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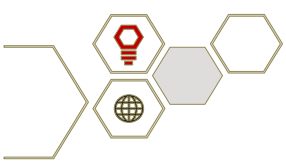
**Origins of the Establishment of the Politico-Legal Basis for Relations
between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania (1989–1994)**

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Abstract. The relevance of this study stems from the need for a profound understanding of the origins of the legal foundations of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations in the context of contemporary challenges associated with European integration, international cooperation, and global geopolitical transformations. In the current environment, as Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania actively counter external threats, particularly Russian aggression, and strive for deeper integration into the European legal and political space, analyzing the historical prerequisites for the development of their bilateral relations assumes particular significance. Examining the legal framework established between 1989 and 1994 enables not only an assessment of the contribution of these relations to strengthening the sovereignty of both states but also the identification of lessons for contemporary diplomacy aimed at countering hybrid threats, enhancing international security, and upholding democratic values. Furthermore, the topic's relevance is underscored by the need to refine mechanisms for legal interaction within international organizations, such as the European Union, where Ukraine and Lithuania jointly advocate for their interests.



The purpose of the article is to analyze the legal framework for the formation of bilateral relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania in 1989–1994, focusing on the legal nature, significance, and impact of key agreements on the establishment of the international legal status of both states. **The research methodology** combines historical-chronological, comparative, and systemic approaches with an interdisciplinary analysis of legal, political, and historical aspects. **The results** demonstrate that informal contacts between the People's Movement of Ukraine and the Lithuanian Sajūdis movement laid the groundwork for legally formalized bilateral relations, which facilitated the development of a legal framework for cooperation. The agreements concluded between 1991 and 1994 became the foundation for strengthening the international legal status of Ukraine and Lithuania, as well as their integration into the European legal space. **The conclusions** of the study contribute to the improvement of modern mechanisms of interstate cooperation, in particular in the field of bilateral trade, economic and legal obligations.

Keywords: Ukraine, Republic of Lithuania, international law, bilateral agreements, diplomacy, legal aid.

Витоки формування політико-правової бази між Україною і Литовською Республікою (1989–1994 рр.)

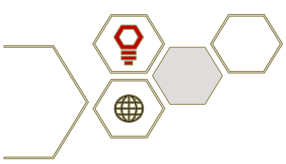
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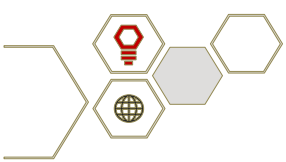
Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена необхідністю глибокого осмислення витоків правових основ українсько-литовських відносин у контексті сучасних викликів, пов'язаних із європейською інтеграцією, міжнародним співробітництвом та глобальними геополітичними трансформаціями. У



сучасних умовах, коли Україна та Литовська Республіка активно протистоять зовнішнім загрозам, зокрема російській агресії, та прагнуть до поглиблення інтеграції у європейський правовий і політичний простір, аналіз історичних передумов формування їхніх двосторонніх відносин набуває особливого значення. Вивчення правової бази, закладеної у 1989–1994 роках, дозволяє не лише оцінити внесок цих відносин у зміцнення суверенітету обох держав, але й виявити уроки для сучасної дипломатії, спрямованої на протидію гібридним загрозам, зміцнення міжнародної безпеки та підтримку демократичних цінностей. Крім того, актуальність теми посилюється потребою вдосконалення механізмів правової взаємодії в рамках міжнародних організацій, таких як Європейський Союз, де Україна та Литва спільно відстоюють свої інтереси.

Метою статті є аналіз правових засад формування двосторонніх відносин між Україною та Литовською Республікою у 1989–1994 роках, з акцентом на юридичну природу, значення та вплив ключових угод на становлення міжнародно-правового статусу обох держав. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на поєднанні історико-хронологічного, порівняльного та системного підходів з міждисциплінарним аналізом правових, політичних та історичних аспектів. **Отримані результати** свідчать, що неформальні контакти між Народним рухом України та литовським рухом «Саюдіс» заклали підґрунтя для юридично оформлених двосторонніх відносин, які сприяли формуванню правової бази співпраці. Укладені у 1991–1994 роках угоди стали основою для зміцнення міжнародно-правового статусу України та Литви, а також їхньої інтеграції до європейського правового простору. **Висновки** дослідження сприяють вдосконаленню сучасних механізмів міждержавної співпраці, зокрема у сфері двосторонніх торгово-економічних і юридичних зобов'язань.

