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QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES

Предметом даної статті є аналіз інтеграційних процесів на міждержавному рівні в рамках окремих бізнес-груп. Авторами аналізуються економічні зв'язки всіх учасників ринкових відносин, що забезпечують реальні можливості для більш інтенсивного руху капіталу в нові, високоефективні, але, разом з тим, і більш ризиковані ринки. Мета полягає в тому, щоб пояснити принципи оцінки інвестиційної привабливості та рівня безпеки багатьох, досить рентабельних, варіантів капітальних вкладень. Ефективність прийнятого рішення буде залежати від того, яка з можливих ситуацій, у зовнішньому середовищі, фактично матиме місце. Принциповим, в цьому підході, є здатність максимально використовувати ті ресурси, якими володіє країна, а саме: корисні копалини, інфраструктуру, трудові ресурси та ін. В кінцевому вигляді це буде визначати ступінь ефективності її роботи та її внутрішню впорядкованість. Міра стійкості системи, її передбачуваність, та прогнозованість, а також її розвиток характеризуються поняттям ентропії. Суть такого підходу полягає в тому, що в якості вихідних даних використовуються: обсяги тран-

зитних перевезень, потужності створюваних підприємств, обсяги та можливості відчужуваних територій. Для коригування параметрів застосовані показники, пов'язані зі створенням нових робочих місць та продуктивність праці по кожній аналізованій інвестиційній програмі. При цьому ризик інвестування вимірюється абсолютною величиною можливих втрат у грошовому еквіваленті. Відповідно задаються варіанти розвитку зовнішніх умов, альтернативи вирішення проблеми і визначення результативності кожного варіанту в різних умовах. Важливим аспектом такого підходу є можливість визначення областей підвищеного і абсолютного ризику. Це дослідження підтверджує наступну гіпотезу: потенціал експортно-сировинного розвитку економіки пострадянських країн вичерпаний, але у них є можливість отримати стратегічну користь від ситуації, яка склалася, ґрунтуючись на стабільному світовому попиті на продовольство, створюючи умови для раціонального спрямування ресурсів в перспективні галузі з метою розвитку в економіці країни індустріального і постіндустріального секторів.

The subject of this article is the analysis of integration processes at an interstate level and within individual business groups, as well as the economic links of all participants in market relations which provide real opportunities for a more intensive movement of capital into new, highly efficient, at the same time more risky markets. The aim is to explain the principles of re-evaluating the investment attractiveness and the level of safety of many quite cost-effective capital investment options. The effectiveness of the decision made will depend on which of the possible situations in the external environment will actually take place. Fundamental to this approach is the ability to make the most out of the resources that the country possess - minerals, infrastructure, labor resources, etc., since ultimately this will determine the degree of its efficiency, its internal order. The rate of the stability of the system, the expectedness and predictability of its development are characterized by the concept of entropy. The principal of this approach is that the following is used as initial data: the volumes of transit traffic, the capacities of the enterprises being created, the volumes of the alienated territories. To adjust the parameters, the indicators related to the creation of new jobs and labor productivity for each analyzed investment program were used. At the same time, the investment risk is measured by the absolute value of possible losses in monetary terms. Accordingly, options for the development of external conditions are assigned, alternatives for tackling an issue are set and the effectiveness of each alternative and risks in various conditions should be determined. An important aspect of this approach is the ability to identify areas of high and absolute risk. This study confirms the following hypothesis. The potential for an export and raw material development of the economies of the post-Soviet countries has been exhausted, nevertheless, they have the opportunity to obtain strategic benefits from the current situation based on the stable world demand for provision, creating conditions for the rational directing resources into promising industries with the aim of developing industrial and post-industrial sectors in the country's economy.

Ключові слова: євроінтеграція, пострадянські країни, біфуркація, інфраструктура, ентропія, інвестиційні ризики.

Keywords: European integration, post-Soviet countries, bifurcation, infrastructure, entropy, investment risks.

Introduction. The subject of this article is the integration processes at the interstate level within individual business groups as well as economic ties of all participants in market relations which provide real opportunities for a more intensive movement of capital to new, highly efficient at the same time more risky markets. Corporate forms of combining investment opportunities are spreading in order to achieve high performance indicators of production and financial activities [3]. Of course, these economic phenomena are faced with the need to solve a number of important issues in the methodology

and practice of the analysis of investment activity. This paper will consider listed aspects for the post-Soviet countries of Eastern Europe.

