

УДК 327.57:341.176:061.1ЄС

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30970/PPS.2025.58.34>

SECURITY AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Mykola Gnatiuk

*National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Social Technologies, Department of Political Science
Skovorody Str., 2, 04070, Kyiv, Ukraine*

Margaryta Chabanna

*National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Social Technologies, Department of Political Science
Skovorody Str., 2, 04070, Kyiv, Ukraine*

European integration is primarily driven by the desire for peace and security in Europe. Unified Europe where war is unthinkable has been the core motivation behind this process, culminating in the EU as a “peace project”. This article explores theoretical approaches to integration, arguing that it has become a crucial tool for addressing security concerns and mitigating the security dilemma among leading European states. Through a conceptual analysis and comparison of functionalism, federalism, regional integration theories, and key international relations paradigms, the article demonstrates that European integration has been perceived as reshaping international politics in Europe. Rather than establishing a federal state or a peaceful environment based solely on independent international actors, a system has emerged where nation-states retain their sovereignty while the EU operates alongside them on a post-sovereign level. The sovereign entities within the EU continue to interact within the anarchic framework of the international system. Integration allows states to maintain sovereignty while simultaneously developing new mechanisms for collective decision-making. Crucially, the article highlights the role of security guarantees from the United States. These guarantees act as a “reconciliation” mechanism, effectively removing the security dilemma in relations between member states, a dynamic consistent with the “Westphalian logic” of the modern international system. It specifically argues that under the umbrella of external guarantees within an “ever-closer union”, a system of “pacified nationalism” is developing at the interstate level, alongside an autonomous and post-sovereign supranational level. This dual structure helps to alleviate anarchic conditions and partially resolve the security dilemma. The article posits that European integration has facilitated the development of a post-sovereign security actor within a supranational framework, thereby enhancing the foreign policy capabilities of member states. Therefore, EU integration is a significant factor in maintaining peace in Europe, balancing national interests with shared objectives.

Key words: security, European integration, theories of international relations, methodology of political science, political interaction, competition, cooperation, theories of political science, political analysis.

European integration has long been reshaping the political landscape of Europe. Shared European institutions have become symbols of peace and stability, replacing traditional interstate competition with cooperation and joint problem-solving [18]. However, this process of European unification, culminating in the EU, also presents a challenge to the traditional nation-state, the bedrock of political legitimacy. The European institutions that have emerged are both familiar and unique, blending characteristics of domestic politics with elements of international relations [11]. This hybrid nature is reflected in both their structure and their function. In certain areas, European institutions share power with national governments, while in others, they exercise exclusive authority. Furthermore, their influence permeates nearly all aspects of public policy.

The political structure that has arisen from European integration is not only complex but also unique within the modern international system, where the sovereign nation-state remains the primary actor [2]. The contemporary EU is the product of cooperation among European states that have successfully navigated internal tensions and forged a community representing the most successful transformation of international relations in the region over the past seventy years.

European integration is primarily a security and peace project, a concept that may seem unconventional within the traditional Ukrainian discourse, particularly given the prevailing view that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is solely responsible for the collective defense and security of the region. The EU is often perceived as a security actor that has only recently “chosen” to develop security instruments to address conflicts in its neighboring regions [10]. This article examines approaches to integration as a security project and argues that European integration has become a key tool for resolving security problems and avoiding the security dilemma among leading European states. The integration process has facilitated the formation of a security community and a post-sovereign security actor operating within a supranational framework, strengthening the foreign policy potential of EU member states. Specifically, this article argues that, under the umbrella of external guarantees within an “ever-closer union”, a system of “pacified nationalism” is developing at the interstate level, alongside an autonomous, post-sovereign supranational level. This dual structure mitigates anarchic conditions and partially resolves the security dilemma. The key data for this research was obtained in the Project run by the Jean Monnet Chair of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy with the support of the European Union (Jean Monnet actions, Erasmus+ program) and is available in the project’s results repository¹.

