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**EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE OF SHAPING THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT
AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE STATE POLICY
OF UKRAINE**

**ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИЙ ДОСВІД ФОРМУВАННЯ БЕЗПЕКОВОГО
СЕРЕДОВИЩА ТА МОЖЛИВОСТІ ЙОГО ІМПЛЕМЕНТАЦІЇ В
ДЕРЖАВНУ ПОЛІТИКУ УКРАЇНИ**

The article examines the problem of modernising Ukraine's national civil protection system under the conditions of full-scale armed aggression and the need to adapt state policy to European Union standards. The post-war transformations of the European security architecture, the intensification of hybrid threats, and the increasing frequency of climate-driven emergencies have exposed substantial gaps in the domestic security mechanism and have highlighted the need to reconsider its institutional, legal, and organisational foundations. The aim of the study is to analyse the contemporary experience of Eastern EU countries (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic) in shaping the security environment and to substantiate conceptual directions for implementing this experience in Ukraine's state policy in the field of public administration of civil protection. The main part of the work reveals the evolution of the concept of "comprehensive security" as the paradigmatic basis of the European model of response to contemporary challenges, analyses Poland's civil protection reform of 2024–2025, the total defence system of the Baltic states, the

Czech integrated rescue system, as well as coordination mechanisms within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Particular attention is paid to the assessment of practices of civil society engagement, the development of protective shelter infrastructure, standards of population self-sufficiency, and strategic communication tools. Based on the results of the research, conclusions are formulated regarding priority directions for adapting European approaches to Ukrainian realities, in particular with respect to the consolidation of the normative and legal framework, the integration of civil-military coordination, the development of volunteer formations, and the enhancement of critical infrastructure resilience.

Keywords: *civil protection, security environment, comprehensive security, public administration, EU Civil Protection Mechanism, total defence, resilience, Eastern EU countries.*

У статті досліджено проблему модернізації національної системи цивільного захисту України в умовах повномасштабної збройної агресії та необхідності адаптації державної політики до стандартів Європейського Союзу. Пovoєнні трансформації архітектури європейської безпеки, активізація гібридних загроз та інтенсифікація кліматично зумовлених надзвичайних ситуацій висвітлили суттєві прогалини у вітчизняному безпековому механізмі та актуалізували потребу переосмислення його інституційних, правових і організаційних засад. Метою роботи є аналіз сучасного досвіду країн Східного ЄС (Польщі, Литви, Латвії, Естонії, Чеської Республіки) у формуванні безпекового середовища та обґрунтування концептуальних напрямів імплементації цього досвіду в державну політику України у сфері публічного управління цивільним захистом. В основній частині роботи розкрито еволюцію концепту «комплексної безпеки» (comprehensive security) як парадигматичної основи європейської моделі реагування на сучасні виклики, проаналізовано реформу цивільного захисту Польщі 2024–2025 рр., систему тотальної оборони Балтійських держав, інтегровану рятувальну систему Чехії, а також механізми координації в рамках Союзного механізму цивільного захисту ЄС. Окрему увагу приділено оцінці

практик залучення громадянського суспільства, розвитку інфраструктури захисних споруд, стандартам автономності населення та інструментам стратегічних комунікацій. За результатами дослідження сформульовано висновки щодо пріоритетних напрямів адаптації європейських підходів до українських реалій, зокрема у частині консолідації нормативно-правової бази, інтеграції цивільно-військової координації, розвитку добровольчих формувань і підвищення стійкості критичної інфраструктури.

