

## Трансформація Зовнішньополітичної Комунікації ЄС, Німеччини та України

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## **TRANSFORMATION OF FOREIGN-POLICY COMMUNICATION OF THE EU, GERMANY, AND UKRAINE**

The study's purpose is to critically analyse approaches to international communication in the global environment and clarify the specifics of processes that characterize the asymmetry of foreign-policy communication because the contemporary communication tools allow forming both a positive perception of foreign policy initiatives and a negative attitude of politicians or the world community toward foreign-policy actions. As a result, the research focuses on studying the transformation of the EU foreign-policy communication tools; analysing the practice of foreign-policy communications of Germany and Ukraine; detecting the impact of destructive communications on the image of the EU, Germany, and Ukraine in the international information space.

The main conclusions of the research are such statements: the aggravation of Ukrainian-Russian relations has demonstrated an imbalance in the existing foreign-policy orientations; the EU leaders rethought the political impact of supranational formation on the contemporary system of international relations; Germany's practice in foreign-policy communication concerns the preservation of the position as a world leader that is able to influence the solution of complex international political and security issues.

**Key words:** foreign-policy communication, asymmetry communication, the EU, Germany, Ukraine.

## **ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ ЗОВНІШНОПОЛІТИЧНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ ЄС, НІМЕЧЧИНИ ТА УКРАЇНИ**

Мета дослідження – критичний аналіз підходів до вивчення міжнародної комунікації в глобальному середовищі та з'ясування специфіки процесів, що характеризують асиметрію зовнішньополітичної комунікації, оскільки

сучасні комунікативні інструменти дають змогу формувати як позитивне сприйняття зовнішньополітичних ініціатив, так і негативне ставлення політиків або світового співтовариства до зовнішньополітичних дій. Отже, дослідження зосереджено на вивченні трансформації інструментів зовнішньої політики ЄС; аналізі практики зовнішньополітичних комунікацій Німеччини та України; виявленні впливу деструктивних комунікацій на імідж ЄС, Німеччини й України в міжнародному інформаційному просторі.

Основними висновками дослідження стали такі твердження: загострення українсько-російських відносин продемонструвало дисбаланс наявних зовнішньополітичних орієнтацій; лідери ЄС переосмислили політичний вплив наднаціонального формування на сучасну систему міжнародних відносин; практика Німеччини в зовнішньополітичній комунікації стосується збереження позиції світового лідера, спроможного впливати на вирішення складних міжнародних політичних і безпекових питань.

**Ключові слова:** зовнішньополітична комунікація, асиметрія комунікації, ЄС, Німеччина, Україна.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**Set of the Problem.** Review of the priorities of foreign policy by some countries and the practical activities of the world community through the implementation of information modernization contributes to the transformation of international relations. At the same time, the state actors continue to play a key role in foreign-policy activities, while the growing political importance of Internet communication leads to the restructuring of international cooperation. In particular, in the international arena, there are processes of information stratification and political differentiation that determine the formation of regional structures with their own principles of communication, relations, and status in the world. In general, we can distinguish political, information, social, cultural and psychological aspects of the study of communication processes that change existing perceptions and stereotypes, influencing the behaviour and models of relations among the states, international institutions and non-traditional actors, emphasizing both constructive and destructive impact of foreign-policy communications on international affairs.

**Analysis of the Recent Documents and Publications.** The scientific literature presents the conceptual approaches to the issues of foreign-policy communication that define the transformation of international affairs as a process of structuring them into a network of relations among the states, transnational corporations, financial groups, organizations and social movements, as well as a phenomenon's impact of contemporary Internet technologies on international cooperation. The scientific works of Rana K. [1], Tkacheva O., Schwartz L., Libicki M., Taylor J., Martini J., Baxter C. [2], Hondul V., Zernetska O. [3], Makarenko I. [4], Shuliak A., Shuliak N. [5], Kenna M. [6], Türkan A. [7] and others investigated the global factors that influence on the international system and features of interaction of international actors in the global environment due to the use of innovative technologies, as well as analyzed the activities of international actors in the global information space.

**The Objective of the Research** is to study the transformation of the EU foreign-policy communication instruments; analysis of the practice of foreign-policy communications of Germany and Ukraine; detection of the impact of communications on the image of the EU, Germany and Ukraine in the international information space.

