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**STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN FOREIGN TRADE WITH EU COUNTRIES
IN THE CONTEXT OF DEEPENING ECONOMIC INTEGRATION:
REGIONAL DIMENSION**

**СТРУКТУРНІ ЗМІНИ ЗОВНІШНЬОЇ ТОРГІВЛІ З КРАЇНАМИ ЄС
В УМОВАХ ПОГЛИБЛЕННЯ ЕКОНОМІЧНОЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ:
РЕГІОНАЛЬНИЙ ВИМІР**

The article is devoted to the assessment of structural shifts in foreign trade with the EU using the example of the Lviv region and to substantiating promising directions for the development of the region's foreign trade. An analysis of the region's foreign trade with EU member states was conducted. The main partner countries (EU members) of the region in commodity exports and imports were identified, as well as the main commodity groups in the foreign trade of the Lviv region with these countries. An analysis of the mutual influence of exports and imports of the Lviv region with EU partners was carried out. The key characteristics of the region's current foreign trade were identified. The main barriers to the development of foreign trade in the Lviv region were highlighted. The prospects for the development of foreign trade in the Lviv region were outlined, in particular in the context of deepening European and economic integration.

Keywords: *foreign trade, foreign economic activity, export, import, economic integration.*

Стаття присвячена оцінюванню структурних зрушень зовнішньої торгівлі з ЄС на прикладі Львівської області як зовнішньоорієнтованого регіону та обґрунтуванню перспективних напрямів розвитку його зовнішньої торгівлі. Розглянуто загальні зрушення зовнішньої торгівлі України, особливості формування сучасної експортної моделі. Наголошено на трансформації характеру торговельних відносин з країнами-членами ЄС, особливо в умовах воєнного стану. Зазначено, що сучасні геополітичні економічні та військові виклики актуалізують участь регіонів у світових торговельних процесах як важливих учасників зовнішньоекономічної діяльності. Проведено аналіз загальної зовнішньої торгівлі товарами Львівської області та зовнішньої торгівлі з країнами-членами ЄС, а також сальдо зовнішньої торгівлі області з ЄС. Виділено найбільші країни-партнери (члени ЄС) регіону у товарному експорті та імпорті, а також найбільші товарні групи у зовнішній торгівлі Львівської області з цими країнами. Показано зростання ролі переробної промисловості та аграрного сектору на фоні збереження значної частки сировинної продукції та значну імпорتنу енергетичну залежність. Проведено аналіз взаємного впливу експорту та імпорту товарів Львівської області з партнерами з ЄС шляхом використання мови програмування python. Доведено сильний позитивний зв'язок між вказаними показниками – зміни в експорті зазвичай супроводжуються подібними змінами в імпорті. З'ясовано основні ключові характеристики сучасної зовнішньої

торгівлі регіону – нерівномірне зростання, диверсифікація, циклічність, європейська спрямованість, негативне сальдо. Виокремлено основні сучасні бар'єри для розвитку зовнішньої торгівлі Львівщини – нетарифні та логістичні обмеження, структурні проблеми економіки, залежність від зовнішньої кон'юнктури. Окреслено перспективи розвитку зовнішньої торгівлі для суб'єктів Львівської області, зокрема у контексті поглиблення європейської та економічної інтеграції та партнерства, розвитку логістики, активізації зовнішньоекономічної діяльності, залучення іноземних інвестицій.

Ключові слова: зовнішня торгівля, зовнішньоекономічна діяльність, експорт, імпорт, економічна інтеграція.

Problem statement. The deepening of integration processes generates new opportunities for increasing the volume of foreign trade, diversifying the commodity structure, and enhancing the competitiveness of domestic companies' products. At the same time, such processes are accompanied by challenges related to the need to adapt to European quality standards, increased competition in external markets, changes in logistics chains, and the influence of geopolitical factors. For the Lviv region, as one of the key export-oriented regions of Ukraine, it is important to assess the dynamics and structure of foreign trade with the EU, identify barriers, and determine promising directions for the development of the region's foreign trade. The relevance of the study is strengthened under martial law conditions, when the reorientation of trade flows toward the European direction has become extremely important for ensuring the economic resilience of the region and the country as a whole.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In the process of examining shifts in the geographical structure of Ukraine's foreign trade, domestic experts distinguish several stages; the current stage, as they note, is characterized by the complete loss of the Russian and Belarusian markets, a temporary transport blockade of seaports, the removal of residual trade barriers by the EU, and the organization of solidarity routes to ensure the transit of domestic goods through European territory, unprecedented logistical difficulties, etc. [5].

