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Public administration of environmental safety in Ukraine and EU countries

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyse the environmental safety policies of Ukraine and the EU, identifying major instruments and implementation challenges. Using hermeneutical and comparative methods, the study revealed the essence of environmental security and defined the content of the state policy on environmental protection. The guidelines for implementing this policy in Ukraine and the European Union were analysed. National and international regulations covering the implementation of environmental policy were identified, and the most significant of them were analysed. The study identified concrete public administration bodies that implement environmental policy in Ukraine and within the European Union. The study delineated the concepts of environmental safety and state policy for environmental safety, together with their characteristics and the importance of their implementation. Despite enhancements to the national legal framework aligning with EU standards, the issue of ineffective environmental policy implementation in Ukraine persists, attributed to constrained financial resources, inadequate monitoring, and flawed regulatory mechanisms. Furthermore, the EU faces challenges in terms of coherence of strategies across sectors. The practical

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significance is in its utility for Ukrainian government agencies, international organisations, and scholars to enhance the efficacy of environmental governance, refine legal frameworks, and adopt best practices

Keywords: environment; eco-policy; state policy; environmental protection; natural legislation; public authorities

Introduction

The escalating global environmental crisis has heightened the imperative to establish robust mechanisms for environmental safety governance in Ukraine and European Union member states. These regions confront multifaceted ecological challenges, encompassing environmental degradation, elevated greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, and climate destabilisation, necessitating the formulation of comprehensive policies and enhancement of administrative frameworks to facilitate sustainable environmental stewardship. Moreover, the ongoing military conflict within Ukraine's territorial boundaries has substantially exacerbated environmental deterioration, underscoring the critical importance of efficacious policy implementation and institutional responses from Ukrainian regulatory authorities. Of particular significance is the harmonisation of Ukraine's environmental legislative framework with European Union environmental acquis and directives, a process that demands meticulous attention to regulatory alignment and implementation protocols.

Negative environmental change is a global problem (Rebhi & Bouderbala, 2023). As a result of systematic missile attacks on Ukrainian cities, hits on critical infrastructure and businesses, hazardous chemicals are released into the air, soil, and water bodies. These hazardous substances are spreading throughout Ukraine, crossing the borders of other states, particularly through winds, groundwater, and rivers (Albakjaji, 2022). Thus, there is an increasing need for effective environmental policy implementation by both Ukrainian and EU authorities, the principles and

problems of which have been repeatedly investigated in the scientific literature.

C. Vashchenko & B. Nosachenko (2024) examined the key role of public policy in overcoming environmental problems on which Ukraine's national security depends. The researchers underscored the necessity for efficient environmental management to enhance environmental safety and establish secure living circumstances amid war actions in Ukraine. Their study pointed to the need to strengthen national control and response to the environmental consequences of military operations. This will facilitate further recovery and sustainable development in post-war Ukraine.

L.O. Ostapenko *et al.* (2023) emphasised the need to reform the environmental governance system and strengthen environmental sustainability. The researchers underscored the importance of public engagement in the execution of environmental policy to enhance the environment.

K.W. Cynk (2024) explored how ministers of Central European countries formulated environmental security issues during the first weeks of the war in Ukraine. The researcher analysed the political statements and decisions made at ministerial meetings, addressing the relationship between military conflict and environmental issues. The study emphasised the need for a comprehensive approach to integrate environmental security into national and regional political strategies caused by military operations. Furthermore, the study emphasises the value of joining forces to address both security and environmental issues in Central Europe. D. Pietrzyk-Reeves *et al.* (2024)

investigated the issue of public involvement in solving environmental problems in Ukraine, where the researchers surveyed 30 members of the public. Their study found that citizens are more likely to be involved when environmental issues directly affect their daily lives. Thus, this study emphasised the need for cooperation between civil society and the state.

E. Alblas and J. van Zeben (2023) analysed how effective these schemes can be in terms of biodiversity conservation of agricultural activities. Furthermore, the study examined the challenges and prospects for engaging farmers and other stakeholders. The need for co-management to improve environmental outcomes was particularly emphasised. Overall, this study helped to understand the interaction between agricultural policy and biodiversity management within the EU. K. Kluza *et al.* (2024) analysed the implementation of climate policy by EU countries according to the Sustainable development goals (n.d.). The researchers determined the effectiveness of this policy in promoting sustainable development and overcoming climate threats. Furthermore, they addressed the role of adapting national legislation in line with EU provisions to ensure environmental sustainability.

Overall, the level of research on environmental security is quite extensive due to the relevance of this issue. Researchers have mostly investigated its essence, identified factors that adversely affect the environment, and analysed legislation related to these issues, as well as its effectiveness. However, much fewer researchers have explored the issue of public administration of environmental security in the EU, and especially in Ukraine.

This study aimed to delineate the function of administrative governance in safeguarding environmental safety in Ukraine, specifically identifying the challenges associated with successful environmental governance. The study's aims were as follows:

- to delineate the notion and articulate the official policy of environmental safety;
- to analyse the environmental legislation of Ukraine and the EU;
- to identify the competent authorities implementing environmental policy in Ukraine and the EU.

Materials and Methods

During the study of Ukrainian legal documents, the study reviewed and analysed the provisions of the following legislative acts: the Constitution of Ukraine (1996); the Law of Ukraine No. 1264-XII "On Environmental Protection" (1991); No. 2086-VIII "On the Ratification of the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on Cooperation in the Field of Protection and Sustainable Development of the Dniester River Basin" (2017); No. 2059-VIII "On Environmental Impact Assessment" (2017); the Association Agreement Between Ukraine, of the One Part, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the Other Part (2017); No. 2697-VIII "On the Basic Principles (Strategy) of the State Environmental Policy of Ukraine for the Period up to 2030" (2019).