Analysis of the most common literature on this issue. Problems, associated with a quantitative assessment of the country's capabilities and its potential, have always attracted the attention of scientists. The works of A. Akmaev, A. Amosha, A. Bardas, Y. Zaloznova, A. Chilikin, Y. Yashchenko M. Lubrano are widely known [1,2,8,11]. In most of the noted studies on the possibility of European integration of post-Soviet countries the subject was considered only from the perspective of the industry or the economy of the state as a whole and the general mineral raw resources limitation. In real conditions, and even more so with the transition to a market economy, it is more relevant to determine the boundaries of integration depending on the state of a particular state. This can be interpreted as a strategic policy to overcome the pathological lagging behind the post-Soviet countries in terms of economic efficiency. The proposed work is devoted to the solution of the problem of improving the methods of determining economic boundaries and risks associated with foreign investments.

The main provisions. The formation of independent states after the collapse of the USSR, the disruption of economic ties between enterprises and organizations, the destruction of the common market for goods and services, the introduction of customs borders and national currencies had a negative impact on the economies of Eastern European countries. They ended up as a cultural phenomenon, more importantly, as potential economies that were once considered promising. It can be argued that over time these countries will be completely different, and the structure of their economies will change radically. A number of fundamental circumstances of recent years should also be taken into account and primarily those in the hybrid policy that led to the annexations of territories, smoldering military conflicts, trade wars, etc. The main internal reason for the shortage of capital investments is seen in the inability of the ruling elites to meet the challenges of the time. European integration is dictated as well to countries with similar resources - from human to natural, including the presence of infrastructures that can feed not only themselves, to shale gas, oil and uranium, the self-organization of people and a change of ruling elites should be considered. The progress in the key issue for Eastern European countries of European integration depends on the implementation of reforms [9].

Over the years, Association Agreements were signed with the European Union which indicated the most important guidelines - the level of fight against corruption, reform of the judicial system, constitutional and electoral reforms, improving the business climate and energy efficiency, as well as public administration reform including decentralization. Today leaders who win the presidential elections are usually inherited by poor, technologically backward, aging countries. The only competitive factor is the industrial and human capital accumulated and educated in previous years. These elements should not disappear along with a developed engineering infrastructure, the maintenance of which in these countries requires about \$ 100 billion [17]. The new governments will have to maximize the creation of enterprises on the domestic raw material base for the production of deep processing and high added value items; at the same time, it is necessary to offer investors raw material sites for the construction of enterprises with a ban on export of the

aimed types of raw materials; they will need to make an inventory of infrastructure, invite and offer ready-made sites to world leaders in the production of high-tech products.

Methodology and quantitative evaluation of the possibility of European integration of post-soviet countries

The study determines that one of the reasons for the emergence of unprofitable capital investments is a rough transfer of foreign technologies for analysing the effectiveness of capital investments into the practice of domestic enterprises without taking into account the conditions and specifics of the local business environment [20]. This leads to an overestimation of the investment attractiveness and the level of security of many, at first glance, quite cost-effective options for capital investments. In this regard, it should become very important and timely to bring all elements of the system for analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of long-term investments in compliance with the new economic reality of the domestic market. In its turn, this requires serious research not only in the field of organizational and methodological support, comprehensive analysis and control of investment activities, but also substantiation of new, developing theoretical and methodological provisions.

Post-Soviet people have a very strong entrepreneurial spirit, and this creates a phenomenal opportunity for countries. Having gone through difficult years with the payment of large external debts and a political cycle, there is a real chance over the next 4-5 years to change the balance of power which is even more disadvantageous for oligarchs and officials. And then it will be possible to speak of a qualitative leap in the countries of Eastern Europe [18,19]. For any, and especially for a post-Soviet state, the most desirable is an economic situation in which full predictability of its development is achieved in all directions, both external and internal. Under this condition, the country steadily ensures the growth of the economy, while the capital assets are reproduced without any hindrances, the labor productivity grows within specified limits, and as the main result of its economic activity, the state receives funds in the amount that it needs to ensure its resource potential.