M. Nepran notes clear changes in Ukraine's foreign trade in 2025; in particular, Ukrainian exports have shifted from survival to conscious adaptation, when the state and business began to consider exports as a systemic element of foreign policy. The export policy model is described as more mature, where the use of customs instruments has become a mechanism for supporting domestic producers and stimulating internal processing (the added value of exported products is gaining importance). It is also emphasized that the nature of relations with EU member states has transformed, with partnership shifting from the political sphere to the plane of balancing interests [2].

M. Shuba and V. Tymofieieva emphasize the importance of Ukraine's internal potential for integration into global value chains and the world economic space. The scholars note the existence of Ukraine's comparative advantages in raw materials and semi-finished goods commodity groups. Under wartime conditions, a change in the structure of foreign

trade is observed, when the share of trade with the EU has increased, the commodity structure of exports has changed through an increase in the share of agricultural and food products and a decrease in the share of metals, and the importance of fuel imports has increased [6]. In conditions of global instability, economic competition, geopolitical threats, and the Russian-Ukrainian war, the issue of regional participation in international trade processes as the main actors of foreign economic activity becomes actualized. The analysis of changes in foreign trade with EU countries makes it possible to formulate substantiated recommendations for improving the efficiency of foreign economic activity of entities in the Lviv region and facilitates the integration of the region into the European economic space.

Purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to assess structural shifts in foreign trade with the EU using the example of the Lviv region and to determine promising directions for the development of the region's foreign trade in the context of European and economic integration.

Presentation of the main research material. The main trends in Ukraine's foreign trade demonstrate geographical diversification and reorientation toward EU markets, the growing role of agricultural exports, dependence on imports, diversification of logistics routes, development of service exports, search for new sales markets, and adaptation to wartime conditions. The need to study Ukraine's current foreign trade position is associated with its status as a candidate for EU membership, the need to fulfill European integration obligations regarding the harmonization of legislation, the development of trade relations with EU member states, sectoral integration into the internal European market, and partnership in key programs [4, p. 324].

The study of changes in exports and imports with EU countries under conditions of deepening economic integration is particularly relevant for the Lviv region, as it has a favorable border location, developed transport and logistics infrastructure, and established trade and economic ties with European Union countries. Trends in changes in the volume of trade in goods by business entities of the Lviv region reproduce nationwide directions and have a cyclical nature (Fig. 1); in general, trade experienced both recovery after 2016 and stabilization after 2022.

Foreign trade in goods of business entities of the Lviv region after 2017 demonstrates growth, but