International treaties include the United Nations Framework Convention No. 30822 "On Climate Change" (1992); the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992); the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012); the European Green Deal (2019); the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2021/1119 (2021) (European Climate Law).

The comparative method facilitated the analysis of current definitions of environmental safety and state policy concerning environmental safety, as delineated in scholarly articles, dictionaries, and online resources, leading to a conclusion about these concepts. In addition, this method

was employed to some extent in identifying the bodies that implement environmental policy in Ukraine and the EU, namely, by demonstrating the difference in the levels at which it is implemented. By analysing national and international legislation, the governing aspects of policy implementation were compared.

Another key element of the methodology was an institutional analysis. This involved identifying the institutions responsible for formulating and implementing environmental policy in Ukraine and the EU, analysing their role in this process, and their interaction with each other. Specifically, this included an analysis of the legislative, executive, and judicial authorities and specialised EU institutions that influence environmental policy.

Results

The concept and content of state policy in the field of environmental safety. According to Article 50 of the Law of Ukraine No. 1264-XII (1991), environmental safety implies a state of the environment that ensures the avoidance of deterioration of this state and threats to the population. Whereas security for Ukrainian citizens is guaranteed by a set of interrelated measures in the political, economic, technical, organisational, legal, and other spheres. It also provides that in case of damage to the environment by individuals or legal entities, their activities may be suspended.

The state policy for environmental safety largely entails the provision of a secure environment by governmental bodies. This is accomplished by using the concepts of balanced environmental management across all sectors of the state's socio-economic development, specifically in Ukraine (Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019). This type of state policy is aimed at ensuring the rights of citizens enshrined in Article 50 of the Constitution of Ukraine (1996) and Article 9 of the Law of Ukraine No. 1264-XII (1991). It specifically pertains to the human right to a secure

environment, the efficient utilisation of natural resources, and the conservation and rehabilitation of ecosystems.

For the effective implementation of this policy, its principles are important. They include 1) the "polluter pays" principle, one of the guiding principles that aims to impose responsibility on the person who caused the pollution. Such a person should make payments for the damage caused and for other measures to address its consequences (van Bueren, n.d.); 2) the principle of precautionary measures, which is aimed at taking preventive actions in case of disputes, which allows preventing and eliminating a possible threat to the environment before it actually occurs (What are environmental principles?, 2019); 3) the principle of integration mandates that environmental protection concerns must be incorporated into many sectors of public policy in alignment with the plan for sustainable development. Adherence to these principles will help build an effective state policy on environmental issues. Overall, these principles are the basis for protecting the entire ecosystem.

Article 6 of the Law of Ukraine No. 1264-XII (1991) prescribes the development and implementation of environmental programmes of local, state targeted, and interstate significance. This is accomplished directly to assure the efficacy of environmental protection measures and safety, as well as to ensure the equitable utilisation of Ukraine's natural resources. This strategy is executed at multiple levels: international (global), national (state), regional (international), and local (Environmental policy of Ukraine..., 2021).

The international global level includes the formulation and adherence of governments to numerous international treaties and engagement in international organisations dedicated to environmental preservation. This addresses global issues including climate change and the release of dangerous compounds into water, air, and soil. For ex-

ample, Ukraine ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), which prompted the state to take adequate measures to monitor the level of emissions of harmful substances into the atmosphere, etc. The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) can be added to these treaties. The execution of global environmental policy connects the majority of the world's nations, including the most isolated or impoverished regions.

The implementation of environmental policy at the international regional level involves solving concrete problems within a particular region. EU directives primarily pertain to EU member states, and the same is true for countries that are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In Ukraine, it is implemented at this level, specifically, through the Basin Agreement (Law of Ukraine No. 2086-VIII, 2017). As a future member of the EU, Ukraine is adapting its national legislation to the EU legislation, and after final accession to the EU, Ukraine will be subject to the EU directives. A vital step towards the EU was the adoption of the Law of Ukraine No. 2059-VIII (2017), which allows for a more accurate environmental impact assessment.

These international treaties, along with others, have helped to create a more effective system of legislation in Ukraine. International cooperation is a vital indicator of a democratic state, as it demonstrates the state's desire to improve its system of government, which is tantamount to improving the living conditions of society. It implies the unity of states in solving global problems, which include the issue of environmental protection.

Principal state bodies responsible for the implementation of public administration of environmental safety in Ukraine. The execution of environmental policy at the state level is essential, as state authorities are accountable for ensuring a safe environmental condition (Amlard & Carter, 2022). The Ministry of Ecology and

Natural Resources of Ukraine (MENR) is the principal governmental authority addressing this matter. The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources is tasked with developing and executing programs for environmental protection and conservation. To this end, the Ministry develops draft regulations (e.g., the Strategy), systematically monitors and assesses water, air, and soil quality, controls industrial pollution and the waste management system, etc. To achieve comprehensive and, most significantly, effective implementation of this policy, the Ministry closely cooperates with a wide range of stakeholders (Regulation on the Ministry of Ecology..., 2015). Specifically, with state authorities, local self-government bodies, international organisations, and political parties (Environmental policy of Ukraine..., 2021).

