

Harmonization of Agricultural Policy and Economic Security of the EU States

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Abstract: In the context of social-economic transformations and globalization of the international economy, the importance of the agricultural sector of the economy is increasing, the efficiency of which ensures the growth of the level of economic security. Harmonization of effective agricultural policy and economic security involves the protection of national economic interests, sustainable economic growth and modernization of the economy on the basis of agricultural sector development as a tool for economic security, and structural transformation of agricultural policy as part of agricultural security. The purpose of the research lies in substantiating the theoretical and applied principles for the formation and implementation of agricultural policy and assessing its harmonization with the economic security of the European Union. In the course of the research, the following methods have been used, namely: methods of economic analysis and synthesis; comparisons and analogies; generalization and systematization; grouping and cluster analysis. Regarding the results of the research, it has been established that the growth of the level of economic security of the European Union depends on the effectiveness of agricultural policy. Studying the peculiarities of the harmonization of agricultural policy and economic security in the countries of the European Union makes it possible to identify three groups of countries that have common features and trends in the indicators being analysed, namely: countries with a high level of economic security and moderate funding for agricultural policy (Germany (IIES: 0,593; FV: 6279967 thousand EUR), Denmark (IIES: 0,723; FV: 977871 thousand EUR), Ireland (IIES: 0,666; FV: 1573102 thousand EUR), Luxembourg (IIES: 0,607; FV: 47909 thousand EUR), the Netherlands (IIES: 0.702; FV: 836749 thousand EUR), Finland (IIES: 0,675; FV: 874699 thousand EUR) and Sweden (IIES:

0,673; FV: 948511 thousand EUR), which effectively implement public economic policy and support the development of the agricultural sector at a high level; countries with a sufficiently high level of economic security and stable development of the agricultural sector (Spain (IIES: 0.518; FV: 6908343 thousand EUR), France (IIES: 0,490; FV: 9448114 thousand EUR), Belgium (IIES: 0,544; FV: 645317 thousand EUR), the Czech Republic (IIES: 0,507; FV: 1193984 thousand EUR), Estonia (IIES: 0,418; FV: 273189 thousand EUR), Malta (IIES: 0,457; FV: 19320 thousand EUR), Austria (IIES: 0,552; FV: 1281161 thousand EUR) and Portugal (IIES: 0,5694; FV: 1370581 thousand EUR), financing of agricultural policy of which occurs in accordance with the needs of economic entities and is aimed mainly at introducing innovations; countries with a low level of economic security, characterized by structural changes in the development of the agricultural sector (Italy, Greece, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia).

Key-Words: agricultural policy, economic security, agricultural market, agriculture, common agricultural policy, the European Union.

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1 Introduction

At the present stage of unstable development of world financial and economic, political and social processes, the development of the agricultural sector of the economy is of particular importance, which for a long time has been a priority component in developing and implementing the European Union's policy. Ensuring a stable and balanced agricultural policy in the Member States of the European Union will contribute to positive changes and development of agriculture on the basis of efficiency, innovation and security, forasmuch as there is a need to comply with agricultural quality and sufficiency of food and raw materials.

The formation and implementation of agricultural policy in the European Union is characterized by a number of significant problems, including as follows: (1) lack of motivation to work; (2) unemployment; (3) labour migration; (4) poverty and decline of social infrastructure, which reduce the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and increase the inefficiency of the use of available resources.

Taking into consideration the tendencies outlined, the issue of deepening investigations of agrarian policy in the countries of the European Union and definition of its interrelation and interdependence with economic security of the analysed countries is actualized.

2 Literature Review

Strengthening the processes of globalization and the formation of regional features of the development of territories necessitate the formation of a regional policy for their management. The emergence of the necessity for European integration has deepened the

development of cross-border cooperation in the agricultural sector and led to the formation of a common agricultural policy within the Eurozone, which, at the same time, is considered as a separate component of economic policy of the European Union. Ensuring an adequate level of security of the agricultural sector is one of the objectives of effective and timely protection of the economy from external and internal threats. In view of this, Urba [1] argues that the agricultural sector is dominant in ensuring the economic security of the state. This sector operates in accordance with a specific model of coherence of its development and economic security system based on the definition of strategic priorities of the agricultural sector (increasing its economic and social efficiency, strengthening food security, developing rural areas and their infrastructure and increasing export potential), developing an effective mechanism for ensuring economic security of the state, minimizing and preventing risks and threats, as well as development imbalances, creating an appropriate institutional environment. However, in order to ensure a sufficient level of economic security of the country, it is not enough to achieve the normative value of the security level of the agricultural sector. It is important to identify the main determinants of economic security; in particular, due attention is paid to an effective agricultural policy.