Ключові слова: Україна, Литва, міжнародне право, двосторонні угоди, дипломатія, правова допомога.

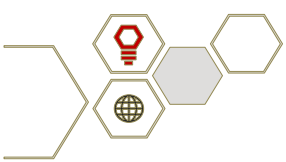


Problem statement. The formation of the politico-legal framework for Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations between 1989 and 1994 played a pivotal role in establishing both states as subjects of international law and laid the foundation for their integration into the European legal space. An analysis of the legal nature of bilateral agreements from this period provides insight into the mechanisms underpinning the development of international legal partnerships.

Societal transformations in Lithuania and Ukraine began prior to the official dissolution of the USSR, even before the declarations of independence by both nations, following the introduction of the policy of glasnost in 1987. The activation of national-political forces in Lithuania culminated in the establishment of the Lithuanian Movement for Restructuring (Sąjūdis) in 1988, while in Ukraine, the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring was formed in 1989. Consequently, the research problem lies in the need for a comprehensive analysis of the origins of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations, encompassing both informal ties at the level of civic movements and political elites during the disintegration of the USSR, as well as the process of establishing a normative-legal framework during the early years of independence of both states up to 1994, when the first convocation of Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada concluded its work.

The lack of a systematic approach to studying the early stages of the politico-legal framework's formation limits the understanding of the deeper factors that contributed to the resilience of Ukrainian-Lithuanian partnership. Thus, this research aims to address these gaps by analyzing both the ideological and practical aspects of cooperation that formed the bedrock of contemporary relations between Ukraine and Lithuania.

Analysis of recent research and publications. To investigate the origins of the formation of the politico-legal basis for relations between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic, a wide range of sources has been utilized, encompassing official documents, scholarly publications, and online resources. This combination has facilitated a comprehensive approach to analyzing the historical preconditions, political, and legal

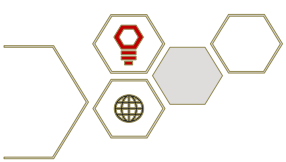


dimensions of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations during the period of their statehood formation.

Official documents form the cornerstone for studying the legal foundation of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations. These include key bilateral agreements, such as the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic dated November 21, 1991, the Treaty on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family, and Criminal Matters dated July 7, 1993, the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation dated February 8, 1994, as well as agreements on free trade and cooperation in education, science, and culture dated August 4, 1993. These documents, published on the official portal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, provide reliable information on the legal formalization of bilateral relations during the early stages of independence for both states. Additionally, the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine «On the Main Directions of Ukraine's Foreign Policy» dated July 2, 1993, elucidates the strategic priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy that contributed to the development of its partnership with Lithuania.

To establish a theoretical foundation for the study, a range of scholarly publications has been analyzed. Articles by Ya. Vizniak [26; 27] explore the historical preconditions and contemporary realities of Ukrainian-Lithuanian cooperation, emphasizing its evolution from cultural ties to strategic partnership. Ya. Bilyk [6] examined the activities of the Popular Movement of Ukraine and Lithuania's Sajūdis, highlighting their roles in state-building and the formation of shared values. T. Shulga [20] addressed Lithuania's foreign policy vector toward Ukraine in the early years of independence, while I. Turyanytsia [25] described cooperation between 1991 and 2004. A. Sorokin [21] presented materials from archival documents illustrating Ukrainian-Lithuanian ties at the regional level.

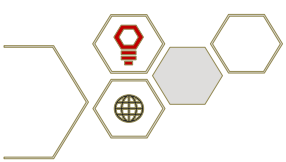
D. Juodis highlights the resilience of Lithuanian national memory in the face of Soviet ideological propaganda, which laid the groundwork for active resistance and the establishment of democratic principles in Lithuania, influencing its foreign policy, particularly in relations with Ukraine [10]. Similarly, D. Budrytė emphasizes the



solidarity between the Baltic states and Ukraine, noting the support provided by Ukrainian volunteers to Lithuanian protesters in 1991, which became a significant factor in strengthening future bilateral ties [7]. The work of A. H. Miller, W. M. Reisinger, and V. L. Hesli reveals differences in the perception of market and democratic reforms in Ukraine and Lithuania during 1992–1995, underscoring that Lithuania's experience of faster transformations served as a reference point for Ukraine in shaping politico-legal cooperation [13].