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (MENR) maintains a comprehensive approach to natural resource management through the continuous enhancement of environmental monitoring mechanisms. This systematic framework encompasses rigorous assessment protocols, and empirical investigations of contamination levels across aquatic ecosystems, atmospheric conditions, and pedological systems, while simultaneously monitoring greenhouse gas emissions (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, n.d.). The foundational policy instrument governing environmental governance in Ukraine is codified in the Strategy of the State Environmental Policy of Ukraine for the Period up to 2030 (2019). This strategic document presents a multifaceted approach, incorporating a thorough analysis of Ukraine's contemporary environmental conditions and associated challenges. Furthermore, it delineates strategic objectives and targeted outcomes to be achieved by pertinent governmental entities by 2030. The policy framework establishes distinct implementation phases for environmental initiatives and incorporates a robust monitoring and evaluation

mechanism to assess policy effectiveness and implementation progress.

The Strategy of the State Environmental Policy of Ukraine (2019) articulates a comprehensive framework of environmental governance through five interconnected strategic objectives. The policy framework begins by emphasising the cultivation of environmental consciousness and sustainable resource management principles within Ukrainian society, particularly about industrial production practices. Building upon this foundation, the strategy seeks to establish favourable conditions for the sustainable enhancement of Ukraine's natural resource capacity. The third objective focuses on mainstreaming environmental considerations into Ukraine's socio-economic development planning and decision-making processes. The fourth goal addresses the mitigation of environmental hazards to reduce their adverse effects on socio-economic development and public health outcomes. Finally, the strategy aims to enhance the efficiency of state environmental monitoring and management systems. These strategic objectives were specifically designed to strengthen Ukraine's existing environmental policy framework while facilitating more effective policy implementation by governmental institutions (Environmental policy of Ukraine..., 2021).

The Strategy (2019) outlines the phases for executing these environmental policy objectives. By 2025, Ukraine is expected to attain a consistent enhancement of the environmental conditions, necessitating reforms in the public administration system regarding environmental issues and adherence to international norms. Structural changes in the ecosystem should be based on improving the environmental accounting system, strengthening control over compliance with the provisions established by legislation, and introducing effective financial and economic mechanisms to stimulate energy efficiency and the transition to more environmentally friendly

technologies. Raising public awareness of environmental issues and introducing an e-government system will increase transparency and engage the public in environmental protection processes. Consequently, these measures will enhance sustainable development and elevate the quality of life in Ukraine, with the objective of significantly improving the environmental condition by 2030 through an integrated approach addressing socio-economic and environmental requirements. This will enable productive cooperation between government agencies, businesses, and the public, and thus sustainable low-carbon development will contribute to economic growth and environmental improvement. This strategy will enhance environmental management in the country and serve as a significant catalyst for socio-economic advancement, achieving a balance between economic development and environmental conservation (Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019).

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU) is crucial in executing environmental policy, directly adopting laws and other legal documents related to environmental policy (mostly approving projects of the Ministry of Ecology). For instance, in 2017, the VRU adopted the Law of Ukraine No. 2059-VIII (2017), which is essential on the path to the EU, and the adoption of the first transboundary Basin Agreement (on water resources) (Law of Ukraine No. 2086-VIII, 2017) was a major progress.

The VRU is updating Ukraine's environmental legislation, monitoring compliance with this legislation, and establishing more stringent liability for its violation. The VRU also monitors compliance with the environmental plan of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the Consequences of the War, 2022). The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU), as the exclusive legislative authority, is tasked with aligning Ukrainian legislation with European Union law. Specifically, after Ukraine joined the European Green Deal (2019)

in 2020, it became necessary to make substantial adjustments to Ukraine's environmental legislation (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, 2024). The signing of the Association Agreement (2017) ensured the improvement of this legislation. The leading role in the VRU's activities belongs to its relations with the population of the state, as the Parliament ensures transparency in its decisions by engaging the public and stakeholders.

Auxiliary state bodies involved in the implementation of environmental policy in Ukraine. State specialised bodies are equally important for the execution of environmental policy in Ukraine. The State Environmental Inspectorate (SEI) oversees adherence to environmental legislation and evaluates environmental performance. Therewith, it performs a legal function – it investigates environmental offences and establishes liability for them, and issues licences and permits on environmental protection issues. The SEI also conducts scientific research on the environmental impact of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (ChNPP) accident and takes the necessary measures to eliminate existing threats (State Ecological Inspectorate of Ukraine, 2018). Among such bodies is the State Agency of Water Resources of Ukraine (2020), which ensures the rational use of the water environment and regulates the implementation of EU directives on analogous issues (specifically, water quality); the State Service of Geology and Subsoil of Ukraine (which controls the optimised use of mineral resources and establishes safe methods of mining) (Regulation on the State Service of Geology and Subsoil of Ukraine, 2015); Regulations on the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management (2014) (which systematically monitors the ChNPP territory, conducts research on the affected facilities and implements measures to minimise the consequences of the accident), etc. The synchronised efforts of these governmental

entities constitute a fundamental component of implementing a successful environmental policy in Ukraine, focused on safeguarding and guaranteeing environmental safety.

The final level (local) pertains to the execution of environmental policy by local self-government entities. The necessity and relevance of these entities is elucidated by their capacity to address the issue directly at its source (Kyrychenko, 2020). The competence of local self-government bodies is defined by the Law of Ukraine No. 1264-XII (1991). Thus, Article 15 stipulates that local councils are responsible for the natural environment on their territories. They facilitate the direct execution of environmental policy; oversee the placement of enterprises within designated territories; authorise projects and formulate programs and measures to enhance the environment in specific areas; apprise the local populace regarding environmental conditions; issue permits for natural resource utilisation; manage the environmental repercussions of disasters or anthropogenic incidents; and monitor adherence to the Law of Ukraine No. 1264-XII (1991). Thus, local councils implement environmental policy exclusively at the local level, which is limited to the territory of the respective local council.