Lile et al. [2] take up the position that agricultural regions in the European Union are of particular social-economic importance and require a balanced and consistent policy in this area. Therefore, it is reasonable to introduce a common agricultural policy, the main goal of which lies in increasing the competitiveness of the European agricultural sector and maintaining the sustainable development of agricultural areas in the direction of

ensuring the social and material well-being of the population.

Moatăr et al. [3] consider the agricultural policy of the European Union as a set of rules and measures aimed at increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector and ensuring adequate living conditions in rural areas in order to stabilize agricultural markets, uninterrupted supply of goods and consumer spending at affordable prices. For this very reason, Ménard [4] emphasizes the necessity of effective control over the use of all available resources of the agro-industrial complex.

Stanciu, S. [5] believes that the common agricultural policy of the European Union contributes to the consolidation of young people in agriculture and stimulates their activities. In particular, in Romania, young farmers under the age of 40 have the opportunity to receive additional financial support and preferential employment conditions.

Maevsky [6] revealed that in 2013, in the process of reforming, the agrarian policy of the countries of the European Union was related to food security, and the main objectives of the common agrarian policy were as follows: (1) self-sufficiency of the European Union in food and strengthening food security; (2) maintaining balance in the global food market; (3) the development of rural areas in the European Union; (4) combating climate change and protecting and preserving the environment.

The agricultural policy of the European Union is characterized by close interdependence with internal and external factors. It is considered in the context of ensuring the economic security of the countries of the analysed group and, at the same time, it is significantly influenced by climatic conditions, which have been emphasized at the Briefing of the European Parliament "EU agricultural policy and climate change" [7] in May 2020, where it has been stated that the agricultural sector is undergoing structural changes due to climate change, in particular: (1) changes in yields; (2) the length of the growing season; (3) availability of water; (4) biodiversity; (5) natural resource management and, at the same time, has an impact on climate formation. Moreover, a clear division of the European Union into two regions is stated according to the climatic conditions of agriculture, namely: North and South. These regions are characterized by different temperature features and rainfall, primarily influencing the effectiveness of agricultural policy in the European Union. In particular, the countries of Southern Europe have been more affected by global warming than the countries of Northern Europe, and according to forecasts until 2030,

global warming may lead to a decrease in irrigated crop yields by 20% in all regions of the European Union.

In response to the necessity to withstand the global challenges and threats of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health crisis and the need to introduce innovations in the agricultural sector, in 2021, the Council and the European Parliament were forced to reformulate the principles of the common agricultural policy and focus on large-scale comprehensive strategy for economic, social and environmental sustainability [8], which, in fact, corresponds to the basic principles of economic security of the state. Bearing this in mind, Fegerberg et al. [9] and Ignatov [10] consider innovation to be a factor in the growth of both productions in the agricultural sector and economic security of the state, and the implementation of innovation, from his viewpoint, characterizes the level of development of the agricultural sector.

Along with this, the European Parliament in the report "Towards a post - 2020 common Agricultural policy" [11] emphasizes significant changes in the economic and institutional environment of the agricultural sector and the growing market uncertainty due to geopolitical events and the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union in 2020, as well as the escalation of the crisis in the EU-US partnership. At the same time, the development of technological innovations and the digital revolution have made their own adjustments to the process of agricultural production and the processing and distribution of food among the countries of the European Union. Conducting scientific investigations in this area, Lazebnyk & Voitenko [12], [13] and Matt et al. [14] emphasize the necessity and feasibility of introducing digital technologies in agriculture, which will contribute to its sustainable development and increase the production efficiency.