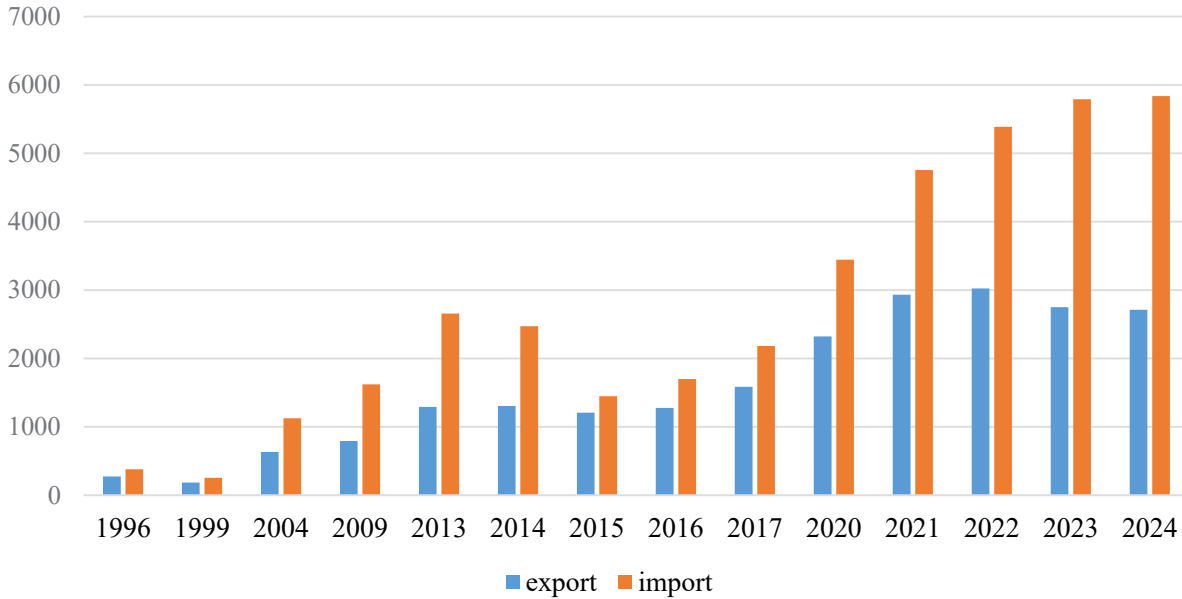


Fig. 1. Total export and import of foreign trade in goods of the Lviv region, million USD.

Constructed based on data from the Main Department of Statistics in the Lviv region [3]

uneven, when imports grow significantly faster than exports (Fig. 2). This indicates an intensification of foreign economic activity, but with a bias toward imports.

In general, the region’s foreign trade is diversified, but the Lviv region has a clear European integration

orientation, with about 89–83% of exports directed to EU countries (Fig. 3).

The trend of increasing dependence on imports can be observed when examining the dynamics of the balance of mutual trade in goods, which has always remained negative (Fig. 4).

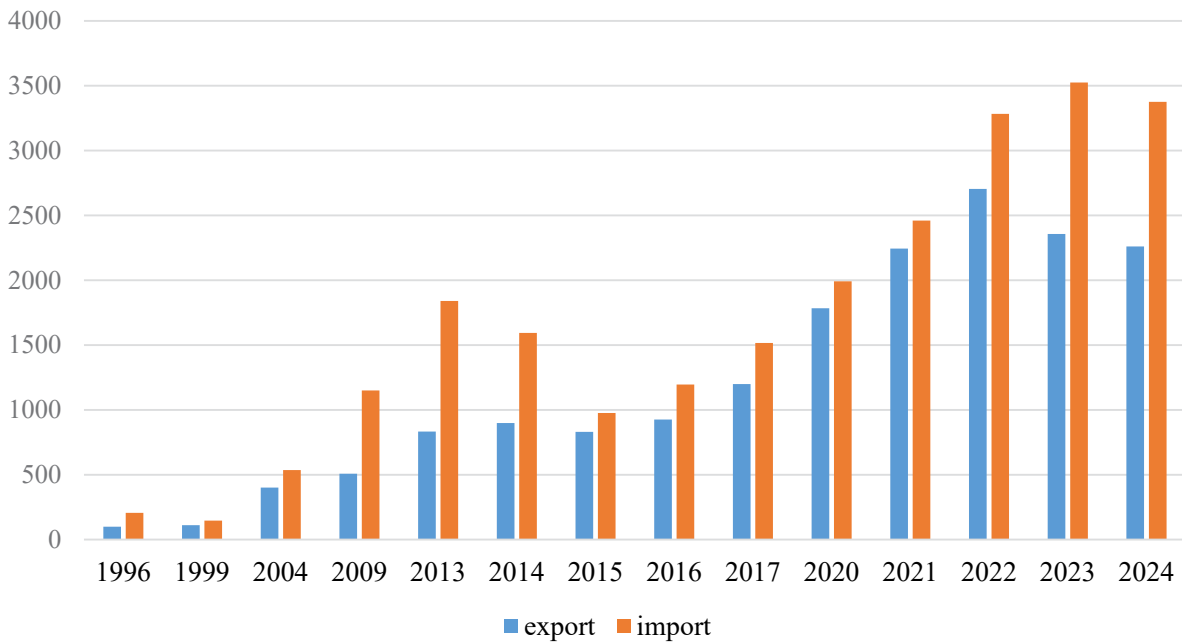


Fig. 2. Export and import of foreign trade in goods of the Lviv region with EU member states, million USD

Constructed based on data from the Main Department of Statistics in the Lviv region [3]