K. V. Korostelina notes that in the early 1990s, Lithuania adapted more swiftly to national-democratic transformations, while Ukraine grappled with the challenges of its Soviet legacy, which influenced the dynamics of their interaction but did not hinder constructive dialogue [11]. L. Kotsur, in turn, highlights the joint efforts of Ukraine and Lithuania in promoting cultural diversity and protecting ethnic culture, which became a vital component of their cooperation at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century [12]. O. Pohuliaiev touches on Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations through the prism of the formation of public organizations of national minorities in 1987–1994 [14].

Online resources supplement the study with up-to-date information. An article by the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory on the Founding Congress of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring in 1989 underscores the significance of national-democratic movements in shaping Ukraine's foreign policy orientations. A publication by M. Polishchuk [15] on the «Istorychna Pravda» portal offers a unique perspective from a participant in the 1991 events in Vilnius, illustrating the solidarity between Ukrainian and Lithuanian activists. J. Anderson, a correspondent for «Justiceinfo.net» in The Hague, analyzed Lithuania's role in supporting Ukraine's legal efforts on the international stage, emphasizing Lithuania's experience in investigating the January 1991 events [4]. Information from the website of the Embassy of Ukraine in the Lithuanian Republic, particularly regarding the treaty-legal framework and political relations as of 2023, provides contemporary context for the analysis of cooperation.



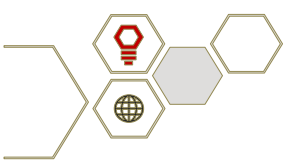
The utilized source base establishes a robust foundation for substantiating conclusions regarding the development of Ukrainian-Lithuanian partnership. No separate study specifically addressing the origins of the politico-legal basis for relations between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic has been identified.

Identification of Previously Unresolved Aspects of the General Problem.

Despite significant progress in studying the formation of the politico-legal framework for Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations in 1989–1994, several aspects remain insufficiently explored, as this period marked the establishment of statehood for both Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania. Notably, there is a lack of detailed analysis of the role of informal contacts between the People’s Movement of Ukraine and the Lithuanian Sajūdis in shaping the legal foundations of cooperation, which preceded formal agreements and played a crucial role in establishing the ideological groundwork for the treaty framework. Investigating these aspects is essential for understanding the complex nature of the Ukrainian-Lithuanian partnership and its significance for contemporary processes of European integration and countering geopolitical challenges. The early years of independence of both states have been examined superficially by researchers, yet it was during this time that an active diplomatic process laid the foundation for friendly and partnership relations between Ukraine and Lithuania.

Formulation of the Article’s Objectives (Statement of the Problem). The purpose of the article is to analyze the legal foundations of the formation of bilateral relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania in 1989–1994, with an emphasis on the legal nature, significance, and impact of key agreements on the establishment of the international legal status of both states. The study aims to elucidate how informal contacts between the People’s Movement of Ukraine and the Lithuanian Sajūdis, as well as regional initiatives, contributed to this process. The objectives of the article include:

- assessing the historical prerequisites and legal mechanisms that facilitated the formation of bilateral agreements;



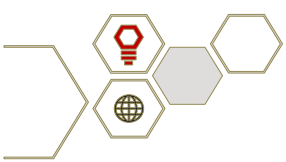
- analyzing the role of informal contacts and regional cooperation in establishing the legal framework;
- determining the practical significance of the findings for improving modern mechanisms of interstate cooperation.

The methodology of this study is grounded in a combination of several scientific approaches that enable a comprehensive analysis of the origins of the political-legal framework between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania. The historical-chronological approach was employed to establish the sequence of events and stages in the development of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations during the 1980s and 1990s, structuring the analysis into informal, normative, and culminating phases. This approach relies on the examination of primary sources, including official documents, protocols, agreements, as well as memoirs and testimonies of participants, ensuring the reliability of the historical reconstruction.

The comparative approach was utilized to juxtapose the political, legal, and social processes in Ukraine and Lithuania within the context of their struggles for independence and the formation of bilateral relations. Specifically, comparing the strategies of national liberation movements (Sąjūdis and the People's Movement of Ukraine) and their approaches to integration into the European legal space facilitated the identification of commonalities and differences that shaped the legal foundation of their cooperation.