**Research Methods.** The Eurobarometer reports and online tool 'Google Trends' were selected for monitoring trends in international relations and determining the level of awareness of the audience about the foreign-policy communications of the EU, Germany, and Ukraine.

The Eurobarometer reports for 1992–2022 were used to study foreign policy communication processes at the EU level. The online tool 'Google Trends' was used to find out the level of audience awareness by the German and Ukrainian public for 2013–2022 periods. The main advantage of Google Trends is the regular data updating according to political, economic and social categories, which allow identifying trends of a search query, and comparing search volume by criteria, as well as demonstrating the impact of new events on search popularity. The interest in the terms 'Ukraine', 'Germany', 'the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine' and 'the Cabinet of Germany' allows for exploring the related issues and ideas, as well as the formed narratives.

## **2. RESULTS OF RESEARCH**

Limiting the political, economic, social or cultural capabilities of international actors in the field of implementation of foreign-policy interests due to lack of access to contemporary means of communication leads to the development of destructive communication processes that affect the bilateral and mul-

tilateral interaction. Under these circumstances, we can interpret foreign-policy communication as a process of realization of relations among the actors of international relations that allows making a political interaction, development of economic cooperation and cultural exchange. Among the tools of foreign policy communication that allow a flexible regulation of international information and communication flows, it could be divided the diplomatic channels, business communications, cultural and scientific exchange, as well as media and the Internet instruments.

The asymmetry of foreign policy communications is manifested in forming both a positive perception of foreign policy initiatives and a negative attitude of politicians or the world community toward foreign-policy actions; deepening interaction between traditional and non-traditional international actors, regardless of state borders; redistributing transnational relations and eroding the monopoly of states for managing world political processes; lacking access to modern means of communication that restricts political, economic, social or cultural opportunities of international actors in supporting their foreign-policy interests; existing a low level of legal regulation of liability for the dissemination of false information; dominating historical traditions and the national mentality.

As a result, the openness of communication allows non-traditional actors to influence state policy. Consequently, foreign-policy communication has changed from one-way communication to multilateral, ensuring the formation of informal communication processes in society. Foreign-policy communication has also influenced the political system, transforming the foreign policy interests of countries, the political and psychological culture of political leaders and society, traditions, values, legal regulations etc.

The transformation of the EU foreign-policy communication tools can be demonstrated by examples of public opinion polls on the EU image, perceptions of European policies and self-identification of Europeans, prepared by Eurobarometer. Regarding the EU image, the public opinion of the EU citizens has changed from 43 % fairly positive perception of the EU in 2006 to 22 % fairly negative in 2010 [8]. Such fluctuations were related to the rejection of the Constitution for Europe by voters in France and the Netherlands in 2005, leading to a revision of the EU policy and the signing of a renewed agreement called the Lisbon Treaty, that entered into force on 1st December 2009. The Treaty added many new policy areas to the list of those on which decisions are made by the co-decision procedure [9]. Since 2013, the public perception of the EU image received a positive dynamic, rising to 37 % in 2019. During the winter of 2021–2022, the image and level of trust in the EU

are the highest since the autumn of 2009, in particular 47 % of Europeans trust the European Union and 44 % of citizens consider that the EU has a positive image [10].

Regarding the perceptions of European policies, we should note that such categories as 'peace among the EU Member States' and 'the free movements of people, goods, and services' belong to the most positive result of the EU activity from 2012 to 2019, in particular 55–57 % of respondents singled out these political areas [8]. Among the EU key policy areas in the winter of 2021–2022, Europeans have chosen 'free movement of the EU citizens' (85 %), 'a common defence and security policy among the EU Member States' (77 %) and 'a common energy policy among the EU Member States' (75 %), as well as 'the EU common trade policy' (74 %) and 'a common foreign policy of the EU Member States' (71 %) [10].

Concerning the self-identification of Europeans in 1992-2019, there was a trend for the EU citizens to perceive themselves as 'nationality only' (fluctuations of 35 to 42 %), and 'nationality and European' (fluctuations of 40 to 55%) [8]. The last public polls of Europeans in the winter of 2021–2022 showed that 71 % of respondents have felt like the EU citizens, and 56 % – have known their rights and have wished to find out more about European citizenship [10].