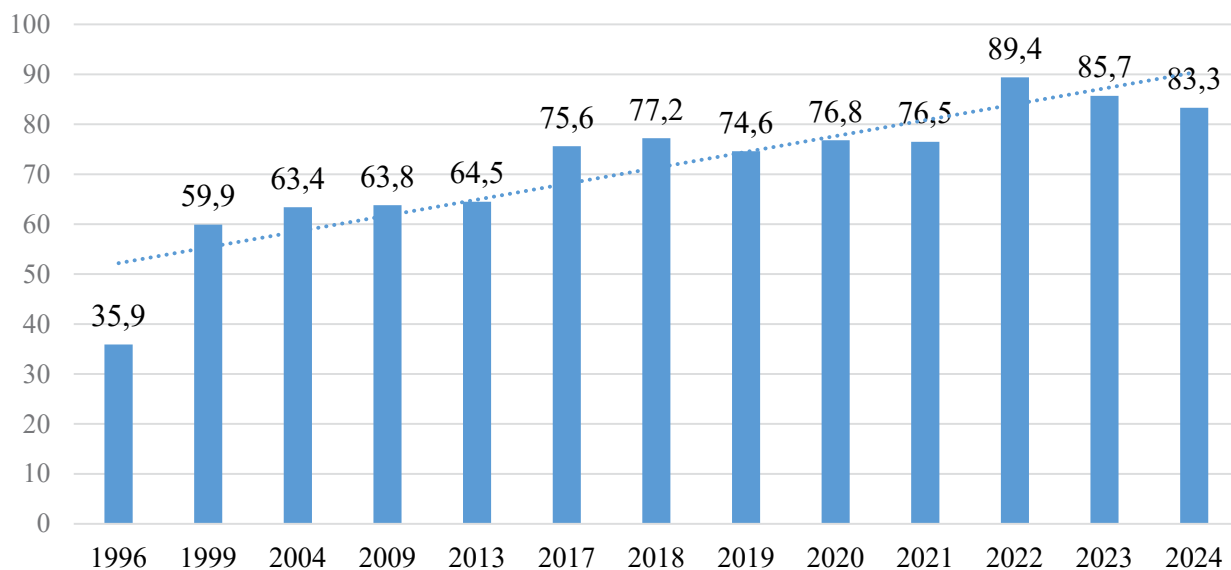


Fig. 3. Export of goods from the Lviv region to EU member states, %

Constructed based on data from the Main Department of Statistics in the Lviv region [3]

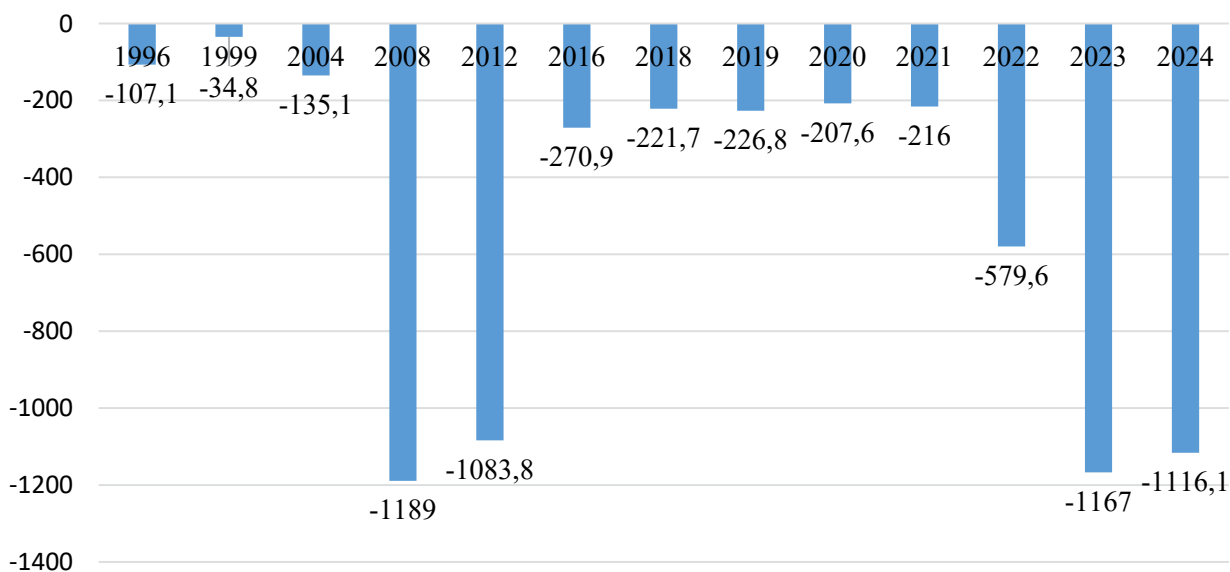


Fig. 4. Balance of foreign trade in goods of the Lviv region with EU member states, million USD