The systemic approach was applied to analyze Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations as an integrated system encompassing political, legal, economic, and humanitarian components. This approach elucidated the interconnections between various aspects of bilateral cooperation, including informal contacts, formal agreements, and their impact on contemporary diplomacy.

An interdisciplinary analysis integrates methods from historical, legal, and political sciences, enabling a holistic examination of legal documents, their historical context, and political significance. Specifically, the analysis of bilateral agreements from 1991 to 1994 was conducted with reference to international law norms, such as



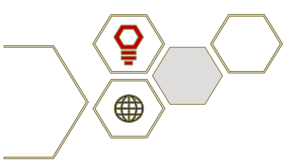
the principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Paris Charter, ensuring an assessment of their compliance with international standards. The use of archival materials, scholarly literature, and contemporary studies deepened the interpretation of events and their relevance to modern regional cooperation in the Baltic-Black Sea region.

Results and Discussion. Informal stage of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations.

The formation of the initial politico-legal basis for regulating relations between Ukraine and Lithuania can be divided into two stages: informal and normative. The first stage spans the period from March 11, 1990 (when Lithuania declared the restoration of its independence) to August 24, 1991 (when Ukraine proclaimed its independence). During this time, relations between the Lithuanian Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic developed in the context of the Soviet Union's disintegration and both republics' aspirations for independence. Among Ukraine's national-democratic forces, there was significant support for Lithuania's pursuit of independence. Ukrainian civic organizations and intellectuals expressed solidarity with the Lithuanian people in their struggle against Soviet authority. In both Lithuania and Ukraine, national liberation movements were active – namely, the Lithuanian Movement for Restructuring (Sąjūdis) in Lithuania and the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring in Ukraine – which maintained close contacts and exchanged experiences.

Prior to the declarations of independence by Ukraine and Lithuania in 1991, informal ties existed between Sąjūdis and the Popular Movement of Ukraine, including mutual support during the economic blockade of Lithuania in 1990 and exchanges of delegations. These connections laid the groundwork for the subsequent legal formalization of bilateral relations.

Lithuania's proclamation of independence on March 11, 1990, created a unique legal situation in which it considered itself a subject of international law *de jure*, while Ukraine remained part of the USSR. Economic assistance provided by Kyiv during the blockade of Lithuania can be interpreted as an act of inter-nation solidarity, though it

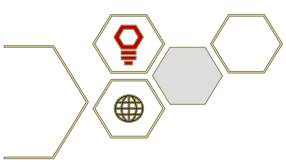


lacked the legal status of an international agreement due to the constraints of Soviet legislation.

Although cooperation between the Popular Movement of Ukraine and Sąjūdis was not institutionally formalized, it carried an ideological dimension. Both movements were grounded in the principles of national revival, democratization, and decentralization of power within the USSR. Sąjūdis, which had articulated the goal of restoring independence earlier than the Popular Movement (on February 16, 1989), served as an example for Ukrainian activists [6, p. 4]. As elements of political dialogue, these informal ties aligned with the principles of international law regarding the self-determination of peoples and the foundations of international negotiations [8].

Cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania in the early 1990s encompassed various domains, including social support and intercity connections. In the wake of the recent Chernobyl disaster, the Kyiv City Council, concerned about children's health, appealed to the Lithuanian government to arrange recuperation programs for them in Lithuanian sanatoriums and rest homes. This gesture reflects the humanitarian dimension of cooperation between the cities and a commitment to assisting the most vulnerable populations. In turn, the Lithuanian side expressed gratitude for Ukraine's support. During a March 1991 session of the Kyiv City Council, a deputy from the Vilnius City Council conveyed appreciation for the economic assistance provided by Kyiv during Lithuania's economic blockade, as well as for the political support extended to the Lithuanian authorities.

Furthermore, the Kyiv City Council initiated the establishment of sister-city relations between Kyiv and Vilnius. This step aimed to strengthen friendly ties between the two capitals, promote the exchange of expertise in various areas of municipal governance, culture, and education, and foster closer cooperation in the future. The establishment of sister-city relations represents an important form of international cooperation that enhances mutual understanding and rapprochement between peoples [21, p. 134].