In some cases, such a sequence of events is quite possible. Especially, in the conditions of centralized management of the economy, when a plan for the production and sale of products was established for each industry, in accordance with the planned calculations the supply of equipment and materials was provided, the training of engineering and technical personnel and workers was conducted. However, even in the conditions of complete centralization of the economy, failures in the work of enterprises and industries were a constant phenomenon and were observed at any level of management of the national economy of the USSR [22].

This fact is due to that with incomplete information on the development of economic conditions, when only assumptions are considered, it is difficult to obtain clear values of the investment performance function [16]. The effectiveness of the decision made will depend on which of the possible situations in the external environment will actually take place. Therefore, it is necessary to set options for the development of external conditions, alternatives for solving the problem and determine the effectiveness of each alternative and risks in various conditions [23].

In the current situation in the economy of the post-Soviet countries, the probability of the fulfilment of the accepted plans, including alternative ones, becomes by one or

two orders of magnitude lower than with centralized planning. This is facilitated by the uncertainty of the market relations themselves, under which competition between manufacturers arises, demand and supply often do not meet since the products sale is directly dependent on the customer's financial solvency; the quality of products is individualized and evaluated not by the average level, as in continuous production, but in accordance with specific requests of the product buyer [23].

In the methodological aspect, one of the ways of such foresight can be, for example, the hypothesis of randomness which excludes the possibility of the existence of a single management decision for all companies and assumes that it is always found as a certain average combination of known management decisions. The hypothesis of dependence on the external environment present a company with the need to choose the optimal model of behavior. The multi-element hypothesis assumes that a company's success is the result of taking into account several key factors in its operations [27]. These hypotheses, as well as the uncertainty factor of market relations, is an extremely relevant topic, since only after knowing its nature, it is possible to correctly assess those actions that allow the country to achieve European integration and effectively act within itself and in relation to the external environment.

Possible coincidences of these results are now called «risks», which mean the probability of deviation of the planned goals from the real consequences of their implementation. The greater this probability is, the higher the level of risk, and vice versa. In this case, «investment risk» has two components — the risk associated with the activities in a certain country of a specific sector of the economy and the actual risk of a particular project [3]. In the economic literature, «risk» is usually understood as the probability (threat) of a market object to lose part of its income (and profits) as a result of certain production and/or financial activities. In other words, risk should mean the likelihood that the planned event will not coincide with the actual results of entrepreneurial activity under the influence of trends prevailing in the post-Soviet country which counteract the effective implementation of the plans, goals and objectives of the investor.

Assessment of the country's potential in terms of European integration

Each country periodically hits a point of bifurcation which will either be followed by a collapse of the state as the central government does not hold under control the situation on most of the territory of the state resulting in the fragmentation of the country, or systemic reforms will take place. The bifurcation point is one of the most significant concepts of the theory of self-organization. This is a period or moment in the history of a system when it turns from one systemic certainty to another. Its qualitative characteristics after reaching the bifurcation point are doomed to a fundamental change, leading to a change in the core of the system itself. The system transformation mechanism, which works at such moments, is associated with the branching of the system trajectory determined by the presence of competition of attractors [8].

Therefore, in order to prevent crisis situations in the country or mitigate them, to «cleanse» market uncertainty from subjective and ineffective government actions in order to create truly equal competitive conditions, a meaningful government policy is needed to ensure anti-crisis conditions for economic development. Although, the new leaderships of the Eastern European countries are pushing the creation of new institutions to fight corruption, there are still no tangible results [9]. Due to the poor business environment the

level of attracting investment and, in particular, foreign direct investment is significantly lower than required. This lack of investment limits productivity growth (labor productivity is less than 10% of the EU average), private sector job creation and improvement in living standards despite a highly skilled workforce. Stronger and more sustainable growth is needed for the country to catch up with its neighbors in the region in terms of income.

The countries of Eastern Europe are countries with a small open economy focused on the export of agricultural products, raw materials and semi-finished products with low added value. That is, they seriously depend on world prices for raw commodities and the situation in the economies of the main trading partners. The critical dependence of their economies on the conjuncture of world commodity markets leads to periodic crises in the balance of payments, turns into threats to the foreign exchange market. Nevertheless, each country has its own competitive advantages, in particular, a good green area in terms of agricultural products [10].