Another representative of local self-government bodies is the executive bodies of village, town, and city councils, according to Article 19 of the Law of Ukraine No. 1264-XII (1991), they carry out the following activities: implement local environmental policy; coordinate activities between different entities; manage waste; approve limits on the use of resources in specific territories; formulate and implement environmental protection programmes and take part in them directly. These entities are crucial for sustaining optimal environmental conditions and enhancing the quality of life in the surrounding area. In addition, the authorised bodies at the local level are

region, Kyiv and Sevastopol city state administrations, whose competence is defined by Article 204 of the Law. These administrations are essential in safeguarding and conserving the environment by executing environmental policies, monitoring and evaluating ecological conditions, optimising natural resource utilisation, and swiftly addressing issues stemming from environmental catastrophes (Powers of local self-government bodies..., n.d.).

The jurisdictional scope of Ukrainian local self-government bodies encompasses comprehensive environmental governance responsibilities. Their mandate extends to industrial zoning regulations, comprehensive waste management protocols, and the remediation of environmental damages stemming from disasters. Furthermore, these governmental entities are tasked with environmental stewardship through systematic monitoring procedures and expeditious intervention in ecological challenges. This framework enables local authorities to implement preventive measures while maintaining responsive capabilities for addressing emerging environmental concerns within their administrative territories.

Instruments for implementing environmental policy in Ukraine. The Strategy (2019) delineates the most exhaustive compilation of instruments for executing environmental policy in Ukraine. Thus, the key instrument is cross-sectoral partnership and interaction with stakeholders. These methods can facilitate the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, including representatives from public authorities, local governments, commercial entities, the private sector, the public, and other interested parties, in the formulation and execution of environmental policy. Such cooperation increases the chances that the policy will be comprehensive and well-grounded and will accommodate the interests and needs of multiple segments of the population and meet their expectations. Joint efforts will result in improved efficiency and sustainable functioning of

environmental protection measures (Implementation of environmental reforms..., 2023).

Information and communication remain vital instruments for the practical implementation of environmental policy. The key purpose of this tool is to ensure that citizens are aware of environmental issues, as well as of the activities of executive authorities and the environmental situation. Communication enhances awareness of the need of environmental preservation in society and fosters skills in sustainable environmental management. Through this approach, government agencies can promote a culture of environmental responsibility among citizens. Specifically, this is achieved by raising their awareness and participation, which is crucial for the effective implementation of any environmental policy (Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019; National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the Consequences of the War, 2022).

State regulation significantly establishes scientifically based constraints on the extraction of natural resources and the extent of industrial pollution. This regulatory framework includes the issuance of integrated permits for the control of industrial emissions, following the EU directives on industrial pollution control. By adhering to these provisions, Ukraine aims to prevent environmental degradation and at the same time promote sustainable environmental management practices. A robust legal regulatory framework ensures stringent adherence to environmental norms by firms, hence enhancing overall environmental safety (Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019; Pavliuk *et al.*, 2023).

The use of strategic environmental assessment is another powerful tool in Ukraine's environmental policy. Such an assessment allows determining the probable environmental consequences of projects before they are implemented. This preventive method ensures compliance with applicable environmental legislation and

rational resource use in future activities. By incorporating environmental assessment into the decision-making process, the state seeks to mitigate detrimental effects on the environment and assure adherence to environmental norms (Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019; National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the Consequences of the War, 2022).

Establishing environmental management systems, which includes audits and certification, increases the efficiency of enterprises while improving environmental performance. Audits check how well companies are implementing their management systems and achieving their environmental goals. Through systematic audits, companies can identify shortcomings, improve production efficiency, and reduce environmental risks. In addition to audits, environmental accounting is used as a way to monitor and report on the environmental performance of an enterprise. By integrating environmental accounting into decision-making procedures, enterprises can combine their economic viability with social and environmental responsibilities (The World Bank, 2016; Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019).

Another valuable tool for implementing environmental policy is legal regulation of this issue, specifically, the fact that Ukrainian legislation should be adapted to EU directives (and especially those on sustainable development and environmental protection). This encompasses the execution of a waste management and climate change strategy, essential for tackling present environmental challenges and adhering to European regulations and standards. Alongside its legislative activities, Ukraine pays special attention to the educational sphere, which aims to form an environmentally conscious society. It is founded on the notion of sustainable development, which ought to be included in educational curricula (Environment. Mission from Ukraine..., 2021). And since the environmental awareness of citizens is the key

guarantee of compliance with Ukrainian environmental legislation, these two instruments are interrelated (Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019).

Furthermore, there are a series of economic and financial instruments that provide support for environmental measures and projects by creating favourable conditions for their implementation. These instruments help to encourage investment in environmentally friendly and resource-saving innovative technologies, as well as provide favourable conditions for international financing of environmental projects. Monitoring systems are being implemented to control compliance with environmental legislation and engage the public in environmental management (Law of Ukraine No. 2697-VIII, 2019). Thus, by using all these tools, the Ukrainian state seeks to strengthen environmental safety and ensure effective climate change mitigation, while following international obligations.

Public administration of environmental safety in the EU. The European Union comprises 27 member nations and has 9 candidates for membership, namely Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Moldova, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, and North Macedonia (Kosovo is a possible candidate, but 5 EU member states still do not recognise it as independent) (EU enlargement, n.d.). All these states form a single entity, and together they are struggling with problems of a global scale. The challenge of guaranteeing environmental security is exacerbated by climate change, anthropogenic pollution, and the systematic release of greenhouse gases and other harmful compounds into the air, land, and water bodies. Environmental issues affect not only a single country but the entire international community. This has led to the need to create a single effective public administration within the EU.