Constructed based on data from the Main Department of Statistics in the Lviv region [3]

In general, a significant share of the region's imports is concentrated in several countries (Poland, Germany, China), which indicates a risk of dependence on individual markets. In 2024, the largest importers of goods to the Lviv region from EU countries are Poland (22.78% of the total volume), Germany (8.71%), Romania (3.42%), Italy (2.97%), Greece (2.58%), the Czech Republic (2.58%), Lithuania (2.15%), and the Netherlands (1.84%). At the same time, the largest

domestic supplies from the Lviv region are directed to Poland (26.24% of the total volume), Germany (15.45%), the Czech Republic (6.9%), Denmark (4.33%), Slovakia (3.56%), the Netherlands (3.43%), Spain (3.35%), Italy (2.7%), and Romania (2.47%) (Table 1).

The list of the region's main trading partner countries within the EU also remained mostly traditional both before the start of the war in 2021 and thereafter (Table 2).

Table 1

Largest partner countries (EU members) of the Lviv region in goods export and import in 2024

Export			Import		
country	thousand USD	%	country	thousand USD	%
Poland	711783,0	26,24	Poland	1329969,9	22,78
Germany	419142,8	15,45	Germany	508733,4	8,71
Czech Republic	187310,5	6,90	Romania	199739,5	3,42
Denmark	117527,9	4,33	Italy	173712,7	2,97
Slovakia	96628,1	3,56	Greece	150723,7	2,58
Netherlands	93153,4	3,43	Czech Republic	150723,1	2,58
Spain	91023,1	3,35	Lithuania	125728,2	2,15
Italy	73246,4	2,70	Netherlands	107630,0	1,84
Romania	67062,0	2,47	Great Britain	93842,6	1,60
France	63164,4	0,32	Slovakia	89674,9	1,53
Austria	62502,3	2,30	Austria	85460,5	1,46
Hungary	62313,1	2,29	Sweden	76240,1	1,300
Belgium	50656,7	1,86	Spain	72870,2	1,24

Constructed based on data from the Main Department of Statistics in the Lviv region [3]

Table 2

Largest partner countries (EU members) of the Lviv region in commodity export and import in 2021

Export			Import		
country	thousand USD	%	country	thousand USD	%
Poland	741361,4	25,28	Poland	871636,4	18,32
Germany	354702,8	12,09	Germany	466084,0	9,80
Czech Republic	204637,3	6,97	Czech Republic	156030,6	3,28
Denmark	175396,7	5,98	Italy	152074,9	3,19
Hungary	141411,5	4,82	Lithuania	99041,0	2,08
Slovakia	123608,4	4,21	Denmark	84780,4	1,78
Romania	77735,8	2,65	Hungary	82853,2	1,74
Netherlands	67909,9	2,31	Slovakia	78346,3	1,64
Austria	67430,6	2,29	Austria	72546,2	1,52
Belgium	45139,3	1,53	Netherlands	72009,8	1,51
France	44000,1	1,50	Spain	71712,5	1,50
Italy	39435,5	1,34	Great Britain	61967,7	1,30
Spain	34310,0	1,17	Romania	47851,3	1,00
Lithuania	33083,6	1,12	France	43817,3	0,92

Constructed based on data from the Main Department of Statistics in the Lviv region [3]

In the export of the Lviv region to the EU in 2024, machinery, equipment and mechanisms; electrical equipment; products of plant origin; prepared food products; fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin dominated. Certain of the indicated goods groups, in particular fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin and prepared food products, showed growth in exports compared to the previous period. The trend proves the increasing role of the processing industry and the agro-industrial complex against the background of maintaining a significant share of raw materials.