Even with relatively slow growth rates, post-Soviet countries can develop since they are mainly resource-based economies, and a sharp rise in raw material prices can increase the economic growth rates of post-Soviet countries. In the post-Soviet space, Russia is the least dependent on external creditors, while the rest of the countries have a rather moderate debt burden. In this regard, it can be noted that Ukraine is at risk of potential default, and the Republic of Belarus is approaching this risk zone from year to year. The growth of budget revenues of these countries can prevent default. Since almost all post-Soviet countries depend on export revenues, a positive trade balance is of great importance.

However, in 2018 only two countries of Eastern Europe could boast of a surplus namely Russia (\$212 billion), and Belarus which in 2018 overcame a long-term period of negative trade balance and went into a small plus in this indicator (\$700 million). Thus, the rest of the post-Soviet countries have a negative trade balance, and Ukraine shows the largest deficit (- \$9.5 billion). Georgia is in second place in the “negative” rating by a large margin (- \$5.8 billion) [25, 26].

There is no successful monocultural agricultural state among the countries of Eastern Europe. For example, Ukraine as the second largest country in Europe accumulates a tenth of the world's reserves of black soil and 70% of the area consists of agricultural land. Agriculture now generates about 13% of Ukrainian GDP and about 12% of jobs, and the export of agricultural products doubled during 2012-2019 reaching about 40% of the country's total exports [26]. Ukraine today is one of the largest exporters of grain crops in the world. However, these apparent successes are actually a trap for Ukrainian farmers, most of whom are accustomed to producing only cheap raw materials inefficiently. For the successful European integration of Ukraine, it is necessary to maximize the creation of new enterprises on the domestic raw material base for the manufacture of deep processing and high added value products. This is favoured by the adopted law implementing the land market.

The permanence of investments, as a desirable characteristic of the growth of the socio-economic system, is widely studied in the direction of determining that impact to which constancy will be applied [7]. With regard to the quantitative assessment of the influence of mankind on nature, there is a dependence on the principle of thermodynamic equilibrium: if an external influence brings the system out of equilibrium, then processes

initiated in it are aimed at attenuate this impact. External influencing factors do not allow to restore balance in the system (to ensure consistency). The lack of permanence is associated with internal contradictions associated with the disturbance of the system or the transition to a whole new state. Such changes occur at critical points of bifurcation [10], i.e. those points where the choice of the further direction of the country's development from alternative options takes place (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Bifurcation diagrams of the system state [10]

It is commonly known that in synergetics the processes of evolution of a system are displayed using bifurcation diagrams (Fig. 1), where Y is a characteristic parameter of the system (level of complexity, organization, differentiation, etc.); X — time; X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4 — bifurcation points; Y_0 — value of parameter Y at point X_2 ; solid line — sustainable solutions; dash-line — unstable solutions. At the point X_5 , the lower bifurcation branch leads to a sliding of the system onto the lower branch of the previous bifurcation, and points K_1 and K_2 reflect the cones of attractors. Generally, it would be more correct to speak about polyfurcation because there can be many trajectories that leave the branching point [10].

Precisely at these points there is a loss of stability in the socio-economic system and the formation of a state that determines the further strategy. Based on this, the researchers concluded that the previous trajectory of the system with the bifurcation diagram has already lost its stability which brings it closer to catastrophic changes as a reaction to anthropogenic impact. It is these processes that have been growing since 1991. At the same time, the possibility of «rapid transformation» is noted under minor external changes, as well as «critical slowdown», when a lot of efforts do not lead to a noticeable change in the situation.

The outcome corresponding to each alternative is the result of a tangled intertwining of all variables describing the external environment with all the variables characterizing the alternative. However, the more amorphous the issue is, the more uncertainty and randomness is in it, the more difficult it becomes to correctly predict these variables and consequently the outcome. Under these conditions the decision-maker usually abstracts the problem and builds a simple model. Subsequently, the outcome obtained from the analysis of the models replaces the unpredictable outcome of the primary constraint.

Statistical assessment of the overall level of investment risk

The essence of this method lies in the fact that preliminary analysis is made of data concerning the efficiency of work on the modernization of the agricultural sector, improvement of the country's road infrastructure, etc. [3,4].

In addition, the following are used as the initial data: the volumes of transit traffic, the capacity of the established enterprises, the volumes of alienated territories. To adjust the parameters of the curves, the indicators related to the creation of new jobs and labor productivity for each analyzed investment program were used. First of all, the indicator of costs for the construction of the corresponding infrastructure element is determined

$$S_1 = \frac{K_i}{Z_i} \quad (1)$$

where S_1 – investment index; K_i is the volume of investments for the construction of the corresponding infrastructure element;

Z_i – the estimated growth in labour productivity in the country.