Exploring the features of the agrarian policy of the countries of the European Union, Dovzhik [15] has come to the conclusion that it consists of supranational (common) and national agrarian policies. At the same time, the author argues that the common agricultural policy regulates the issues of pricing in the region, foreign trade orientation and settlement of structural changes in the agricultural sector. Along with this, national agricultural policies focus on the formation of an appropriate infrastructure; they are engaged in stimulating production, taking into account the principles of environmental conservation. By the way, the scientist considers the establishment at the level of the European Union of the price corridor at a

sufficiently high level for farmers and acceptable to consumers equally important, which provides for possible fluctuations, but within the established parameters. At the same time, the common agricultural policy of the European Union's states does not deny the possibility of imports, for which the marginal price is determined by the upper price level of the specified corridor.

It is obvious that international integration and regionalization have a positive effect on the pace of economic development of a particular analysed group of countries. In turn, a qualitatively new level of development of the agricultural sector requires radical restructuring and significant amounts of financial and economic resources, which, according to the viewpoint of Krugman [16], can be achieved by protecting national interests from the influence of destructive environmental factors, ensuring a high level of economic security of the state.

A similar position is shared by Ocepek [17], who argues that the European Union insists on integration in order to increase the competitiveness of national economies, and their unification in the world economic system is interpreted as ensuring economic security based on the equality of all member states. Herewith, the scientist considers the economic security of the countries of the European Union to be the main state goal of protecting national economic interests, ensuring sustainable economic growth and modernizing the economy.

In particular, in Germany [18] economic security is formed on the principles of social-economic progress, ensuring freedom of access to raw materials and markets; it also focuses on the export economy.

Pishchenko [19] treats the issue of studying problems of harmonizing interests of subjects of the economic security regulation mechanism in the agricultural sector from the standpoint of the relationship of the security strategy of the agricultural sector with the relevant level of economic security. The scholar considers the strategy of agricultural sector development as a tool to ensure the economic security of the state; he believes that the structural transformation of agricultural policy is a component of security of the agricultural sector.

Complementing the study of Pishchenko [19], Utenkova [20] adheres to the position that the agricultural sector is system-forming for the country's economy, the effective development of which guarantees food security, development of rural areas and territories, and stimulates the development of other sectors. It should be noted that the scientist is limited to considering the economic

security of the agricultural sector as a component of the economic security of the state, stating that this economic category is identical to food security. The author argues that its level is determined by the seasonality of production and economic activity.

Along with this, Bianco A. [21] & Bosma, N. et al. [22] emphasizes the necessity to study the country's food security through the prism of agricultural sector development on the basis of innovation, nanotechnology and sustainable certified production.

3 The Research Goals

The purpose of the research lies in substantiating the theoretical and applied principles for the formation and implementation of agricultural policy and assessing its harmonization with the economic security of the European Union.

4 Materials and Methods

In the course of the research, the following methods have been used, namely: the method of economic analysis and synthesis to study the essence of agricultural policy and economic security; comparisons and analogies in order to analyse agricultural policy and determine the state and trends of economic security of the European Union; generalization and systematization in order to summarize the results of the research and formulate the hypotheses and conclusions; cluster analysis based on the use of the k-means method for grouping the studied countries by indicators of the level of economic security and the volume of expenditures on agricultural policy.

The countries of the European Union were selected for the research.

The information base of the research is based on the reports for 2016–2020: Statistical Factsheet European Union: Agriculture and Rural Development.

5 Results

Ensuring the formation and implementation of an effective agricultural policy in the context of strengthening the economic security of the state is one of the priority areas of the country's economic policy, protecting national interests from the influence of risks and threats from the external and internal environment and ensuring the stable development of the state. The demand in harmonizing agricultural policy and economic

security of the European Union’s countries is driven by the need of state regulation of agricultural policy and economic security, forasmuch as economic growth significantly depends on the security of the agricultural sector, but the achievement of high efficiency of the agricultural sector, in turn, depends on the available financial and economic resources and the optimality and rationality of their use.

In this context, it is reasonable to study the main trends in determining the amount of funding for the agricultural sector of the countries of the European Union. The conducted analysis of the volume of expenditures of the European Union’s states on agricultural policy in 2020 (Figure 1) makes it possible to state that no stable trend has been recorded in the group of countries under consideration. It has been established that the highest volumes of agricultural policy funding are directed to such countries as: France (9448114 thousand EUR), Spain (6908343 thousand EUR), Germany (6279967 thousand EUR) and Italy (5778411 thousand EUR), which introduce the latest technologies of agriculture at a high level, thereby significantly increasing productivity in the agricultural sector.