Integration and security: a normative approach

The pursuit of security through strengthened regional cooperation among nation-states raises the question of how to define the term «integration.» European regional integration has unfolded in a rather unexpected and uneven manner, often contradicting the predictions of classical normative theories of integration.

The European integration process, while based on intensifying relations between states and building international cooperative structures, transcends traditional interstate cooperation. However, it falls short of achieving the ultimate goal, as envisioned by normative theories, of establishing a federation [17] or a network of international functional agencies [15]. It is worth noting that federalism and functionalism have become the normative approaches that have virtually monopolized the discourse on the goals of European cooperation after World War II and its security function. Both theories build the outlines of a future European solution and its security function as a response to the inability of nation-states to maintain peace among themselves, which was empirically proven by two world wars in Europe and the prospect of a third one that would be even more destructive.

From the point of view of both theories, a return to the system of nation-states in Europe means a return to a system of balance of power that does not guarantee peace. Moreover, the nation-state has discredited itself and can no longer guarantee the safety and well-being of its citizens.

1 See: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content>



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Federalism, as a strategy for achieving peace, bases its argument on a rejection of the collective security mechanism, whose failures it seeks to avoid. Proponents like Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi argue that, absent external intervention, the power of nation-states becomes “instruments of destruction, barbarism, and suppression” [17]. They state that the only solution is to transfer power to a higher, supranational level. Spinelli and Rossi believed that only a federation could end the prevailing anarchy in Europe and the world. They pointed to the League of Nations as an example of the ineffectiveness of other peacekeeping approaches. The League, lacking military instruments to enforce its decisions and bound by the doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, was ultimately unable to deter aggression and proved disastrous for efforts to maintain regional stability.

It is important to note that a European federal state also represents the political realization of long-held ideas of European unity that have shaped European political discourse. However, neither the global nor the European political landscape was conducive to such a radical restructuring. At the global level, US President Roosevelt favored the concept of a concert of great powers, promoting his «four world policemen» initiative, where smaller states would be subordinate [5]. This vision ultimately materialized in the UN model and the concept of permanent members of the Security Council. In Europe, the regional system gradually devolved into bloc confrontation with the USSR. Under these circumstances, the creation of a European federation as a means of overcoming international anarchy lacked the necessary political support, even though the idea remained prominent in post-war European discourse [6].

While sharing the view that the interaction of nation-states within the anarchic structure of international relations has significant destabilizing potential, functionalism proposes a solution based on a “positive peace” model, which differs substantially from the constitutional approach of federalists. Functionalists argue that forming a European or even a world federation is not a viable solution to the security problem because it still involves sovereign state entities, which they consider a destabilizing factor in international society. They believe that a federal solution for Europe creates more problems than it solves and would hinder the establishment of a just and peaceful international order [15].

Offering an approach to building international peace and achieving security, functionalism advocates the formation of an alternative to the nation-state, namely through a change in the form of organization of political power.

The emergence of trans-territorial social actors and their interconnected systems will lead to a more structured global society and the development of a new international order. Political power, rather than being concentrated in a single center as in the nation-state, can be distributed among various autonomous actors. The activities and interactions of these social actors, especially their collaborative efforts to find common solutions to social problems irrespective of borders, will gradually diminish the importance of territorial boundaries, ultimately leading to the transformation of traditional politics and the decline of the world order based on nation-states.

The normative approaches establish the theoretical basis for the potential security role of European integration and its mechanisms, and offer a degree of guidance, however they don't always reflect real-world outcomes. Empirical evidence demonstrates that the integration logic of supranational approaches diverges significantly from the interstate integration mechanisms that were initially established with the creation of the first integration structures [7].

Integration: key assumptions

A further set of theoretical frameworks comprises theories of regional integration, which emerged in response to existing integration structures like the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) and the European Economic Community (1957). In nearly seventy years since

the emergence of these early European integration efforts, and despite the substantial growth of research on the integration process, many aspects remain unexplained. One key question is why states are willing to relinquish of their sovereign power. As Alan Milward observes, the intention of Western European governments to voluntarily achieve political unification remains one of the least understood aspects of history and contemporary political life [14, p. 1-2].