In 2024, the structure of imports of goods to the Lviv region from EU countries was dominated by: mineral products; machinery, equipment and mechanisms; electrical equipment; means of land transport, aircraft,

and floating vessels; textile materials and textile products; products of plant origin (Table 3). A dependence on imports of energy resources and machinery can be observed. Among the goods whose import volume increased in the current period, it is worth noting the group "Means of land transport, aircraft, and floating vessels" (from 4.3% to 11.5%).

Let us conduct an analysis of the mutual influence of exports and imports of goods of the Lviv region with EU member states using the Python programming language. Based on the results of data analysis from data.csv, it was established that there is a very strong positive relationship between export and import indicators: the correlation between them is 0.9273. This means that the movement of indicators occurs in the following

Table 3

Largest commodity groups in the foreign trade of the Lviv region with EU countries in 2024

HS code and description of goods according to UKTZED	Export		Import	
	thousand USD	% of the total volume	thousand USD	% of the total volume
I Living animals; products of animal origin	58968,5	2,2	142599,5	2,4
II Products of plant origin	387753,1	14,3	369867,4	6,3
III Fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin	350358,2	12,9	6394,3	0,1
IV Prepared food products	352239,9	13,0	229117,3	3,9
V Mineral products	16474,5	0,6	1469689,3	25,2
VI Products of the chemical and related industries	23755,9	0,9	306099,4	5,2
VII Polymers, plastics and articles thereof	18508,3	0,7	362948,6	6,2
VIII Raw hides and skins, leather	50499,0	1,9	89790,7	1,5
IX Wood and articles of wood	223231,2	8,2	22168,6	0,4
X Pulp of wood or of other fibrous cellulosic materials	78340,4	2,9	137503,2	2,4
XI Textiles and textile articles	164157,3	6,1	556387,6	9,5
XIII Articles of stone, plaster, cement	21180,1	0,8	77260,1	1,3
XV Base metals and articles of base metals	67360,8	2,5	334094,8	5,7
XVI Machinery, equipment and mechanical appliances; electrical equipment	471259,1	17,4	797950,4	13,7
XVII Means of land transport, aircraft, and floating vessels	31462,1	1,2	671701,1	11,5
XX. Miscellaneous industrial goods	376437,0	13,9	93534,5	1,6

Constructed based on data from the Main Department of Statistics in the Lviv region [3]

direction: an increase in exports is usually accompanied by an increase in imports.

The regression model of imports as a function of exports has the following form:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Import} &= 1,1744 * \text{Export} + 299,69 \\ R^2 &= 0,8599 \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

This model shows that with an increase in exports by 1 million USD, imports increase on average by approximately 1.174 million USD. The positive coefficient and high R^2 value indicate a close linear relationship between these indicators.

In turn, the regression model of exports as a function of imports has the following form:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Export} &= 0,7322 * \text{Import} - 96,72 \\ R^2 &= 0,8599 \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

In this direction, the model shows that with an increase in imports by 1 million USD, exports increase by approximately 0.732 million USD. The R^2 value also indicates a good fit of the linear model to the data.

Thus, exports and imports have a strong positive relationship. This means that changes in exports are usually accompanied by similar changes in imports. The linear model, where imports depend on exports, has a high explanatory value ($R^2 = 0.8599$), which allows considering the relationship statistically stable for the given dataset. The two constructed models yield identical R^2 values, confirming the symmetry of

the relationship between exports and imports in the sample.

As it seems, the main barriers to foreign trade of the Lviv region with the EU are revealed in the presence of non-tariff restrictions, primarily complex EU requirements for quality, certification, and product safety; logistical constraints, in particular congestion at border crossing points, increased costs and delivery time; a significant share of raw material exports and a limited share of products with high added value; structural trade imbalances, when imports from the EU consistently exceed exports and form a significant negative balance; dependence on external markets and conditions; the negative impact of martial law. Thus, the main barriers are related to non-compliance with EU standards, logistics, institutional difficulties, and structural problems of the regional economy.

M. Harasyliuk and K. Olekh see prospects for the development of Ukraine's foreign trade with the EU in light of improving the qualitative level of communication with European partners, active representation of the interests of Ukrainian stakeholders in the negotiation process, and the activities of public organizations and institutions in lobbying the interests of Ukrainian entrepreneurs and developing export industries [1, p. 45].