At the same time, the lowest volumes of agricultural policy funding are observed in Malta (19320 thousand EUR), Cyprus (72929 thousand EUR) and Luxembourg (47,909 thousand EUR).

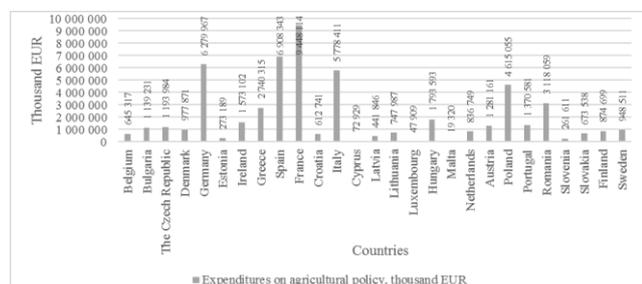


Fig. 1: The volume of expenditures of the European Union’ states on agricultural policy in 2020, thousand EUR

Calculated based on: [23]

It should be noted that highly developed countries have formed their own agricultural policies at the proper level and finance the agricultural sector in sufficient, but not too large volumes. In addition, some countries have managed to attract innovation to the development of the agricultural sector, which has improved their position and strengthened competitiveness. It is worth noting the experience of Denmark, specializing in organic farming; this country is actively implementing nanotechnology.

The development level of the agricultural sector of the European Union’s states can be determined by deepening research in the direction of identifying certain patterns and features of the agricultural policy development of the countries of the European Union. This can be achieved by grouping these countries in terms of expenditures on agricultural policy in 2020, using cluster analysis technologies based on the method of k-means. The corresponding results of clustering are systematized in Table 1.

Table 1. Grouping of European Union’s states by the volume of expenditures on agricultural policy in 2020, thousand EUR

The volume of expenditures on agricultural policy		
№	Country	Cluster number
1.	Germany	1
2.	Spain	
3.	France	
4.	Italy	
5.	Greece	2
6.	Poland	
7.	Romania	
8.	Belgium	3
9.	Bulgaria	
10.	The Czech Republic	
11.	Denmark	
12.	Estonia	
13.	Ireland	
14.	Croatia	
15.	Cyprus	
16.	Latvia	
17.	Lithuania	
18.	Luxembourg	
19.	Hungary	
20.	Malta	
21.	The Netherlands	
22.	Austria	
23.	Portugal	
24.	Slovenia	
25.	Slovakia	
26.	Finland	
27.	Sweden	

Calculated based on: [23]

According to the obtained data, three groups of countries have been formed among the countries of the European Union, which are characterized by related characteristics of the formation and implementation of agricultural policy and features

of the agricultural sector. The first group includes such countries as: Germany, Spain, France and Italy, which have the highest rates of state support for agricultural policy.

The second group consists of Greece, Poland and Romania; the agricultural policies of these countries are aimed at developing innovative technologies of agricultural production and stimulating youth activities in agriculture.

The third group includes the countries as follows: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, where the lowest volumes of agrarian policy funding are recorded.

The study of economic security trends in the countries of the European Union in 2016 (Figure 2) made it possible to establish that among the countries under consideration, the highest value of the integral indicator of economic security was recorded in Denmark (0,723), the Netherlands (0,702), Finland (0,675), Sweden (0,6) and Luxembourg (0,607), which, according to the criteria for determining the level of economic security, corresponds to the optimal value. Consequently, the countries specified belong to the group of countries with a high level of economic security.

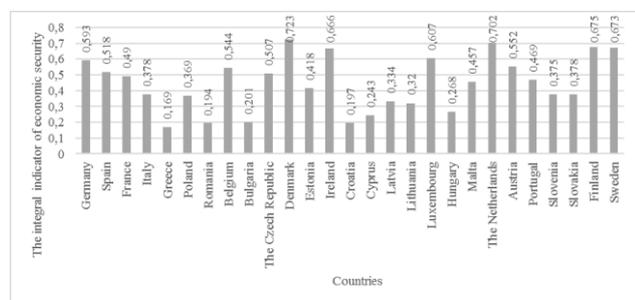


Fig. 2: Dynamics of the integral indicator of economic security in the countries of the European Union in 2016, %
Calculated based on: [23]

Herewith, the lowest values of the analysed indicator, which are within critical limits, are observed in Greece (0,169), Romania (0,194), Croatia (0,197), Bulgaria (0,201), Hungary (0,268) and Cyprus (0,243). The results obtained testify to the existence of a number of financial and economic problems and require increased attention to the economic policy of such countries.