Interpretations of the essence and purpose of integration often depend on the authors' theoretical preferences and values. For instance, according to Karl Deutsch, integration can be understood as a condition or a probability that conflict will be resolved peacefully [3]. The key outcome of a successful, fully integrated community is the development of a sense of shared identity within a specific territory, along with the establishment of institutions and practices strong enough to guarantee the expectation of "peaceful change" among the population in the long term.

Ernst Haas argues that conceptualizing integration as a static state makes it difficult to distinguish between pre- and post-integration phases. His pioneering neo-functional approach defines integration as a process in which political actors shift their «loyalties, expectations, and political activities to a new center whose institutions have or claim jurisdiction over the nation-states that preceded them» [8, p. 627]. The outcome of this process is the formation of a new political community that overlays existing ones, namely, the nation-states [9, p. 16].

Integration as a process does not necessarily lead to the creation of a political alternative to nation-states. The focus on establishing institutions for joint decision-making, rather than forming a centralized, state-like federal entity, defines integration as the development of mechanisms for collective decision-making through means other than the autonomous actions of individual states [12, p. 5-6].

Lindberg's definition aligns with the conceptualization of intergovernmentalist approaches. According to Andrew Moravcsik, European integration is a series of rational choices made by national leaders, resulting in the creation of supranational institutions based on the pooling of national sovereignties and the delegation of national powers to semi-autonomous central structures [16, p. 18]. Within this framework, the EU is seen as a neutral instrument that carries out the preferences of its member states.

As a process of interaction between states, integration inevitably increases their interdependence. Realist perspectives, for example, view integration as a form of international cooperation, characterizing it as a process of mutual exploitation, in which governments seek to mobilize and accumulate resources of neighboring countries in the interests of strengthening their own power [4]. Within this view, the creation of international institutions through interstate interaction is seen as a form of power politics, with those institutions primarily serving the interests of the member states.

On the other hand, integration, viewed as a type of interdependence involving the removal of barriers to the movement of production factors, can lead to very different conclusions. Liberal perspectives, for instance, argue that increased free trade and interdependence reduce the likelihood of states using force, as the costs of doing so increase. From this standpoint, European integration structures are a result of this process, enabling states to manage policymaking within the context of globalization [19].

To varying degrees, each of the integration approaches acknowledges that the changes brought about by the formation of communities are transforming regional politics in Europe. Integration influences traditional international relations between nation-states, which become less autonomous, and the anarchic conditions of their interaction become more structured. Therefore, the integration project is inherently linked to security dynamics at both the nation-state and regional levels.

Within the current Westphalian system of international relations, with its focus on the sovereign state, integration manifests as a specific level of interaction among nation-states within a regional context. Two primary ways of defining this interaction exist. The first posits that the presence of a potential supranational element in interstate interaction leads to viewing integration as a process culminating in a completely new political entity - either a state (of confederal or federal type) or a unique (*sui generis*) formation. The second perspective suggests that regional integration constitutes a distinct form of intensive interstate interaction, yet one that is constrained by the imperative of national self-preservation, thereby limiting the level and the institutional and political outcomes of that interaction.

Integration and security: IR theories

As previously mentioned, European integration theories that emphasize the supranational aspect view the integration process as a model for overcoming the security dilemma and preventing war. Proponents of a European federation, in particular, see it as a mechanism for mitigating the negative consequences of interstate interactions and averting conflict. Functionalists focus on the nature of political power and the potential for establishing a peacekeeping mechanism based on joint actions that benefit all participants. Their proposed solution involves sectoral integration of international agencies, which fosters cooperation and reduces political tensions. Ernst Haas, the founder of neofunctionalism, similarly viewed integration as a process of peaceful cooperation and the creation of larger political units, characterized by peaceful conflict resolution between communities and the conscious avoidance of force.