Articles 11 and 191-193 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012) designate the EU itself as the

competent authority in the field of environmental policy. Its authorities encompass climate change, air and water contamination, and waste management. The European Union's environmental policy is founded on four basic principles. These include 1) the precautionary principle implies refraining from certain actions or policy strategies that may be dangerous (until such actions are deemed safe). This helps to prevent threats before they occur; 2) the precautionary principle emphasises the need to take precautions to avoid damage to the environment. It prioritises actions aimed at preventing environmental violations over responding to such violations; 3) if pollution has already occurred, measures should be taken to clean the contaminated areas. This is part of the policy aimed at restoring ecological balance; 4) and the last principle of "polluter pays", which places responsibility for the damage caused on the party that caused it. This means that the guilty party must not only eliminate the consequences of its actions on the environment but also cover the costs of restoration (Ruiz *et al.*, 2022; Kurrer & Petit, 2024).

These principles are the key norms that should guide both member states and candidates for EU accession. They form the system of environmental protection in the European Union and are mostly preventive in nature. Specifically, these principles are used when making significant decisions (e.g., when addressing climate change), as such issues are of global significance.

The EU's environmental policy, alongside legislation, relies on the execution of pertinent initiatives, notably The Eighth European Union Action Programme for the Environment until 2030 (2022). This Programme came into force in 2022 and is designed to be implemented until 2030, and is aimed at achieving six goals, including:

- attainment of the objective to diminish greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. This implies achieving

a balance between the level of emissions and their removal from the atmosphere, which will ensure a more environmentally friendly and sustainable future;

- enhancing adaptive capability, fostering resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change. Building resilience will help to counter climate threats more effectively, as it will reduce the vulnerability of the population and natural environments to possible threats;

- shift towards a regenerative growth model that separates economic expansion from resource use and environmental harm, while promoting a swift transition to a circular economy. In the transition to a circular economy, the key purpose is to minimise waste, maximise resource efficiency, and ensure that economic activity has a favourable effect on the environment;

- attaining the objectives of zero pollution, particularly concerning air, water, and soil, while safeguarding the health and social welfare of the European populace. Thus, the primary task should be to protect public health, and reducing pollution will contribute to improving living standards and the environment;

- safeguarding, preservation, and propagation of biodiversity, together with augmentation of natural resource volume. By preserving habitats and protecting biodiversity, natural capital can be strengthened;

- alleviating the environmental and climatic impact resulting from production and consuming activities, particularly in sectors such as energy, industry, construction, infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade, and the food system. This will primarily help to increase the efficiency of environmental management and achieve the goals of the Eighth European Union action programme (2022).

The Programme is a comprehensive strategy for implementing environmental policy in the EU, setting ambitious goals for achieving climate

neutrality, reducing pollution and protecting biodiversity (Tosun, 2023). By promoting sustainable development and strengthening cooperation between EU member states, the Programme aims to overcome critical environmental threats while improving the living standards of European citizens.

The European Council is crucial in executing environmental policy inside the EU, establishing strategic directions and defining political goals. Overall, the Council sets targets (including those related to minimising greenhouse gas emissions) that directly affect setting the legislative agenda. Its function is also to shape environmental policy and identify issues that require immediate attention (e.g., climate change). Through the recommendations of the European Council, political assistance and support is provided to draft laws submitted by the European Commission (The European Green Deal, 2019). In addition, by reviewing reports and analytical assessments, the European Commission can hold Member States accountable for their commitments. Thus, by exercising the control function, the Council encourages EU member states to take adequate measures on environmental issues (Selin & Van Deveer, 2015).

Through the establishment of a bilateral conversation, the Council guarantees the alignment of national interests with EU objectives, which is essential for the efficient implementation of environmental legislation (The European Green Deal, 2019). Consequently, although the European Council does not actively engage in the execution of environmental policies, it is crucial in establishing strategic objectives. It also plays a key role in achieving unanimity among member states, providing a legislative framework that facilitates the creation of an effective EU environmental policy and its implementation (Selin & Van Deveer, 2015).

The European Parliament serves as a crucial legislative institution within the European Union's governance framework, operating in conjunction with the Council of the European Union

to fulfill essential legislative responsibilities. This dual legislative authority encompasses the formulation and implementation of regulations across diverse policy domains, with particular emphasis on environmental matters such as climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Both institutions possess the constitutional prerogative to propose amendments and conduct formal voting procedures on environmental legislation of critical significance. Through the Parliament's dedicated legislative endeavors, the European Union has established a comprehensive body of environmental law that imposes binding obligations upon all Member States. The Parliament's influence has been instrumental in underscoring the imperative for Member States to incorporate and enforce EU environmental directives within their respective national legal frameworks, thereby ensuring consistent environmental protection standards across the Union.

The European Parliament has enacted substantial environmental policy changes with far-reaching implications. Through comprehensive legislative frameworks, the Parliament has addressed multiple ecological challenges simultaneously. The development of climate change legislation stands as a cornerstone of these efforts, accompanied by parallel initiatives in waste management protocols and biodiversity preservation measures. Of particular significance is the Parliament's instrumental role in crafting and implementing an action plan centered on circular economy principles. This commitment was further solidified through the ratification of the Paris Agreement, marking a decisive step in the institution's approach to climate change mitigation (Kurrer & Petit, 2024). A watershed moment occurred when the Parliament formally declared a climate and environmental emergency, which subsequently catalysed the establishment of the European Climate Law (2021). This pivotal legislation codifies the European Union's binding commitment

to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, while simultaneously establishing specific greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for individual member states to pursue (Kurrer & Petit, 2024).