Grouping the countries of the European Union according to the integral indicator of economic security in 2016 using cluster analysis (Table 2) has

made it possible to identify three groups of countries with common economic features and problems of economic development and ensuring economic security.

Table 2. Grouping the countries of the European Union according to the integral indicator of economic security in 2016

The integral indicator of economic security		
№	Country	Cluster number
1.	Germany	1
2.	Denmark	
3.	Ireland	
4.	Luxembourg	
5.	The Netherlands	
6.	Finland	
7.	Sweden	
8.	Spain	2
9.	France	
10.	Belgium	
11.	The Czech Republic	
12.	Estonia	
13.	Malta	
14.	Austria	
15.	Portugal	3
16.	Italy	
17.	Greece	
18.	Poland	
19.	Romania	
20.	Bulgaria	
21.	Croatia	
22.	Cyprus	
23.	Latvia	
24.	Lithuania	
25.	Hungary	
26.	Slovenia	
27.	Slovakia	

Calculated based on: [23]

The first group of countries is characterized by high indicators of economic security, stability of economic development and efficiency of economic policy in all sectors. This group includes highly developed countries, namely: Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden, which focus on improving the efficiency of the economy while maintaining economic security.

The second group of countries includes as follows: Spain, France, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Malta, Austria and Portugal,

which have relatively high rates of economic development, relatively high levels of macroeconomic stability and effective measures to protect national economic interests from potential risks and threats.

The third group of countries includes as follows: Italy, Greece, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia. The level of economic security of these countries is characterized as critical due to strengthening of negative destabilizing factors on economic processes and the economy as a whole. At the same time, reforms in restructuring and subordination have already been completed in these countries; however, the reform of security structures is at the stage of formation.

Taking into consideration the fact that conducting empirical studies of the integral indicator of economic security of the European Union's states in 2020 is quite problematic, based on calculations conducted in 2016, we substantiate the main trends in the analysed indicator and factors

influencing it, taking into account changes in GDP, real prices of agricultural products and changes in the structure of agricultural products.

It should be noted that the main cost indicator determining the degree of development of the national economy and the end result of productive activity is gross domestic product (GDP). The dynamics of real GDP growth rates in the countries of the European Union in 2016 and 2020 (Figure 3) indicates a significant drop in GDP in 2020 in all countries of the analysed group, which makes their economies less flexible and vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of risks and threats. This situation is due to the intensification of the global financial and economic crisis, caused by the instability of the social-political situation and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following on from these trends, it can be hypothesized that the level of economic security of the European Union's states has experienced a negative impact and a significant decrease under the influence of the factors outlined.