However, the mechanism by which integration affects and resolves traditional security problems arising from interstate interactions remains a point of contention within international relations theory. This is particularly true regarding its impact on the balance of power among participating states and the extent to which it mitigates or eliminates the security dilemma.

From a liberal, especially institutionalist, perspective, the security implications of interaction within a regional entity resemble participation in a collective security system. Robert Axelrod, for example, argues that states' involvement in joint international institutions mitigates the security dilemma due to the «shadow of the future» effect. Regional integration, by establishing shared institutions, rules, and norms of interaction, makes it extremely difficult for states to withdraw, given the risk of reverting to the traditional security dilemma [1]. Beyond promoting collective security interests, regional integration also lowers the transaction costs associated with decision-making, negotiation, implementation, and conflict resolution.

Realist paradigms suggest that the security dilemma within integration processes can only be resolved with the presence of an external «security guarantor.» This guarantor's presence alleviates security concerns among participating states, diminishing fears that some members might gain disproportionate advantages that could strengthen their power potential. The crucial security factor enabling European integration, therefore, is the existence of U.S. security guarantees. Without them, EU member states would face a dilemma: either unify and form a supranational political entity, or revert to the traditional model of balance of power politics.

In conclusion, analysis of the main theoretical approaches to European integration reveals that security motives play a significant role in both the formation and the subsequent security functions of the European integration project. Rather than creating a federal state or a peaceful environment based solely on autonomous international agencies, a system is emerging where nation-states retain their sovereignty. The EU does not replace nation-states but operates alongside them on a post-sovereign basis. Simultaneously, the sovereign entities that comprise the EU member states continue to interact within the anarchic framework of the international system.

The treaties establishing the first integration communities envisioned international bodies acting in the interest of the entire community, endowed with significant powers. The level of authority and the capacity to act in the common interest while ensuring adherence to agreed rules and principles make the EEC a unique form of interstate cooperation [13]. The creation of this community of nation-states diminishes the importance of traditional diplomacy among its members. Collective agreements take precedence over bilateral ones, and the pursuit of national interests and relative advantage gives way to a focus on accommodating the interests of other participants and ensuring a basis for continued cooperation. This shift aligns with theories of regional integration and the liberal perspective within international relations theory.

Unlike a federation, in a community of nation-states, supranational interests do not always supersede national interests, and states are often more inclined to act in their own national interest than in the interest of the community as a whole. However, the existence of a permanent political mechanism outside the individual nation-states (Brussels) provides a degree of assurance that the provisions of the founding treaties will be implemented and that conflicts will be resolved through compromise.

Power politics no longer dominates the maintenance of order and the pursuit of national interests. States increasingly prioritize coalition-building to achieve shared solutions rather than focusing solely on relative gains. U.S. security guarantees remain a crucial factor in the EU system, acting as a «reconciliation» mechanism that mitigates the security dilemma among member states. This dynamic, consistent with the «Westphalian logic» of the modern international system, is likely to continue shaping the EU's future.

References

1. Axelrod R. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books, 1984. 241 p.
2. Birchfield V. L., Krige J., Young A. R. European integration as a peace project // *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*. 2017. № 1 (19). P. 3–12.
3. Deutsch K. *Political community at the international level: problems of definition and measurement*. New York : Doubleday, 1954. 70 p.
4. Dyson T. *Neoclassical realism and defence reform in post-Cold War Europe* / T. Dyson, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 328 p.
5. *FDR's World: War, Peace, and Legacies (The World of the Roosevelts)* by D. Woolner (Author), W. Kimball (Author), D. Reynolds (Author). Palgrave Macmillan; 2008th edition (March 13, 2009). 267 p.
6. Gnatiuk M. *European Peace Project: Federalist Perspective*. *National Interest* Vol. 2, No.8 May - July 2022. P. 12-27.
7. Gnatiuk M. *Integration and the European Security Solution: Overcoming the Security Dilemma*. *Ukrainian Policymaker*, Volume 10, 2022. P. 18-26.
8. Haas E. *Persistent Themes in Atlantic and European Unity*. *World Politics*. 1958, 10(4) P. 614-628. doi:10.2307/2009280
9. Haas E. *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*. Stanford : Calif. Stanford University Press, 1958. 641 p.
10. Koval N., Vachudova M. A. *European Union Enlargement and Geopolitical Power in the Face of War* // *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*. 2024. № S1 (62). P. 135–146.
11. Laffan B. *Collective Power Europe? (The Government and Opposition / Leonard Schapiro Lecture 2022)* // *Government and Opposition*. 2023. № 4 (58). C. 623–640.
12. Lindberg L. *The political dynamics of European economic integration*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963. 367 p.
13. Middelaar L. *The passage to Europe : how a continent became a union*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 2013. 372 p.