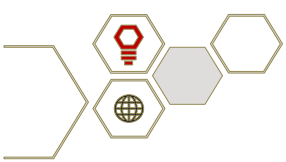


The theoretical analysis of the informal stage of Ukrainian-Lithuanian cooperation positions it as an exemplar of early inter-national solidarity amidst the disintegration of an imperial system. The examination of interactions between the People's Movement of Ukraine (Rukh) and Sąjūdis reveals that informal contacts served as a prototype for the future legal framework, rooted in shared values of self-determination and democratization. This stage illustrates how ideological alignment can compensate for the absence of formal legal mechanisms, laying the groundwork for the institutionalization of relations in the future.

On October 5, 1990, the government program of the restored Lithuanian Republic outlined the main directions of its foreign policy, prioritizing reintegration into the international community as an independent state through the signing of bilateral agreements with countries of the Soviet Union and pursuing European political integration within the framework of the Council of Europe and the European Economic Area. At the constitutional level, it was stipulated that Lithuania would not join any post-Soviet eastern alliances and would instead develop bilateral relations with each former Soviet state individually [20, pp. 32, 34].

The aforementioned Lithuanian government program faced legal uncertainties stemming from Soviet legislation. The regulations governing the foreign policy activities of Soviet republics contained contradictions: while formally permitting contacts with foreign states, they effectively subordinated such actions to the central authority of the USSR [9]. This created challenges for Lithuania, which considered itself a subject of international law, and for Ukraine, which remained part of the USSR, in developing official bilateral relations. In these circumstances, informal contacts between Lithuanian and Ukrainian national-democratic forces served as an alternative channel for interaction. Such actions aligned with the principle of self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in international law.

The ideological party nomenclature of the USSR continued its active activities until 1990, but even with the support of the «KGB» (Committee of State Security), it did not overcome the national memory of the conscious public. The distribution of

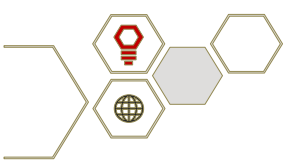


anonymous essays that justified Soviet repressions did not find support among Lithuanians [10, p. 204].

Amid the emergence of democratic movements and aspirations for independence, cooperation between Ukrainian and Lithuanian activists in the early 1990s made a significant contribution and laid the foundation for future interstate relations between Ukraine and Lithuania. In the winter of 1991, Ukrainian volunteers (whose numbers are difficult to estimate) supported Lithuanian protesters in their struggle against Soviet intervention [7, p. 85]. On January 13, Ukrainian politicians, dissidents, and writers, including Ivan Drach and Oles Honchar, spoke at a rally [15].

Lithuania's experience in prosecuting those responsible for the violence on January 13, 1991, when 14 people were killed and hundreds of protesters were injured during the struggle for independence from the Soviet Union, became a crucial element of Lithuania's national identity and legal practice. Over the decades, Lithuanian authorities persistently worked to hold those responsible accountable, accumulating significant expertise in investigation, judicial proceedings, and evidence preservation. This experience enables Lithuania to share its practices with international investigators. As a result, the Lithuanian Republic is now at the forefront of supporting Ukraine's legal efforts [4].

Normative stage of the formation of the political and legal framework between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania. Following the failure of the August Coup, the next normative stage in Lithuanian-Ukrainian relations began, characterized by the development of an initial legal framework between the two states, which was critically important for further cooperation. On August 24, 1991, the first congratulatory telegram on Ukraine's declaration of independence was received from Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Republic. Two days later, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine recognized the independence of the Lithuanian Republic, and the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Republic recognized Ukraine's independence three days after the All-Ukrainian Referendum. Diplomatic relations were officially formalized on December 12, 1991. The Embassy of the

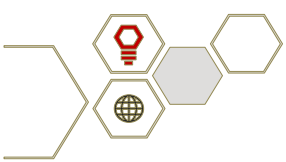


Lithuanian Republic in Ukraine was opened in August 1992, and exactly one year later, Ukraine's embassy was established in Vilnius [16]. The first representative of Lithuania in Ukraine was Virgilijus Koryzna, while Rostyslav Bilodid represented Ukraine in Lithuania [5].