The risk (comparative feasibility) of investment can be measured by the absolute value of possible losses in monetary terms, or by the ratio of these losses to certain base which can be the indicator of net profit, total balance sheet profit, gross income and, finally, investor property fortunes [29].

There are four main risk areas of investor activity in the implementation of projects:

1) guaranteed area - characterized by the absence of any losses during investment activities with a guarantee of obtaining, at least the estimated profit;

2) the area of increased risk - characterized by the adjustment of the index of the guaranteed area to the level of production costs on the i-th project

$$S_2 = S_1 \frac{C_i}{C_b} \quad (2)$$

Here C_i and C_b are the actual traffic flow in the existing region and the quasi-standard level adopted, say for Ukraine, equals to 100 million tons;

3) the area of absolute risk – implies guaranteed area index correction to the level on the i-th project

$$S_3 = S_2 \frac{P_i}{P_b} \quad (3)$$

where P_i and P_b are the actual labor productivity and its suboptimal level, adopted for Ukraine equal to 20 USD/person.

Let us consider an example of a statistical assessment of the overall risk level of an investment project. The Lorenz curve [12,15] serves as a tool for statistical assessment of the risk level. In this case, the level of risk in the m-th area is determined by dependencies (1-3).

To build a graph, the cumulative (accumulated) results of risk levels are calculated. For example, for the Dnieper region, they are 0.42, 0.71, 0.63 and 0.18. The graph is built in a square 100*100, plotting the cumulative results of risks on the vertical axis, and connecting them with a smooth curve, previously dividing the horizontal axis into equal segments according to the number of risk areas (Fig. 2).

In this case, convex or concave lines can be obtained. If the frequency of losses occurrence is distributed evenly, then the curve turns into a straight line of equality. It is accepted that the degree of risk of loss is measured from 0 to 1, the higher risk corresponds to the value of the indicator closer to one. Plotting lines for different periods allows comparing the risk levels y_p by the degree of curvature of these lines. The lower y_p is, the more line is convex [6].

Any line can be described by the equation $Y = F(x)$. The risk level can be defined as the area of a figure enclosed between the abscissa axis, a corresponding line and perpendiculars drawn from the extreme points of this line to the abscissa axis, i.e.

$$Y_p = \int_0^1 F(x) dx, \%$$

Fig. 2. Degree of risk when investing in different regions [6, 29].

For the considered example, the cumulative curves can be described by the following empirical formulas :

Central region $Y_{k.m.} = -0.08x^2 + 0.06x$

Western region. $Y_l = 0.1x^2 - 0.82x$

For the example under consideration, the total risk level will be:

Central region

$$Y = \int_0^1 (-0.08x^2 + 0.06x) dx = -0.08 \left| \frac{x^3}{3} \right|_0^1 + 0.06 \left| \frac{x^2}{2} \right|_0^1 = 22\%$$

Western region

$$Y = \int_0^1 (101x^2 - x) dx = 101 \left[\frac{x^3}{3} - \frac{1}{2}x^2 \right]_0^1 = 33\%$$

In a similar way, the risk level can be calculated not only for the data of each year of past observations but also for the entire retrospective period under consideration as a whole.

Fundamental to this approach is the ability to make the most of the resources that the country has – minerals, infrastructure, labor resources, etc., since ultimately this will determine the degree of its efficiency, its internal ranking. The measure of system stability, expectedness and predictability of its development are characterized by the concept of entropy [4]. Figure 3 shows three options for the development of a country, depending on the ability of its structures to reduce the level of entropy [4]. The first option A characterizes the situation where the state transits to autonomous survival, loses development prospects and subsequently moves to a certain equilibrium state in the natural system as a whole (a decrease in the potential of individual links due to the action of natural factors and a lack of resources to eliminate the negative consequences of the impact of the natural environment, degradation of technological equipment and a decrease in the level of qualifications of personnel).

Fig. 3. Roles of the country's governing system as the owner of the process [4]

A – a system with a high level of entropy (chaotic)

B, C – organized and highly organized system

vector of interests of the control subsystem

vector of interests of controlled subsystems (transport, industry, etc.)