Ключові слова: *цивільний захист, безпекове середовище, комплексна безпека, публічне управління, Союзний механізм цивільного захисту ЄС, тотальна оборона, стійкість, країни Східного ЄС.*

Statement of the Problem. The full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, launched on 24 February 2022, became a catalyst for a fundamental reassessment of security paradigms not only in Ukraine but also in European Union member states. The destruction of critical infrastructure, massive strikes on the energy system, humanitarian crises, and unprecedented waves of internally displaced persons and refugees demonstrated that the traditional distinction between military and civilian security had lost its relevance [10]. Contemporary challenges are complex and transboundary in nature and require a systemic response encompassing state institutions, the private sector, civil society, and individual citizens. Tellingly, as early as 2024 the European Commission published the Preparedness Union Strategy, which envisages 30 key actions for embedding the principle of "preparedness by design" into all EU policies [11]. In parallel, the Eastern Flank countries of the European Union — Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Czech Republic — carried out unprecedented reforms of their civil protection systems, reflecting the formation of a new Eastern European model of the security environment. For Ukraine, which has been a participating state of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism since April 2023 [12] and is simultaneously advancing on its path of European integration, it is critically important to comprehend this experience and adapt it in a methodologically sound manner.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The issues of shaping the security environment in the European dimension and their reflection in Ukrainian state policy have received considerable attention in the contemporary scholarly literature. The theoretical and methodological foundations of comprehensive security and civil protection in Eastern European countries have been thoroughly developed in the works of A. Kuchyńska-Zonik [1], K. Pelczyńska-Nałęcz [2], and W. Kitler [3], who formulated a conceptual distinction between civil protection and civil defence in the context of modern hybrid threats. Current transformations of the Polish civil protection model following the adoption of the Law of 5 December 2024 have been analysed in publications of the Institute of Central Europe (Lublin) and the Casimir Pulaski Foundation [4; 5]. A systemic analysis of the experience of the Baltic states is represented in studies by the Danish Institute for International Studies [6] and the Atlantic Council [7], which emphasise the integrative "whole-of-society" approach. Ukrainian scholars — P. Volianskyi, V. Sadkovi, V. Tyshchenko — address issues of adapting European standards to the national civil protection system, highlighting institutional constraints [8; 9]. At the same time, despite the substantial body of publications, there is a lack of comprehensive studies combining a comparative analysis of the 2024–2025 reforms in Eastern EU countries with practical recommendations for Ukraine's state policy in the context of ongoing aggression. It is precisely this circumstance that determines the relevance of the proposed study, aimed at bridging the existing analytical gap.

Statement of the Objective. The purpose of the study is a comprehensive analysis of European practices of shaping the security environment in the sphere of civil protection and the substantiation of conceptual directions for their implementation in the state policy of Ukraine, taking into account the specificities of domestic public administration and the security situation.

Presentation of the Main Material. The theoretical and methodological foundation of the contemporary European security model is the concept of comprehensive security, whose genesis goes back to the Northern European traditions of total defence from the 1950s, but which has acquired new significance after 2022. In its classical formulation, comprehensive security

implies the integration of military, civilian, economic, and social components into a single system in which public bodies, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, territorial communities, and individual citizens act as interconnected actors in ensuring national resilience [13]. The fundamental methodological shift lies in the reorientation from reactive emergency management towards a preventive resilience-based approach, which presupposes the capacity of a social system not only to withstand shocks but also to adapt and recover from them. In this context, the doctrine of societal resilience acquires measurable dimensions: infrastructural, institutional, informational, and socio-psychological. The evolution of the normative foundation of civil protection in the EU demonstrates a consistent deepening of supranational coordination — from the establishment of the Community Civil Protection Cooperation Mechanism in 2001 to the introduction of the rescEU reserve in 2019 as an additional layer of protection [14]. According to official data, since 2001 the Union Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated more than 830 times [14], and the coordinated response to the aggression against Ukraine constitutes the largest-scale operation in its history. Methodologically significant is also the transition from fragmented sectoral regulation to integrated risk management plans covering the full cycle of an emergency: prevention — preparedness — response — recovery. In public administration terminology, this means a transition from a hierarchical-bureaucratic model to a networked co-governance model, in which horizontal coordination between levels of authority and between sectors becomes the defining factor of effectiveness [15]. An important conceptual contribution is also the "between peace and war" doctrine, which records the new reality of permanent hybrid tension and demands the abandonment of the binary division into peacetime and wartime in favour of graduated readiness regimes [16].