A prominent achievement was the implementation of the European Green Deal (2019), which was aimed at creating the first climate-neutral territory (Hereu-Morales *et al.*, 2023). The Parliament is actively engaged in formulating strategic plans for the execution of environmental policy within the EU. Similar to the VRU, the EU Parliament advocates for the engagement of concerned citizens in the formulation of environmental policy decisions. Consequently, citizen trust in the Member States escalates, and the openness of enacted legal provisions enhances. Consequently, the EU Parliament is crucial for the execution of environmental policy inside the EU and is directly engaged in the formulation of the Union's environmental legislation. The Parliament ensures the efficacy of the legislative process.

The principal tenets of the European Green Deal (2019) encompass attaining net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; eradicating pollution from the environment by 2050; aligning the environmental legislation of EU Member States with established objectives; formulating a sustainable production policy to diminish material usage and foster recyclable products; and preparing for the execution of a hydrogen-based clean steel initiative (Smol *et al.*, 2020).

The European Commission has a significant role in executing environmental policy across EU Member States. It offers new draft rules that tackle environmental concerns, such as initiatives to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and is also engaged in their formulation. The Commission's activities also extend to the implementation of The European Green Deal (2019), mainly addressing concrete issues and implementing relevant strategies within the framework of this Agreement. The Commission possesses the authority to oversee

adherence to EU environmental legislation and to assess the conformity of Member States' national legislation with EU law. In case of non-compliance, the Commission lodges a claim against such a state, and if the issue is not resolved through negotiations, the European Court of Justice is competent to resolve the problem (The eighth European Union action programme..., 2022).

It is the Commission that is responsible for providing technical support to Member States to help them implement EU environmental policy (to prevent litigation). Specifically, the Commission uses such an effective tool for implementing environmental policy as the Environmental Implementation Review (which involves the preparation of reports that help implement EU legislation) (Environmental implementation review, 2019). The European Commission serves as the official representation of the EU in international discussions and the execution of agreements pertaining to environmental matters. The Commission participates in talks about climate change, biodiversity conservation, and pollution reduction on international platforms (e.g., the Framework Convention) (Selin & Van Deveer, 2015).

Furthermore, the Commission ensures that environmental interests are considered in other policy areas (including energy, transport, and agriculture). This mainstreaming fosters sustainable development in environmental and other domains. Consequently, the European Commission guarantees the execution of the EU environmental policy primarily through the proposal and development of new legislation. It additionally oversees adherence to regulations, offers assistance to member states, and advocates for the EU's stance on the world stage.

The European Court of Justice is another entity executing environmental policy. It primarily interprets the requirements of EU environmental regulations at the request of a Member State.

This helps states to correctly understand the provisions of EU treaties or legislation, which affects their adaptation to national legislation. The European Court of Justice may also be approached by national courts of Member States to request possible precedents in analogous circumstances (Sobotta, 2020). Consequently, national courts may utilise prior rulings from the European Court of Justice when the cases have analogous components or references to EU legislation and its interpretation. Furthermore, these judgments have elucidated for Member States the implementation of required safeguard measures (Cenevska, 2016).

This Court is empowered to impose liability on the infringer of EU environmental legislation. After the EU Commission submits a case of violation of EU legislation, the Court considers the case and decides what penalty the violator should be punished. In most cases, such penalties are either direct fines or obligations on the part of the infringing state. The European Court of Justice considers cases related to environmental rights, thereby providing an opportunity for citizens and non-governmental organisations to challenge decisions that pose a threat (Jacobs, 2006). This approach promotes public involvement in environmental governance and ensures control over the activities of the authorities.

EU subsidiary bodies for the implementation of environmental policy in the EU. The European Environment Agency (EEA) is important in tackling environmental challenges and is recognised as the EU's official environmental agency. It was established under the European Economic Community Regulation in 1990, and the Agency began its operations in 1993. For the most part, this body covers the EU member states, but there are a few exceptions (specifically, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and Liechtenstein), and thus the Agency has 32 member states (Our knowledge network..., n.d.). The EEA was established to

conduct systematic monitoring of environmental quality, specifically: to assess air, soil, and water quality; to evaluate climate change; to examine biodiversity conservation status; to monitor pollution levels; and to measure greenhouse gas emissions, among other factors.

Consequently, the Agency guarantees the accuracy and validity of the gathered data regarding environmental conditions, while producing publicly accessible reports that enable universal readership, irrespective of one's affiliation with the EEA or the EU. This ensures the transparency of the Agency's activities and allows it to change the public's attitude towards the perception of the natural environment (Kovacic & Benini, 2022). These reports allow for the creation of draft laws, as they identify the key problems, strategies, and possible solutions to environmental issues. This both greatly simplifies the work of the EU bodies and contributes to the efficiency of its legislative function. The EEA also acts as the coordinator of the European Environmental Information and Observation Network (Eionet), which comprises public environmental authorities and other stakeholders. The network enables the exchange of information and best practices across member governments, thereby enhancing the availability and quality of environmental information (Our knowledge network..., n.d.).

This is achieved by conducting comprehensive environmental control, providing well-founded proposals on draft laws on environmental issues to the EU bodies. It also plays a vital role in informing the public about the environmental situation, ensuring proper compliance with environmental legislation, and cooperating with stakeholders. The EEA's successful operations and environmental reporting enable EU member states and other nations to tackle significant global environmental challenges, including climate change.