Prior to Ukraine's recognition of independence, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries signed the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic on November 21, 1991, guided by the principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. The purpose of the Protocol was to enhance the quality of political, trade, economic, and cultural ties between the two countries. The parties agreed to establish diplomatic relations and exchange diplomatic missions at the embassy level [19, p. 62; 17]. Over the next two years, interactions were established between ministries, agencies, state institutions, cultural organizations, and educational establishments.

On July 2, 1993, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Resolution "On the Main Directions of Ukraine's Foreign Policy". While the pro-European vector was given significant attention, it was not the primary focus due to cautious relations with the Russian Federation. Both Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic had to balance between the «West» and the «East» on the international stage. According to the resolution, all states were divided into four priority groups, with bordering countries included in the first group [26, p. 126; 18]. Nevertheless, this did not hinder the establishment of the first legally formalized contacts between Ukraine and Lithuania prior to this period, with continued activity until the resolution of the «nuclear issue».

In July 1993, Leonid Kuchma, then Prime Minister of Ukraine, made the first high-level visit to Lithuania, during which a series of intergovernmental agreements were signed on cooperation in the fields of transport, communications, international transportation, air transport, customs, science, culture, and non-commercial payments [20, p. 34]. Among these, in pursuit of aligning national legislation with pro-European standards, the Treaty between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family, and Criminal Matters was signed in

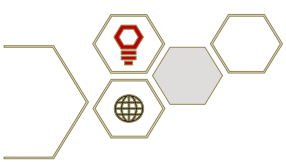


Vilnius on July 7, 1993. Comprising three parts and 68 articles, the treaty was ratified on December 17 of the same year. It established the right of citizens of one state to freely and without obstacles access the courts, prosecutor's offices, and notarial services of the other state in matters related to civil, family, and criminal cases, enjoying the same legal protections for their personal and property rights as citizens of the host state [22].

Citizens of Ukraine and Lithuania were granted a legal status closely aligned with that of citizens of the host state in terms of access to justice. Bureaucratic and legal barriers that could previously have impeded the realization of citizens' rights – such as in inheritance matters, family disputes, or property rights protection – were minimized. In criminal matters, this included procedures for providing legal assistance in investigative actions and extradition.

In the summer of 1993, Lithuanian Prime Minister Adolfas Šleževičius visited Kyiv. During this official visit, on August 4, two agreements essential for both Lithuania and Ukraine were signed. The Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Lithuanian Republic on Free Trade, comprising 18 articles, aimed to foster trade and economic cooperation based on equality and mutual benefit. It provided for the elimination of customs duties, taxes, and fees on the export and import of goods originating from the territories of the parties, except for a mutually agreed nomenclature outlined in a separate protocol. The agreement established rules of origin for goods, prohibited discriminatory taxes or restrictions, ensured unimpeded transit, and regulated re-export, creating a bilateral Commission to address disputes and enhance trade [2].

This treaty marked a qualitative leap in the formation of the legal framework for economic relations between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic. It went beyond a mere cooperation agreement, establishing a comprehensive legal regime aimed at integrating the economic space. The practical significance of the rules of origin lay in preventing the potential re-export of third-party goods through the territory of one party to evade customs duties, which could distort the market and harm national economies.

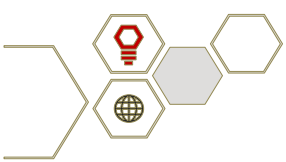


The Commission effectively served as a guarantor, providing an institutionalized forum for discussing and resolving potential legal conflicts or discrepancies that might arise in the application of the agreement's provisions. This underscored the parties' intent not only to sign a document but also to ensure its effective and legally robust operation in the long term.

The cooperation between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania in the early 1990s unfolded amid complex democratic and economic transformations. As noted by A. Miller, W. Reisinger, and V. Hesli, between 1992 and 1995, Lithuania exhibited a higher level of support for market reforms compared to Ukraine, which grappled with significant economic challenges. This divergence in the perception of market principles underscores the importance of Lithuania's experience for Ukraine [13, pp. 345–346].

Additionally, the Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Lithuanian Republic on Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Science, and Culture was signed, comprising 16 articles. The agreement was set for a five-year term with automatic renewal for subsequent five-year periods unless either party notified the other of its intent to terminate [3]. It provided for the establishment of direct ties between ministries of education and science, educational institutions, the development of joint research projects, and exchanges of graduate students and academic specialists. The agreement also established a framework for interaction between cultural institutions to promote folk festivals, film weeks, and national culture days in Ukraine and Lithuania [27, p. 38].