The theoretical framework thus formulated gains substantive content through the analysis of reform initiatives in Eastern EU countries, which have become the most representative examples of responses to the new security reality. The Republic of Poland, being an EU member state with the longest shared border with Ukraine, carried out the most far-reaching reform of its civil

protection system. On 5 December 2024, the Sejm adopted the Law "On Civil Protection and Civil Defence," which entered into force on 1 January 2025 and which experts characterise as the most significant transformation of Poland's security legislation in recent decades [17]. The new law consolidated previously fragmented powers contained in numerous regulatory acts into a single system, integrating planning, financing, the infrastructure of protective shelters, and public education into a coherent mechanism. The key innovative element is the flexible architecture of the system: under peacetime conditions a civil protection regime operates, which upon the introduction of martial law automatically transforms into a civil defence regime [17]. The head of the system is the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration, who simultaneously fulfils the functions of the Commander-in-Chief of Civil Defence. Particularly important is the financial constitutionalisation: the law enshrines the annual allocation of at least 0.3% of GDP for civil protection and defence needs [18]. According to official data, the Polish emergency response system relies on 16,000 units of the Voluntary Fire Service and 5,000 operational units of the State Fire Service [19], attesting to a substantial level of civil society engagement. A distinct element of the reform is the population autonomy standard — citizens are recommended to maintain supplies for three days of independent survival without state assistance [19]. This approach replicates the Finnish "72-hour" model and is part of the broader philosophy of citizen agency within the security system.

Similar trends are observed in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which after 2022 accelerated the formation of a total defence model. On 6 November 2023, Lithuania adopted a new National Defence Plan defining armed defence, mobilisation, and the organisation of civilian resistance as three core elements of the system [20]. On 5 October 2023, Latvia approved a new National Defence Concept built on four strategic lines: deterrence, defence capability, resilience, and the will to defend the state [20]. Of particular interest is the Estonian comprehensive security model (riigikaitse), which integrates defence education into school curricula, operates the "Ready Together" platform, conducts cyber call-up of digital specialists, and mobilises volunteers through the Defence League (Kaitseliit) [21]. A significant element of the Baltic model is the territorial

defence formations — the Estonian Kaitseliit, the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, and the Latvian Zemessardze — which function as a bridge between civil society and armed structures [21]. In January 2024, the Defence Ministers of the three states decided to construct the Baltic Defence Line, combining military engineering structures with integrated civil protection [22]. The Czech Republic, for its part, demonstrates a mature model of the Integrated Rescue System (Integrovaný záchranný systém — IZS), which unites the Fire and Rescue Corps, emergency medical services, the police, and other forces into a single coordination structure. This system has been functioning for more than two decades and is an example of effective horizontal inter-agency coordination.

At the EU scale, the European dimension of the response is also significant: according to data as of February 2026, more than 157,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid had been delivered to Ukraine under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, nearly 4,800 patients had been evacuated for treatment in European hospitals, and more than 9,500 generators had been transferred [23; 24]. At the end of 2025, an unprecedented operation to relocate a complete thermal power plant from Lithuania to Ukraine was carried out [24]. These figures illustrate not only the volumes of assistance but also the existence of a functional supranational coordination infrastructure to which Ukraine has full access as a participating state of the mechanism. As of 2024, in the Baltic and Northern European countries a significant financial strengthening of civil protection is observed: Sweden allocated an additional 35.7 billion Swedish kronor (approximately €3.4 billion) for civil defence through 2030, and Finland substantially increased budgetary appropriations for 2026–2029 [25]. These investments confirm that the European consensus on the priority of the civilian component of security is not declaratory but materially substantiated.

The projection of the analysed experience onto Ukrainian realities reveals both points of convergence and fundamental particularities. Ukraine already possesses a basic legal and regulatory foundation — the Civil Protection Code of Ukraine of 2012, the updated National Security Strategy, a number of subordinate legislation governing the activities of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine [26]. At the same time, the ongoing full-scale war has exposed systemic limitations: insufficient integration between various actors of the

security sector, fragmentation of protective shelters, a weak population autonomy standard, limited engagement of the private sector in resilience planning, underdeveloped culture of voluntary participation, lack of systemic investment in strategic communications and countering disinformation.