A significant instrument for executing the EU's environmental policy is the European Union

Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL). The principal task of IMPEL (n.d.) is to improve the implementation process of national legislation and ensure its strict compliance: EU Member States, the Single Economic Area (SEA), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and future candidates for accession to them. IMPEL focuses on capacity building, coordination of law enforcement actions in the environmental sector, and addressing existing gaps in the implementation of environmental legislation. The Network also cooperates with stakeholders and provides an information basis for environmental policy development. Its initiatives foster the establishment of a cohesive strategy for addressing environmental issues in European nations. IMPEL executes EU environmental policy by promoting sustainable development and environmental protection on a progressively intricate global scale.

Local administrations have a crucial role in executing environmental policy inside the EU. The operations of each EU member state dictate their obligatory performance and compliance with EU environmental legislation. Their primary function is to implement EU regulations into national legislation, while ensuring compliance with EU legislation. Local authorities monitor compliance with environmental legislation at the local level (in a particular state), and in case of violations, they conduct relevant inspections and impose penalties (Environmental implementation review, 2019). Through the development of national policies on waste management, air quality, and biodiversity conservation, they adapt local policies to EU goals (specifically, the European Green Deal (2019)). This allows them to address concrete environmental issues within their region and respond effectively to them. Local authorities cooperate with regional and national governments, which ensures harmonious policy implementation at all levels of government.

Discussion

In recent decades, environmental conditions have been progressively declining, constituting a global concern (Chaudhary & Piracha, 2021). This is due to several anthropogenic disasters that result in a rise in the frequency of natural disasters. The dropping of nuclear bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Chernobyl accident, systematic oil spills into the Nigerian Delta, the growth of enterprises and factories that emit hazardous chemicals, and finally wars (specifically, the war in Ukraine and the explosion of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant) have all led to the environmental safety of the entire world being threatened (van Steenberghe, 2023).

The techniques of warfare inflict significant harm on the environment, including missile strikes on infrastructure and other strategically vital assets, the destruction of military equipment, the excavation of trenches, and the deployment of tanks, among others. This results in the release of hazardous chemicals into the environment, which destroy fertile black soil and deal a devastating blow to the ozone layer (Rawtani *et al.*, 2022; Reshetilov, 2022). That is why there is a pressing need for effective implementation of environmental policy aimed at strengthening environmental safety and improving the state of the environment. Public administrations both in Ukraine and within the EU Member States should improve their activities and join forces to ensure environmental safety.

G. Reshetilov (2022) investigated the issue of integrating circular economy principles into Ukraine's environmental policy. The researcher emphasised the significance of sustainable resource management and waste minimisation as the key elements of this approach. Reshetilov also reviewed the current environmental policy, regulatory framework, and practical tools. The researcher pointed out that these instruments ensure environmental sustainability and at the same time contribute to economic growth. Specifically, the

study focuses on the need for interaction between government agencies, business, and the public. First and foremost, this is done to ensure an effective transition to a circular economy in Ukraine.

This study has consistently emphasised the importance of collaboration among authorities, businesses, and the public to enhance efficacy in guaranteeing environmental safety. Thus, it can be correlated with the study by G. Reshetilov (2022) directly in the context of the need for cooperation between these actors. This approach will not only help to engage stakeholders to improve environmental policy but will also influence the environmental awareness of citizens. And this will have an impact on reducing environmental pollution.

M. Imran *et al.* (2024) investigated the impact of environmental legislation on the advancement of renewable energy sources among EU nations. The researchers specifically examined the efficacy of mechanisms like subsidy programs and regulations to stimulate investment and innovation in the renewable energy sector. The research indicated that an effectively formulated environmental policy enhances the utilisation of renewable energy, hence facilitating the attainment of the EU's climate objectives.

The current study and the study by M. Imran *et al.* (2024) had some common conclusions, specifically, the significance of establishing effective public administration for the implementation of environmental policy. It will also ensure that Ukraine meets the EU's strategic goals and demonstrate that Ukrainian legislation is in line with EU regulations.

C. Wang and A. Naveed (2024) analysed data on the regulatory framework and its impact on economic performance, innovation, and sustainable development practices in various sectors. Enhancing oversight of adherence to environmental standards can foster competitiveness and innovation. This will help improve the environmental situation and accelerate economic growth.

Overall, C. Wang and A. Naveed (2024) established the direct role of compliance with environmental laws, which both distinguishes and combines their study with the data. The distinction pertains to the focus of the research: authors study aimed to assess the influence of compliance on the shift towards a green economy in the EU, whereas the current study seeks to identify the authorised entities responsible for the enforcement of environmental policy in Ukraine and the EU. The common aspect of both studies is the fact that it is vital to ensure compliance with regulations on this issue and their influence on society.

The researchers emphasised that such control over compliance with environmental legislation may entail short-term costs for enterprises. However, in the long term, it will help them achieve longer-term outcomes by promoting the adoption of environmentally friendly practices and technologies. The researchers emphasised the necessity of aligning legislation with economic considerations to enhance the efficacy of environmental policy in advancing a green economy. Comparing the present study with the study by C. Wang and A. Naveed (2024), both emphasised the need for proper monitoring of compliance with environmental legislation.

I. Cadoret and F. Padovano (2016) analysed whether internal political, economic, and social preconditions or international agreements and cooperation have a greater effect on the shaping of this policy. The study helped to clarify the correlation between national and international influence in the development of effective environmental regulations. Comparing the study by I. Cadoret and F. Padovano (2016) with the present study, it can be concluded that they have certain shared aspects. This pertains to the need of establishing an efficient environmental management system and the necessity for collaborative efforts between national and international organisations. Both studies showed that to solve environmental problems, serious

national commitments and international cooperation are needed. Furthermore, comprehensive environmental programmes need to be developed to meet both local and international needs.