Despite its humanitarian character, the Agreement has deep normative-legal roots and significant importance. It should not be viewed as a declarative document but rather as a classic example of a «framework» type international agreement that establishes the legal basis for further differentiation and specification of cooperation. Its provisions created a legal environment for the implementation of numerous programs, projects, and initiatives carried out at the level of individual agencies and institutions. The clause on automatic renewal, in the absence of denunciation, is fundamental from the perspective of the principle of stability in international treaty

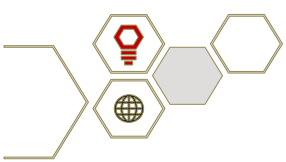


law. It ensured legal predictability and continuity of cooperation, minimizing the risks of political fluctuations and demonstrating the parties' long-term strategic commitment to developing not only bilateral but also broader European humanitarian ties.

From a theoretical perspective, the normative stage of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations demonstrates how post-Soviet states leveraged international law to assert their sovereignty amid legal uncertainty. The analysis of the signed agreements, particularly those on legal assistance and free trade, underscores their role not only as instruments of bilateral cooperation but also as facilitators of broader integration into the European legal space. These agreements embodied the principle of sovereign equality of states, as enshrined in the UN Charter, and established a foundation for harmonizing national legislation with international standards.

It is noteworthy that cooperation between Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania in the early 1990s unfolded amidst significant differences in their state-building processes. While Lithuania progressively advanced national-democratic transformations, forging a clear vision of national identity, Ukrainian authorities grappled with the challenges of adapting the Soviet legacy. Nevertheless, despite these disparities, official-level cooperation proved constructive, facilitating the exchange of experiences in post-Soviet transformations for both states [11, p. 40].

The culmination of the formalization of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations. A pivotal document, signed by Presidents Algirdas Brazauskas and Leonid Kravchuk in Vilnius on February 8, 1994, and registered with the UN Secretariat, is the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic, comprising 29 articles. The parties committed to resolving potential disputes exclusively through peaceful means, guided by the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The treaty established essential foundational norms for cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania in the fields of economy, trade, communications, transport, culture, science, and healthcare [23].



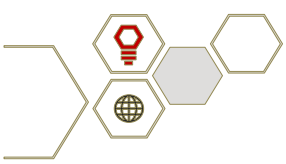
The Ukrainian-Lithuanian agreement not only marked the culmination of the early stage of bilateral relations between the two states from 1989 to 1994 but also served as a comprehensive foundational document that solidified their strategic partnership amid post-Soviet transformation. The treaty laid the groundwork for the peaceful resolution of potential disputes, which was innovative for a region where borders and statehood remained subjects of intense debate. Furthermore, the agreement facilitated the institutionalization of bilateral relations, creating a legal framework for subsequent specialized agreements that detailed cooperation in specific areas.

The parties agreed to ensure the rights of national minorities in both countries. Article 6 of the Treaty guarantees the Lithuanian minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minority in Lithuania the right to use their native language, receive education in their native language or study it in state educational institutions or through national cultural associations, develop national cultural traditions, and establish national cultural and educational institutions [23]. In the early 1990s, the Ukrainian diaspora in Lithuania numbered approximately 45,000 individuals, while the Lithuanian community in Ukraine exceeded 10,000 [14, p. 118].

Lithuania, like Ukraine, has focused on developing cultural diversity and supporting the culture of national minorities. However, protecting the ethnic culture of the indigenous peoples of both states should be a top priority of national policy [12, p. 218].

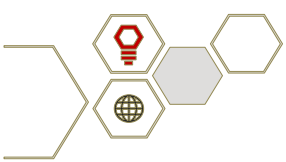
The analytical evaluation of the 1994 Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation highlights its significance as a model of strategic partnership for post-Soviet states during a period of transformation. Theoretically, this document exemplifies how bilateral agreements can integrate principles of international law with pragmatic goals of stabilizing regional relations. Practically, the Treaty established a legal mechanism for long-term cooperation, proving resilient to geopolitical challenges and affirming its relevance as a tool for strengthening regional security and European integration.