For the investigation of the practice of foreign-policy communications of Germany and Ukraine, it was taken online instruments 'Google Trends' and such periods of time:

1. from 01/09/2013 to 01/01/2018, as from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 to February 2014 the Euromaidan Revolution (the Revolution of Dignity) continued; in March 2014, the first political chapters of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement were signed; on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014, in the margins of the European Council, were signed the remaining chapters following the presidential elections in Ukraine; on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, the provisional application of the deep and comprehensive free trade area started; on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, the association agreement entered into force; on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Council of the EU adopted a regulation on visa liberalisation for Ukrainian citizens travelling to the EU.

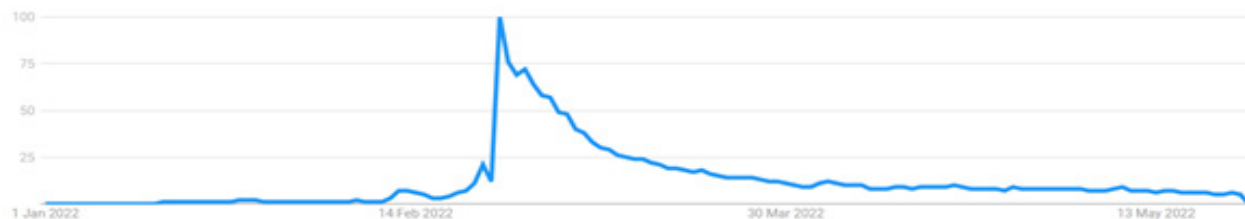
2. from 01/01/2022 to 26/05/2022, as Russia launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

All these above-called information occasions aroused interest in the German audience, as we can see from the peaks in pictures 1 and 2. We can also observe a decrease or equalization of interest in topics. Although, given the national interests of Ukraine, it is important to maintain the permanent interest of the Germans in the country's events.





**Pic. 1.** *Interest of Germans in Term ‘Ukraine’ over 01/09/2013 – 01/01/2018*  
Source: Google Trends

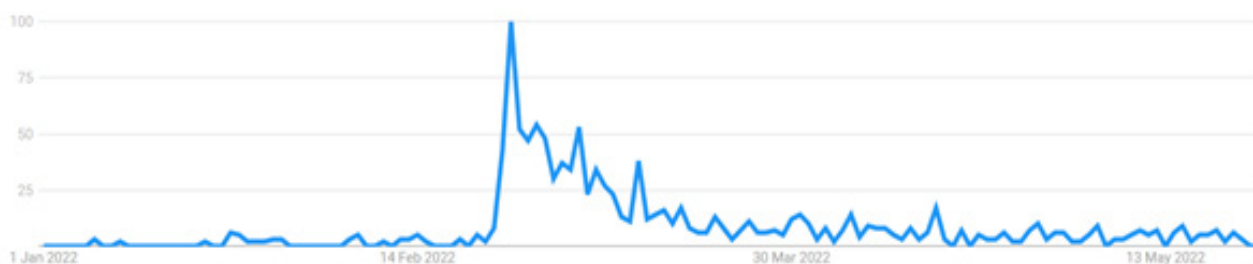


**Pic. 2.** *Interest of Germans in Term ‘Ukraine’ over 01/01 – 26/05/2022*  
Source: Google Trends



**Pic. 3.** *Interest of Germans in Term ‘the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine’ over 01/09/2013 – 01/01/2018*

Source: Google Trends



**Pic. 4.** *Interest of Germans in Term ‘the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine’ over 01/01 – 26/05/2022*

Source: Google Trends

Users searching for term ‘Ukraine’ also searched for these topics and queries:

1. from 01/09/2013 to 01/01/2018 – ‘Aircraft crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17’, ‘Eurovision Song Contest 2016’, ‘Russian military intervention in Crimea in 2014’, ‘War in Donbas – Armed conflict’, ‘News agency Sputnik’,

‘Separatists in Ukraine’ and ‘football matches Poland–North Ireland and Germany–North Ireland’.

2. from 01/01/2022 to 26/05/2022 – ‘Ukraine Negotiation’, ‘Casualty’, ‘Campaign Germany Helps’, ‘Donation’ and ‘liveblog on Russia–Ukraine war’.

