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# Cross-Border Mediation under Current Threats: Ukraine-Poland (Some Aspects of Interaction)

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#### **Abstract**

Using the documentary research technique, this paper outlines certain aspects of Ukraine-Poland cross-border mediation interaction in the context of contemporary threats. In addition, it points out the main contemporary threats, which affect the cross-border interaction of Ukraine and Poland. It characterizes such

threats as nuclear danger, environmental problems, humanitarian crisis, economic threats and food shortages. It points out that there are internal threats to Poland in connection with the war in Ukraine, the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, due to the large number of refugees, the threat to food security, the threat to Poland's economic stability and poverty. It is shown that Poland interacts with Ukraine on all urgent issues: helps citizens seeking temporary protection, sends humanitarian aid, strengthens and stimulates market relations. It is concluded that all this led to increased cross-border interaction between the countries. The relevance of alternative types of conflict resolution, such as mediation, is highlighted. The scope of cross-border mediation is presented, the current state of mediation is analyzed and conclusions are drawn on the need for further development of this institution.

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**Keywords:** energy crisis; international mediation; cross-border cooperation; political mediation; international politics.

Mediación transfronteriza bajo las amenazas actuales: Ucrania-Polonia (Algunos aspectos de la interacción)

#### Resumen

Mediante la técnica de investigación documental, este trabajo esboza ciertos aspectos de la interacción transfronteriza de mediación entre Ucrania y Polonia, en el contexto de las amenazas contemporáneas. Además, señala las principales amenazas contemporáneas, que afectan a la interacción transfronteriza de Ucrania y Polonia. Se caracterizan amenazas como el peligro nuclear, los problemas medioambientales, la crisis humanitaria, las amenazas económicas y la escasez de alimentos. Señala que hay amenazas internas a Polonia en relación con la guerra en Ucrania. la propagación de enfermedades infecciosas, incluyendo COVID-19, debido al gran número de refugiados, la amenaza a la seguridad alimentaria, la amenaza a la estabilidad económica de Polonia y la pobreza. Se muestra que Polonia interactúa con Ucrania en todas las cuestiones urgentes: ayuda a los ciudadanos que buscan protección temporal, envía ayuda humanitaria, fortalece y estimula las relaciones de mercado. Se concluye que todo esto condujo a un aumento de la interacción transfronteriza entre los países. Se destaca la relevancia de tipos alternativos de resolución de conflictos, como la mediación. Se presenta el alcance de la mediación transfronteriza, se analiza el estado actual de la mediación y se sacan conclusiones sobre la necesidad de un mayor desarrollo de esta institución.

**Palabras clave:** crisis energética; mediación internacional; cooperación transfronteriza; mediación política; política internacional.

#### Introduction

The full-scale invasion was sharply condemned by the European community. Humanitarian aid and refugees were provided, but European countries long feared the threat of nuclear weapons by the aggressor country, so the war escalated into a long process that posed global real threats to the entire world. Poland became one of the countries that provided the most support to Ukraine. Therefore, there is an interaction between Ukraine and Poland on all issues aimed at speeding up the end of the war. In such circumstances, there is a need for conflict resolution - both in public and private law. The relevance of cross-border mediation between Ukraine and Poland is growing.

#### **Research Problem**

The paper points out some problems of interaction between Ukraine and Poland on cross-border mediation in the face of current threats. It is found that the scientific literature pays little attention to this issue, mostly studying the issues of domestic mediation or mediation in the resolution of international disputes. Many scholars, particularly Cooper (2023) Deininger *et al.* (2023), Grossmann *et al.* (2021), Kuzemko *et al.* (2022) Analyze contemporary threats affecting country relations. Davydchyk *et al.* (2018) examined the Ukraine-EU relationship. Goldthau and Boersma (2014) found the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war since 2014 on the world food situation. Dulia (2022) analyzed the amount of social assistance provided to Ukrainian citizens in need of temporary protection. Lewtak *et al.* (2022) conducted an analysis of Ukrainian-Polish relations under war conditions. Izbash (2022) investigated the issue of online mediation. Stepanenko (2021) analyzed European mediation standards in civil law disputes and their implementation in Poland and the Czech Republic.

#### Research Focus

The focus of this study was such aspects of the interaction between Ukraine and Poland as cooperation in the conditions of modern economic, environmental, food, military threats; economic cross-border cooperation and the establishment of new economic links; social and humanitarian assistance for persons seeking temporary protection, cross-border mediation as an alternative method of dispute resolution in the conditions of modern threats.