Version B illustrates a model where the desired direction of development of the system and coordination of efforts is achieved due to the dominance of the interests of the process owner (controlling subsystem) over the interests of controlled subsystems. Such management activity involves an increase in the order of the control object condition and a decrease in its entropy due to a greater consistency of actions taken by the owner. An increase in the entropy of a system means an increase in the uncertainty of its future states, making it less predictable in terms of the consequences of its development, since a new set of elements appears in the place of the former balanced system, the balance of which in the future can lead (and most likely will lead) to the emergence of

completely new connections and functional dependencies. Thus, developing resources the state changes the initial conditions of the environment, and this leads to a complication of the conditions for its functioning and forces to spend more resources on maintaining favourable conditions for its work as well as on restoring environmental conditions to one degree or another close to the original ones. Option *C* offers an ideal model in which all processes are strictly coordinated and subordinated to a single goal, for which specific enterprises were created [4].

If economic patterns do not underlie in the state regulation, but the biased interests of certain individuals and groups, the uncertainty of the external environment of the enterprise is increasing to the point when even knowledge of market patterns and trends will not help the company to choose a sound market policy [8,10]. Market dominance (in the economy) of several financial groups monopolizes economic policy and economic behaviour, excludes fair competition and, together with the problem of uncertainty, removes the possibility of choosing an economic strategy by the enterprise itself. The countries of Eastern Europe are now in a good state, they are already developing. This is a much more pleasant period than confrontation and struggle for existence as it was five years ago. That is why the role of the current leadership in this process of restructuring the economy is special, so that Western countries could easily expand private or conditionally private capital into the country. The attractor (in this case, the investor) is one of the possible trajectories of a new path of development of the system which is distinguished by relative stability and attracts the entire set of trajectories of the system with different initial states [9].

This trajectory of the future development of the post-Soviet countries is determined by its internal properties and is the most attractive and progressive and therefore promising. Regarding the moment of choosing an attractor (the path of development of the system), synergetics can be viewed as an optimistic way of mastering a nonlinear situation. There are many ways of developing systems, however it is necessary to get on the particular attractor (option), certain form of organization. The spectrum of possible forms of organization (development paths) is determined solely by internal environment properties and does not require any external influences parameters, thus this environment conceals the field of development paths [11]. Due to the probabilistic nature of bifurcation processes evolution cannot be reversed, and this leads to the irreversibility of not only evolution, but also time. Thus, expectations of a return to the old days are always groundless, and this is very important from the point of view of euro integration of post-Soviet countries.

They are still behind developed countries in terms of labour productivity in agriculture due to the deindustrialization of agricultural production and a low crop yield. However, this does not imply that the development of the agricultural sector is an unpromising path. It is important to decide where to use one third of the world's black soil, an advantageous geographical location and favourable climatic features.

Conclusions. The potential for the export and raw material development of the post-Soviet countries' economies has been exhausted, though they have the opportunity to obtain strategic benefits from the current situation, based on the stable world demand for ration, creating conditions for the rational channelling of the resources into promising industries. They can build a new industry [12]. Therefore, the tactical emphasis on

the agricultural sector, especially if the situation is favourable, can and should be used to develop the industrial and post-industrial sectors in the country's economy. This is a real way of making a breakthrough in modernization. It should be borne in mind that the decline in GDP implies the need to actually change markets and the structure of exports in order to stop the decline and switch to growth. In addition, individual indicators at the moment show that the development of agriculture and the development of industry do not contradict each other. This does not mean that the risk of de-industrialization and the disappearance of high-tech industries has disappeared for the post-Soviet countries. This means that it is necessary to understand the objective reasons for certain processes, as well as to highlight both negative and positive tendencies. It is necessary to take into account, for example, the rather high level of claims of Ukrainians. They have a high "comparative bar". They are geographically close to Europe and are quite strongly integrated into European culture. Their role model is standards of living in the countries of the European Union. Despite that, the level of economic and social development of Ukraine is very far from the EU. Therefore, Ukrainians are little satisfied with the standard of living. Residents of other post-Soviet countries (with the exception of the Baltic countries) are less oriented towards the EU and other Western countries in their assessments. They are more focused on Russia or other states of the former Soviet Union. Because of their lower claims, they are more satisfied with life.

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