Overall, the above studies have some similarities in their findings, including those of the present study. The effective implementation of environmental policy encompasses several critical dimensions within the European Union's framework. The process begins with the fundamental task of incorporating EU environmental legislation into member states' national legal systems, including Ukraine's legislative framework. This integration requires careful harmonisation of national environmental statutes with EU directives and programs, ensuring comprehensive alignment across jurisdictional boundaries. Rigorous enforcement mechanisms and compliance monitoring form an essential component of this process, creating a robust foundation for environmental protection. Furthermore, successful environmental governance necessitates enhanced collaboration among various stakeholders at the national level, including governmental institutions, commercial entities, and civil society organisations. This domestic coordination is complemented by strengthened international cooperation between EU member states and Ukraine, particularly given its status as an EU accession candidate. The overarching objectives of environmental sustainability and judicious natural resource management serve as guiding principles throughout these efforts. These interconnected elements collectively constitute the cornerstone of successful environmental policy implementation, forming a comprehensive approach to addressing contemporary environmental challenges within the European framework.

Consequently, aligning Ukrainian legislation with EU standards and norms will facilitate a swift and efficient reaction to emerging offenses in the realm of environmental safety in Ukraine (Bak *et al.*, 2024). Simultaneously, enhancing collaboration

between the Ukrainian government and the European Union will aid in mitigating the detrimental environmental effects of Russian aggression.

The result of this section was that the analysis and comparison of the researchers' studies revealed that ensuring that the state properly follows environmental legislation is a key means of strengthening global environmental security. Therewith, it is vital to reform the state bodies authorised to implement environmental policy and strengthen cooperation between stakeholders. Specifically, as for Ukraine, considering the military actions, there is an even more urgent need to adapt Ukrainian legislation to EU provisions. This will facilitate the implementation of a more effective environmental policy and help improve the environmental safety of Ukrainians.

Conclusions

This investigation examines the conceptual foundations of environmental safety and corresponding state policies, with particular emphasis on comparative analysis of regulatory frameworks between Ukraine and the European Union. Environmental safety encompasses comprehensive measures designed to shield ecosystems from degradation while simultaneously safeguarding public health from environmental hazards. The research demonstrates that state environmental safety policies incorporate multiple dimensions, including systematic monitoring of environmental risk factors, development and deployment of pollution prevention protocols, and implementation of natural resource conservation measures. The comparative analysis reveals the intricate legal and administrative architectures governing environmental protection in both jurisdictions. Through careful examination of the regulatory landscape, this study delineates the specific governmental bodies and administrative entities tasked with environmental policy implementation in Ukraine and across EU member states. This institutional

mapping provides crucial insights into how environmental safety mandates are operationalised within different administrative contexts.

Environmental policy in Ukraine is implemented at four levels: international global (addressing global environmental problems (climate change)); international regional (addressing environmental problems within a particular region (EU)); state (implemented by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the State Environmental Inspectorate, etc.); and local (local self-government bodies – local councils; executive bodies of village, town, and city councils; regional, Kyiv, and Sevastopol city state administrations). The entities accountable for executing environmental policy within the EU are the European Council, European Parliament, European Commission, and European Court of Justice.

Ukrainian public authorities implement environmental policy through administrative instruments. However, since the state does not fully implement one of the crucial instruments – ensuring effective legal regulation – such policy implementation is not particularly effective. However, the problem lies in the direct implementation of the provisions of this legislation, as the public authorities on environmental issues do not fully perform

their obligations. The deficiency of financial resources and the inadequate methods for monitoring and enforcing compliance with environmental legislation remain a pressing issue.

Despite the comprehensiveness of the EU legal framework, there are still certain challenges in implementing EU environmental strategies, especially in terms of coherence among EU sectors. The 8th Environment Action Programme pointed out the necessity of improving regulatory methods and stakeholder participation in addressing obstacles to effective environmental governance. This will facilitate fast responses to environmental disasters and their prevention in EU member states and candidate countries, including Ukraine.

Future study opportunities encompass an examination of the execution of environmental policy by public authorities across many nations, especially those with varying degrees of environmental safety, facilitating a comparison of the mechanisms for policy implementation.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Публічне адміністрування екологічної безпеки в Україні та країнах ЄС

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Анотація

Метою дослідження був аналіз державної політики України та ЄС у сфері екологічної безпеки, а також визначення її ключових інструментів та проблем реалізації. За допомогою герменевтичного та порівняльного методів у дослідженні розкрито сутність екологічної безпеки, визначено зміст державної політики стосовно захисту навколишнього природного середовища. Проаналізовано керівні принципи реалізації даної політики в Україні та Європейському Союзі. Встановлено національні та міжнародні нормативно-правові акти, що відповідають за здійснення екологічної політики, проаналізовано найбільш вагомі з них. В ході дослідження виокремлено конкретні органи публічного адміністрування, які здійснюють екологічну політику в Україні та в межах Європейського Союзу. У результаті дослідження було визначено поняття екологічної безпеки та державної політики у сфері екологічної безпеки, їх особливості та важливість реалізації. Було встановлено, що незважаючи на вдосконалення національної правової бази в умовах адаптації до стандартів ЄС, проблема низької ефективності реалізації екологічної політики в Україні залишається актуальною через обмеженість фінансових ресурсів, недосконалі механізми моніторингу та правового регулювання. Крім того, у ЄС існують виклики щодо узгодженості стратегій між секторами. Практична цінність роботи полягає в тому, що результати можуть бути використані державними органами України, міжнародними організаціями та науковцями для підвищення ефективності екологічного врядування, вдосконалення правових механізмів і впровадження кращих практик.

Ключові слова: навколишнє природне середовище; екополітика; державна політика; захист довкілля; природне законодавство; органи державної влади