The experience of Poland points to the advisability of consolidating the regulatory framework into a single framework law integrating civil protection and civil defence with the possibility of a smooth transition between regimes. The Baltic model demonstrates the critical role of territorial voluntary formations, which in the Ukrainian context could be developed through the reform of the Territorial Defence Forces with a strengthening of the civilian component and integration with local self-government bodies. The Finnish-Polish population autonomy standard (72 hours without external assistance) should be established as an official recommendation with appropriate educational support — through public information campaigns, school programmes, and methodological materials for households. Estonia's experience of digitalising operational coordination and cyber call-up is particularly relevant given the high level of development of the Ukrainian IT sector. The Czech IZS model can serve as a benchmark for deepening inter-agency coordination in Ukraine on the basis of a unified operations centre. In the area of financial provision, the Polish approach is worth considering — the legislative enshrinement of a minimum annual civil protection funding level as a defined share of GDP, which would ensure predictability and independence from current political circumstances. Finally, Ukraine's participation in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism opens opportunities for deeper integration into European response plans, logistical hubs (already operational in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia [23]), ERCC training programmes, and expertise exchange within the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP). It is important that all the aforementioned directions of implementation be aligned with the Ukraine Facility instrument of up to €50 billion for 2024–2027 [27], which provides for the financing of reforms within the framework of the European integration process and can serve as the resource base for modernising the civil protection system. In the public administration dimension, the key is a shift of emphasis from hierarchical administration to networked coordination involving

local self-government bodies — which during the war have demonstrated a high level of operational capacity — business structures ensuring the functioning of critical infrastructure, and non-governmental organisations carrying a significant burden in the spheres of humanitarian assistance and psychosocial support. Methodologically, such a transition means the institutionalisation of the principle of shared responsibility and the development of horizontal interaction mechanisms at all levels — from the central to the community level.

Conclusions. The conducted study of the European experience of shaping the security environment in the sphere of civil protection and emergency management makes it possible to formulate a number of generalising conclusions. The contemporary European security model underwent a fundamental transformation after 2022, transitioning from a fragmented sectoral approach to an integrated paradigm of comprehensive security that unites military, civilian, infrastructural, and social dimensions into a single continuum of resilience. The Eastern Flank countries of the European Union — Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Czech Republic — demonstrated examples of systemic reforms, the most illustrative of which are the Polish Law "On Civil Protection and Civil Defence" of 5 December 2024, the Baltic concepts of total defence, and the Baltic Defence Line as the materialisation of the principle of strategic resilience. The shared methodological features of these reforms are the consolidation of the regulatory framework, the legislative enshrinement of minimum funding levels, the institutionalisation of population autonomy standards, the development of voluntary formations, the integration of civil-military coordination, and the digitalisation of operational processes.

For the state policy of Ukraine, the identified experience is of priority significance in several dimensions: the normative-legal dimension — through the advisability of developing updated framework legislation synthesising the norms of civil protection and civil defence with flexible transition regimes; the institutional dimension — by strengthening horizontal coordination between the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, the Territorial Defence Forces, local self-government bodies, and the non-governmental sector; the financial dimension — through the introduction of a legislatively guaranteed minimum

level of funding for the civil protection system; and the social dimension — by implementing a household autonomy standard, developing educational programmes, and establishing strategic communications. The practical implementation of these directions should rely on the resource possibilities of the Ukraine Facility and the instruments of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, of which Ukraine has been a full participant since April 2023. At the same time, the adaptation of European practices requires consideration of the unique Ukrainian context — the ongoing full-scale aggression, which simultaneously represents both a challenge and a source of unprecedented empirical experience relevant to the entire European space. Prospects for further scholarly inquiry are associated with the development of specific models of institutional reform, the evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented mechanisms, and the study of opportunities for transferring Ukraine's experience of responding to hybrid and military threats to partner EU states.

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