграційних процесів, а також захисту власних інтересів при побудові зовнішньої політики. Матеріал може слугувати базою щодо навчального процесу при підготовці політологів, фахівців-міжнародників, а також в роботі над науковою літературою

Ключові слова: союз, зовнішня політика, європейська інтеграція, міжнародні організації, вплив