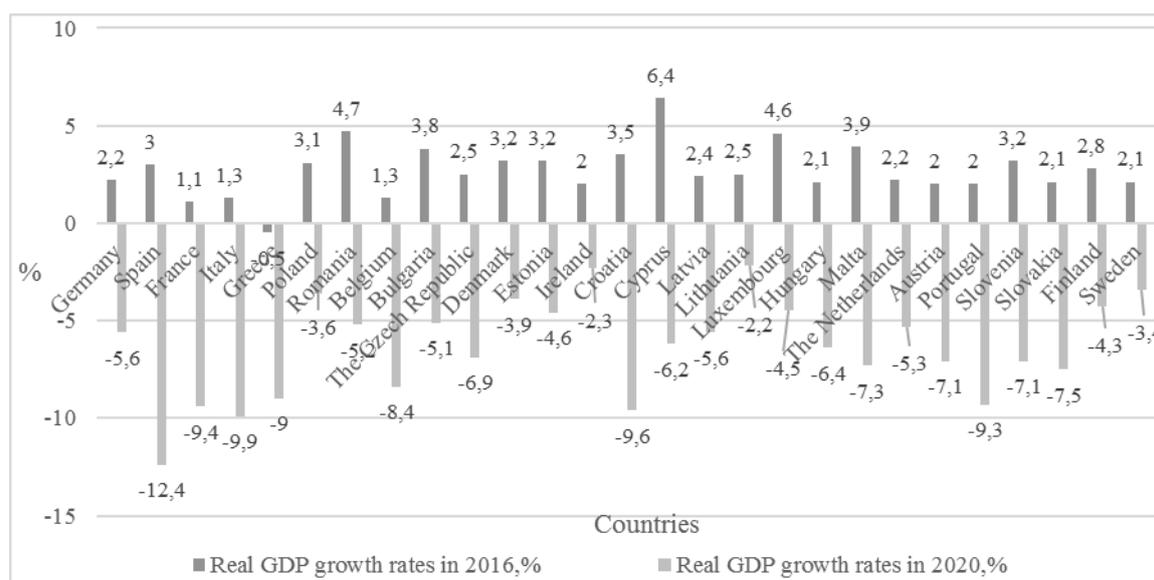


Fig. 3: Dynamics of real GDP growth rates of the European Union's states in 2016 and 2020, %
 Calculated based on: [23]

At the same time, when analysing the dynamics of changes in the state of real prices of agricultural products in the countries of the European Union in

2018–2020 (Figure 4), their decrease is stated, which is especially noticeable in 2020.

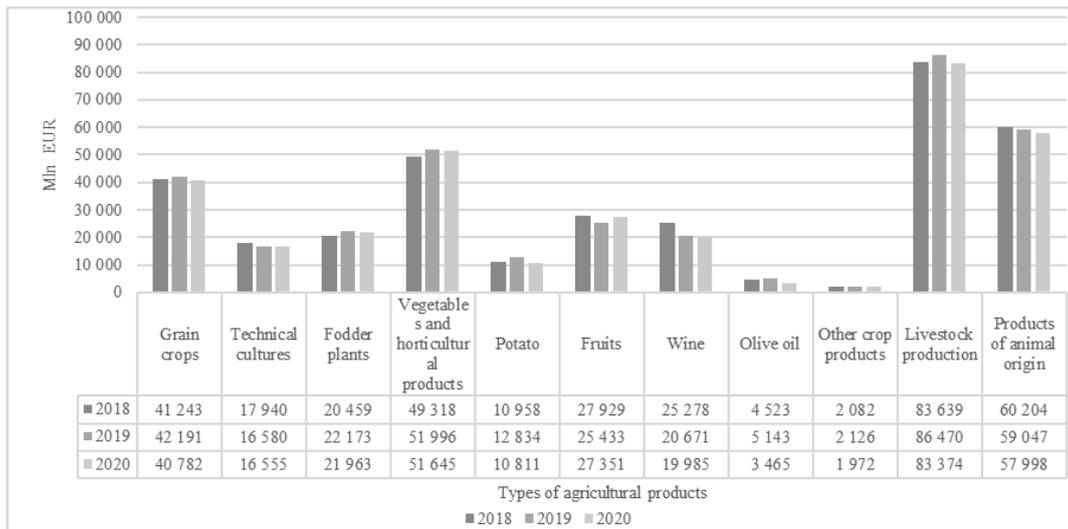


Fig. 4: Dynamics of change in the state of real prices of agricultural products in the countries of the European Union in 2020, EUR million
 Calculated based on: [23]

In this context, it is advisable to study the structure of agricultural products, which is reflected in Figure 5. According to the results of the calculations, the share of agricultural products in the European Union's states in 2020 is occupied by vegetables and horticultural products (26,5%) and grain crops growing (21%). Taking this into consideration, the hypothesis is proved regarding the significant impact on the volume of growing agricultural products of plant origin of climatic conditions for doing business, as well as the significant impact of global warming.

As for the structure of agricultural products of animal origin (Figure 6), 59% are livestock products (17,3% - cattle, 24, 9% - pigs, 0,6% - horses, 2,5% - sheep and goats, 12,2% - poultry and 1,4% - other animals), and 41% - products of animal origin (33,8% milk; 5,7% - eggs; 1,5% - other products).