Prospects for the development of foreign trade of the Lviv region are associated with deepening economic integration with the EU, which will ensure growth in

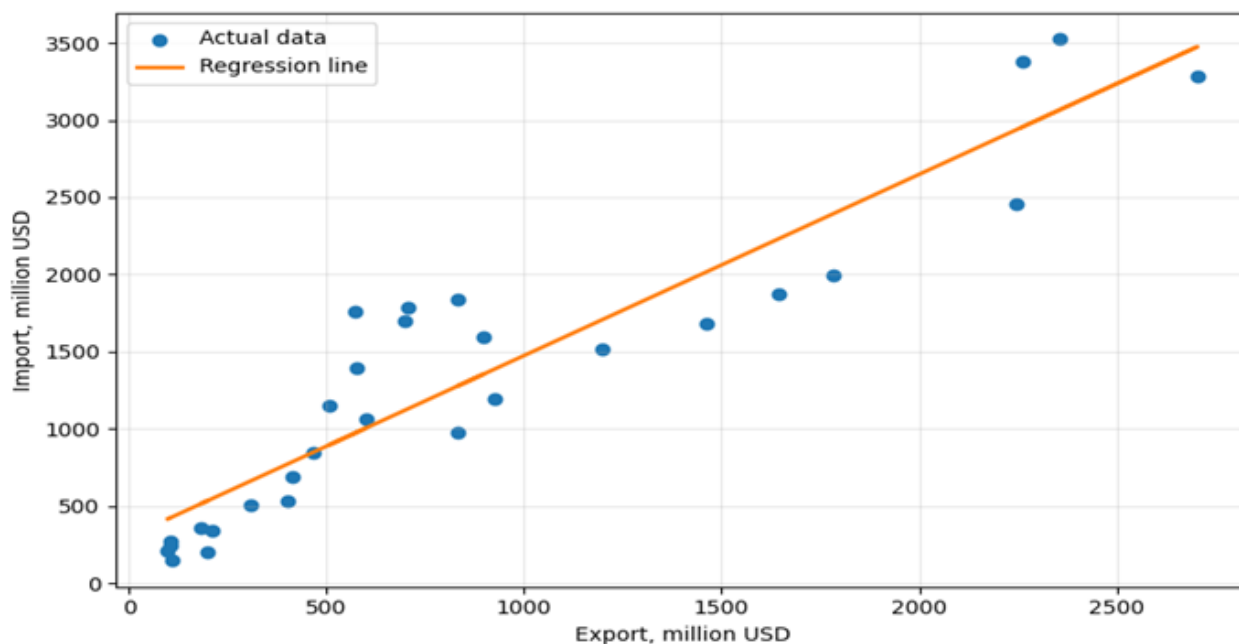


Fig. 5. Mutual dependence of imports and exports of goods of the Lviv region with EU countries

product exports, simplification of access to European markets, and harmonization of standards; growth of export potential in promising areas; development of logistics and transport infrastructure, where the Lviv region is considered as a logistics hub between Ukraine and the EU and a center of international transportation; attraction of foreign investments, which will make it possible to ensure the opening of new production facilities, development of export-oriented enterprises, and full integration into global value-added chains.

Conclusions. Today, in light of modern challenges, Ukraine has begun to build its foreign economic policy not only as a response to crisis phenomena, but as a system for implementing balanced decisions in logistics, trade, and protection of domestic producers. The Lviv region, due to its favorable border location and developed transport and logistics infrastructure, forms strong trade and economic ties with European Union countries. The foreign trade of the Lviv region

generally has a cyclical nature and demonstrates uneven growth during the modern period with a bias toward imports. The Lviv region is also characterized by a clear European integration orientation, with more than 80% of exports directed to EU countries. The main trading partners of the region among EU countries are Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

In the exports of the Lviv region, products of plant origin; prepared food products; fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin prevail, while in imports – mineral products; machinery, equipment and mechanisms; electrical equipment, etc. Exports and imports of goods of the Lviv region with EU countries are characterized by a mutual positive dependence. In the future, the foreign trade of the Lviv region tends to grow due to European integration, development of logistics, and foreign economic activity. However, the key task is to increase the competitiveness of products and the share of goods with high added value, which will reduce the trade deficit and ensure stable development.

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