The 1994 Treaty on Friendship remains relevant as one of the first international legal instruments to affirm Lithuania's support for Ukraine's sovereignty amid



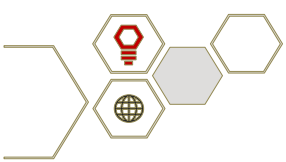
contemporary geopolitical challenges. Its provisions, particularly those concerning respect for territorial integrity and the peaceful resolution of disputes, continue to be pertinent in the context of Russian aggression against Ukraine, as Lithuania consistently supports Ukraine on the international stage, guided by the principles enshrined in the Treaty. However, modern bilateral relations demonstrate that certain aspects of the Treaty, such as economic cooperation and the protection of minority rights, require updating due to changes in the global context and the integration of both countries into European structures. For instance, Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO since 2004 and Ukraine's aspirations for European integration necessitate the adaptation of the legal framework to EU standards. The 1994 Treaty on Friendship remains not only a historically significant document but also a legal cornerstone for deepening strategic partnership, though its implementation requires modernization through the conclusion of new agreements. Thus, with the conclusion of the work of the first convocation of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on April 22, 1994, the second stage of forming the politico-legal basis for relations between Ukraine and the Lithuanian Republic was completed.

Vytautas Landsbergis, leading the opposition in the Seimas of the Lithuanian Republic in the early 1990s, remarked that «Ukrainian leadership showed little interest in Lithuania», a statement with which we strongly disagree, as the bilateral achievements between the two countries suggest otherwise. By mid-1994, the two countries had managed to conclude 27 agreements, including 2 interstate, 15 intergovernmental, and 10 interagency agreements. During 1993–1994, Lithuania's Seimas delegation visited Ukraine twice, and in December 1993, a Ukrainian parliamentary delegation visited Vilnius. These activities demonstrate a sustained interest in cooperation from both the Ukrainian and Lithuanian sides [25, pp. 41–43]. Over the 32 years of Ukrainian-Lithuanian relations, the treaty-legal framework has significantly expanded, comprising over 170 agreements, including 6 interstate, 32 intergovernmental, and 64 interagency agreements, two documents on interparliamentary cooperation, and more than 70 other bilateral documents [24].



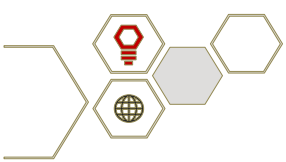
Conclusions. The cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, which began with informal contacts between the Popular Movement of Ukraine and Sajūdis and evolved into the formal establishment of diplomatic relations, marked a significant stage in the development of friendly and partnership ties between the two states. Solidarity during the economic blockade of Lithuania, support for the 1991 protests, humanitarian initiatives, and the establishment of sister-city relations between Kyiv and Vilnius laid a strong foundation for further cooperation. The signing of key bilateral agreements between 1991 and 1994 completed the process of creating a legal framework that facilitated the development of political, economic, and cultural relations, which remain a vital component of the European integration of both countries. Most Ukrainian-Lithuanian agreements signed during these first three years remain in force, with the exception, for instance, of the Agreement on Free Trade (which expired in 2004) but was replaced by an agreement signed between Ukraine and the EU.

From a legal perspective, the agreements of 1991–1994, particularly the 1994 Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation, established a robust foundation for recognizing Ukraine and Lithuania as subjects of international law, creating legal mechanisms to protect national interests and guarantee minority rights. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the systematization of the origins of Ukrainian-Lithuanian legal cooperation, providing a deeper understanding of the stages in the development of bilateral relations as a model for other post-Soviet states in the context of their integration into the European legal framework. Practically, the findings can be applied to enhance Ukraine's contemporary diplomatic strategy, particularly by strengthening regional cooperation with Lithuania in the areas of security, energy, and European integration, as well as fostering joint initiatives in the Baltic-Black Sea region aimed at addressing current challenges. Future research could focus on analyzing the evolution of bilateral agreements after 1994, particularly their adaptation to European legal standards.

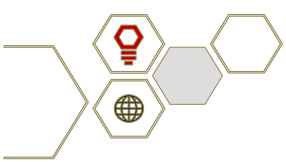


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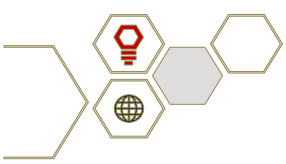
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