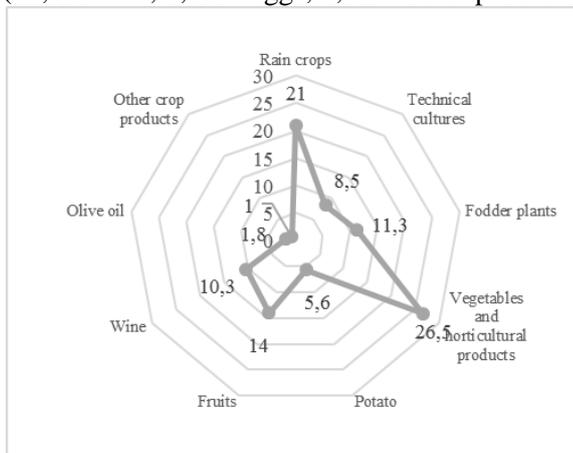


Fig. 5: The structure of agricultural products by selected types of crop production in the European Union in 2020,%
 Calculated based on: [23]

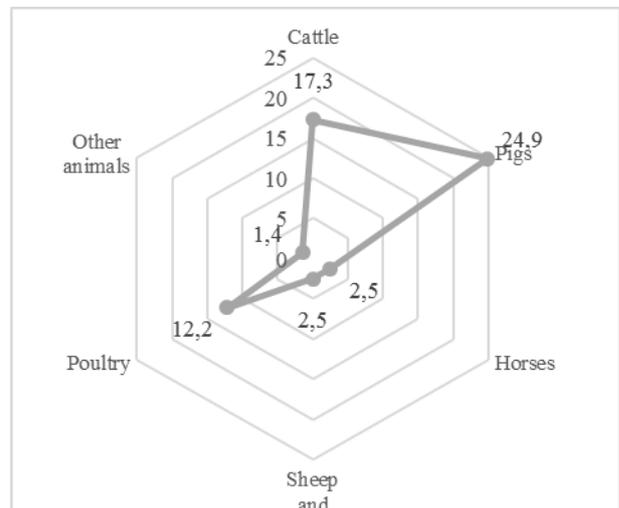


Fig. 6: The structure of agricultural products of animal origin in the European Union in 2020,%
 Calculated based on: [23]

Therefore, on the basis of the conducted studies, it can be concluded that the formation and implementation of agricultural policy and ensuring the economic security of the European Union's states are closely related. The leading positions in the structure of agricultural products of plant origin are occupied by vegetable growing, horticulture and the cultivation of crop grains, while in the structure of animal products, the cultivation of pigs and cattle dominate. Ensuring high rates of development of the agricultural sector will protect strategically important aspects of the society and help increase the level of economic security of the countries. Therefore, the formation and implementation of a balanced and effective agrarian policy of the

countries of the European Union is of particular importance.

6 Discussion

The results of conducted studies on the harmonization of agricultural policy and economic security of the countries of the European Union make it possible to single out three groups of countries that have common features in the formation and implementation of policies in the agricultural sector of the economy and, in this context ensuring, a high level of economic security.

Group 1. Countries with a high level of economic security and effective agricultural policies that involve the attraction of innovation, the implementation of innovative abilities and the satisfaction of consumer needs in terms of the quality of agricultural products (Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden).

Group 2. Countries with a relatively high level of economic security and stable development of the agricultural sector; the agricultural policy of these countries is formed in the framework of the general agricultural policy of the European Union, and implemented in coordination with leading EU member states (Spain, France, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Malta, Austria and Portugal).

Group 3. Countries with a low level of economic security, the formation and implementation of agricultural policy of which is influenced by structural changes in the agricultural sector and growing economic instability (Italy, Greece, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia).

Taking into consideration the significant differences in the formation and implementation of agricultural policy and the conditions for ensuring the economic security of the countries of the European Union, it is advisable to increase the food saturation and balance of national agricultural markets, as well as the dynamic economic development of rural areas.

7 Conclusions

Thus, the harmonization of agricultural policy and economic security of the countries of the European Union lies in ensuring such a security state of the economy of the country and the agricultural sector, which guarantees constant and effective development and protection from the destabilizing influence of risks and threats of the external and

internal environment. It has been established that the agricultural policy of the European Union is formed and implemented depending on the geographical location of the country, taking into account the features of its climatic conditions, economic development; it focuses on the basic principles of the common agricultural policy of the European Union. In addition, highly developed countries use innovations to a greater extent in implementing economic activities in the agricultural sector. It has been proved that the leading positions in the structure of agricultural products of plant origin are occupied by vegetable growing, horticulture, the cultivation of crop grains and livestock. In order to provide an advanced development of the agrarian policy of the European Union's states in the context of ensuring the economic security of the state, it is necessary to direct the main efforts towards improving the efficiency of its institutional support, transparency, stability and flexibility.

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