These search words show the formed narratives in the German audience – what they think or what is important in their everyday life.

The Germans’ interest in the activities of the Government of Ukraine was studied separately, and information activity coincided with the above-mentioned political events that took place in Ukraine (pic. 3 and 4). However, it allowed a deeper understanding of circulated narratives in the German media space. These combinations of words show the formed narratives in the German audience concerning the Ukrainian government:

1. from 01/09/2013 to 01/01/2018 – ‘Fascism’, ‘Arseniy Yatsenyuk – Former Prime Minister of Ukraine’, ‘War in Donbas – Armed conflict’, ‘Nazism – Political ideology’, ‘Petro Poroshenko – President of Ukraine’, ‘Ukrainian Government resigns’, ‘New Government’ and ‘Ukraine news’.

2. from 01/01/2022 to 26/05/2022 – ‘Political party – Organization type’, ‘Right-wing politics – Political ideology’, ‘Nazism – Political ideology’, ‘Fascism’, ‘Volodymyr Zelenskyy – President of Ukraine’, ‘Government of Ukraine’, ‘Ukraine Government rights’ and ‘Ukraine news’.

There is much information circulated in the Ukrainian media space concerning Germany. The interest of the audience does not fade because the political and economic development of Ukraine depends on the EU / European decisions in which Germany and France, as well as the United Kingdom, play an important role (pic. 5 and 6).

Such topics as migration requests, shops, and football are interesting for Ukrainians concerning Germany. In particular, users searching for the term ‘Germany’ also searched for these topics and queries:

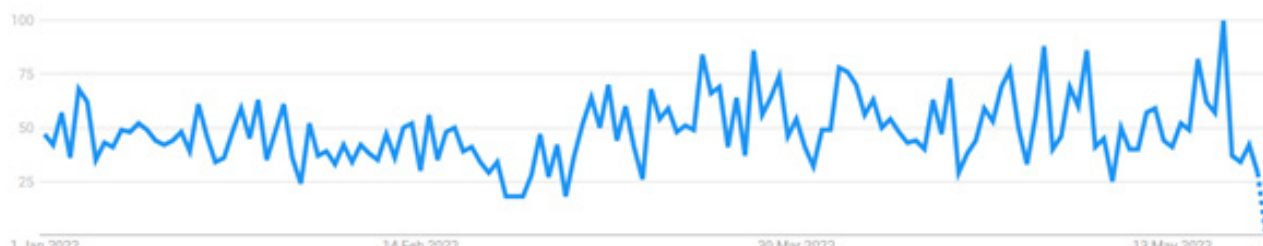
1. from 01/09/2013 to 01/01/2018 – ‘Voice Kids – German reality show’, ‘Brazil v Germany – 2014 FIFA World Cup’, ‘France national football team’,



**Pic. 5.** *Interest of Ukrainians in Term ‘Germany’ over 01/09/2013 – 01/01/2018*

Source: Google Trends





**Pic. 6.** *Interest of Ukrainians in Term 'Germany' over 01/01 – 26/05/2022*  
*Source: Google Trends*

'Brazil national football team', 'VFS Global – Visa Facilitation Services Global Company', 'OLX Germany', 'Ukraine-Germany-euro' and 'Driving Zone: Germany'.

2. from 01/01/2022 to 26/05/2022 – 'Yahoo! – Company', 'VFS Global – Company', 'IKEA Germany – Company', 'Driving Zone: Germany – Video game', 'UNIQLO Kingston – Store' and 'mobile.de'.

In the case of the searching term 'the Cabinet of Germany', Ukrainians try to understand how the decisions are made in Germany. In media space, we can find much controversial information on the political line of conduct of the German government (pic. 7 and 8). Users searching for term 'the Cabinet of Germany' also searched for these topics and queries:

1. from 01/09/2013 to 01/01/2018 – 'Law', 'Politics – Field of study', 'German Bundesrat – Governing body', 'German language – Spoken language', 'Germans – People' and 'Federal Government'.

2. from 01/01/2022 to 26/05/2022 – 'Germany – Country in Europe' and 'Government – Organization type'.