14. Milward A. The European Rescue of the Nation-State. London : Routledge, 1992. 484 p.
15. Mitrany D. A working peace system. Introd. by Hans J. Morgenthau. – Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1966. 221 p.
16. Moravcsik A. The Choice for Europe: social purpose and state power from Messina to Maastricht. London : UCL Press, 1998. 528 p.
17. Spinelli A., Rossi E. The Ventotene Manifesto (1941). Ventotene: The Altiero Spinelli Institute for Federalist Studies. http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_manifesto_of_ventotene_1941-en-316aa96c-e7ff-4b9e-b43a-958e96afbecc.html
18. The European Union's contribution to international peace and security: liber amicorum in honour of Gert-Jan van Hegelsom. Leiden, The Netherlands; Boston: Brill Nijhoff, 2023. 336 p.
19. Youngs R. Geoliberal Europe and the test of war / R. Youngs. Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2024. 200 p.

БЕЗПЕКА ТА ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКА ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ: ТЕОРЕТИЧНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА

Микола Гнатюк

*Національний університет «Києво-Могилянська академія»,
факультет соціальних наук та соціальних технологій, кафедра політології
вул. Сковороди 2, 04070, м. Київ, Україна*

Маргарита Чабанна

*Національний університет «Києво-Могилянська академія»,
факультет соціальних наук та соціальних технологій, кафедра політології
вул. Сковороди 2, 04070, м. Київ, Україна*

Європейська інтеграція зумовлена насамперед прагненням до миру та безпеки в Європі. Ідея побудови об'єднаної Європи, що робить війну неможливою на континенті, закладає нормативну основу функціонування Європейського Союзу. У статті досліджуються теоретичні підходи до інтеграції як засобу досягнення безпеки та відстоюється теза, що європейська інтеграція стала вирішальним інструментом пом'якшення «дилеми безпеки» для провідних європейських держав. За допомогою концептуального аналізу та порівняння теорій функціоналізму, федералізму, регіональної інтеграції та ключових парадигм міжнародних відносин показано, що європейська інтеграція сприймається як така, що змінила міжнародну політику в Європі. Замість створення федеративної держави або мирного середовища, заснованого виключно на незалежних міжнародних акторах, виникає система, в якій національні держави зберігають свій суверенітет, а ЄС діє поряд з ними на постсуверенному рівні. У статті підкреслюється роль гарантій безпеки Сполучених Штатів, які ефективно усувають безпекове протистояння між державами-членами ЄС. Стверджується, що під егідою зовнішніх гарантій в рамках “дедалі тіснішого союзу” на міждержавному рівні розвивається система “умиротвореного націоналізму”, поряд з автономним і пост-суверенним наднаціональним рівнем. Ця подвійна структура допомагає пом'якшити анархічні умови та частково вирішити дилему безпеки. У статті також продемонстровано, що європейська інтеграція сприяла розвитку постсуверенного актора безпеки в наднаціональних рамках, тим самим посилюючи зовнішньополітичні можливості країн-членів. Таким чином, інтеграція в ЄС є важливим фактором підтримки миру в Європі, збалансування національних інтересів та завдання підтримання стабільності.

Ключові слова: безпека, європейська інтеграція, теорії міжнародних відносин, методологія політичної науки, політична взаємодія, конкуренція, співпраця, теорії політичної науки, політологічний аналіз.