As a result, Ukraine's practice of foreign-policy communication concerns the preservation of sovereignty and independence; the establishment of strategic relations with leading actors; the maintenance of the international authority of the state under imbalance in international affairs. Germany's practice in foreign-policy communication concerns the observance of a balance between



**Pic. 7.** *Interest of Ukrainians in term 'the Cabinet of Germany' over 01/09/2013 – 01/01/2018*

*Source: Google Trends.*



**Pic. 8.** *Interest of Ukrainians in term 'the Cabinet of Germany' over 01/01/ – 26/05/2022*

*Source: Google Trends.*

national and European interests; the preservation of the position as a world leader that is able to influence the solution of complex international political and security issues; the prevention of the repetition of the tragic lessons of the First and Second World Wars. We would like to note that both states demonstrate information swings through a lack of political will and willingness. Although the citizens of Ukraine, Germany and the EU show greater unity in solving the political, security and economic problems that have arisen as a result of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In the last Eurobarometer on the EU's response to the war in Ukraine (April 2022), we can mark that the involvement of Europeans and Germans in conversations on the news related to the war in Ukraine was the same. In particular, 41 % of Europeans and Germans discussed several times a day the Russian-Ukrainian war, 29 % of respondents debated it once a day and 19–20 % of citizens talked about the war several times a week [11].

Regarding the support of measures that have been announced by the EU to respond to the war in Ukraine, we should note that 55–57 % of Europeans and Germans advocated the economic sanctions against Russia and 25 % of respondents tended to approve; 33–31 % of Europeans and Germans expressed themselves for financing the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine and 34 % of citizens tended to approve, at the same time 26 % of Europeans and Germans tended to disapprove or fully disapprove of the military assistance for Ukraine. In relation to the dominance of the Kremlin's disinformation and information manipulation assets in Europe, the Council of the European Union resolved to suspend the distribution of State-owned Russian media across the EU. This decision was supported by 41–39 % of Europeans and Germans, 25 % of respondents tended to approve, whereas 26 % – tended to disapprove or fully disapprove of banning state-owned Russian media from broadcasting in the EU [11].

The survey also presented the viewpoints of Europeans and Germans concerning the support of EU decisions in the diversification of energy resources:

56–57 % of citizens agreed that the EU should reduce its dependency on Russian gas and oil as soon as possible and 29–26 % – tended to agree with this suggestion. In this context, 49–52 % of respondents maintained the deepening of European activity in buying gas from other countries in order to get a better price and 36–31 % – tended to agree with this proposition. We should add that 37–42 % of Europeans and Germans totally agree with the statement that the war in Ukraine indicates the need to expand military cooperation within the EU and 39–36 % of citizens – tended to agree with it [11].

The intensification of the EU's efforts to strengthen its status as an independent actor in the international arena has helped to increase the coordination of a common foreign policy and ensure efficient representation of the EU abroad. The EU skilfully uses communication tools for the creation of public discussions on a common foreign and security policy within the European community, conduction of communication campaigns, promotion of European policies and projects in various fields, and dissemination of official statements and press releases.

The aggravation of Ukrainian-Russian relations has demonstrated an imbalance in the existing foreign policy orientations. As a result, the EU leaders rethought the political impact of supranational formation on the contemporary system of international relations and proposed a renewed strategy to transform the EU into an active global player.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

The main task of foreign-policy communications of the EU, Germany, and Ukraine is to promote political, security and economic ties through efficient dialogue with partners and regular awareness of the world community on foreign policy priorities, driven by current events and processes.

The efficient foreign-policy communication presupposes the implementation of such functions as: the feedback function that provides the political system with information on current foreign-policy processes and allows to adequately assess the effectiveness of political governance; the function of forming world public opinion that allows to create the necessary stereotypes and models of international political behaviour; the integrative function that forms communication affairs in the foreign policy area and coordinates the interaction of all levels and segments of the international system.

These functional features form the global and national communication space and determine the interaction of actors within the international system, while media affects a large scattered audience, which allows international actors to increase the efficiency of foreign policy.

In the short term, we can expect further expanding the EU participation in international and regional governance; deepening the internal consolidation of political and economic capacities of the EU Member States; creating and participating in global and regional alliances; defining a clear pan-European position at the level of international organizations on existing global challenges and threats. These issues will require further research.

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