# **Research Aim and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to identify specific aspects of the interaction between Ukraine and Poland on cross-border mediation in the context of current threats posed by military actions in Ukraine.

Research assignment: to investigate the main threats posed to Poland and Ukraine by military action, to characterize the nature of relations between the parties, to analyze the types of interaction between them, and to identify the specifics of cross-border mediation in the face of contemporary threats.

The hypothesis of the study: it is proposed in the future to pay attention to such type of alternative dispute resolution as cross-border mediation, to legislate it at the country level, to introduce the legislative consolidation and practice of online cross-border mediation.

## 1. Research Methodology

#### 1.1. General Background

To implement the objectives, the study was carried out in certain stages in a combination of analysis of theoretical material, research data from around the world, scientific studies of applied and theoretical material. Such stages were: search for research data; search for scientific literature; analysis of research data and scientific sources; comparison and comparison of identified data, development of conclusions and recommendations.

### 1.2. Sample / Participants / Group

The empirical basis for research and scientific papers of scientists from different countries, legislation of the EU, Poland, and Ukraine, data from sociological and economic research, and surveys.

#### 1.3. Instrument and Procedures

In order to implement the objectives, the study was carried out in certain stages in a combination of analysis of theoretical and statistical material and practical tasks. Such stages were:

- 1. searching for empirical data and scientific sources;
- 2. analysis of these data and sources;
- 3. comparing and contrasting data by year, providing conclusions and recommendations, and forecasting.

# 1.4. Data Analysis

The system of general scientific and special scientific methods was chosen as a methodological basis. The analytical method, which allowed revealing the influence of modern threats on the mutual relations of Ukraine and Poland, was chosen as the basic method. The integrated method allowed to combine the knowledge and practice of different branches, in particular computer technology, economics, and sociology. The synergetic methodology allowed to determine further directions of research of cross-border mediation in relations between Ukraine and Poland.

#### 2. Research Results

The full-scale attack on Ukraine in February 2022 showed the imperfection of the international security system. In recent years, institutions for conflict mediation have been created and improved among

states, but in practice, they have not been effective. Despite the existence of international mediators, there are few resolved armed conflicts involving them (Moore, 2003). The international community strongly condemned the invasion, called for an immediate cease-fire, a peaceful end to the aggression. But recognized the violation of international humanitarian law, which leads to the damage and destruction of health facilities, education, leading to a significant deterioration in the health of children, the elderly, the disabled. Pointed out the nuclear risks (Lancet, 2022).

The problem of providing social protection to people fleeing the war, of which millions of Ukrainian citizens turned out to be, most of whom sought asylum in Poland (Matviichuk and Ryzhenko, 2022), has become especially relevant. Under such conditions, European democracies had to implement a number of effective measures to deal with the situation of migration of large numbers of people. Subsequently, these measures proved effective and showed organized concerted action to provide Ukrainian citizens with free transportation, housing, food, and educational and medical services (Lesniak, 2023).

"The Russo-Ukrainian armed conflict is a dramatic global event" that has had an impact on the natural environment, society, and the economy. Energy and food have suffered losses at the global level. Sustainable development goals are at risk for many countries (Pereira, Zhao, Symochko, Inacio, Bogunovic, Barcelo, 2022).

The war in Ukraine has resulted in a global humanitarian crisis, causing many deaths, destruction, and mass displacement of people. Many more citizens are potentially at risk. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, as of April 17, 2022, more than 4 million Ukrainians, 2 million of them children, were forced to seek temporary protection abroad. Most Ukrainians left for Poland - 2.8 million people (Dulia, 2022).

Since 2022, the world has learned new real threats due to the invasion of Ukraine. Scholars have noted that the aggressor country of the Russian Federation was confident that NATO would not intervene in military action in Ukraine because of the possible escalation of the nuclear conflict.

But the fear of Russia's use of nuclear weapons prevented Western countries from providing military assistance to Ukraine in a timely manner, providing military aircraft, missiles, and equipment (Cooper, 2023). More recently, conclusions have been drawn that "Europe is no longer as peaceful as many had assumed", and "the geopolitical holiday" is over. The 2014 war in Ukraine shook the international community and intensified cross-border mediation and cooperation. In such circumstances, there are new needs for cross-border interaction between states and international organizations, both public and private law.

Among the current threats to the modern world is the looming energy crisis caused by military action in Ukraine since 2014 and the confrontation between the West and Russia. As the global energy industry moves into the next phase with a new emphasis on renewable energy and energy efficiency, and as energy markets become increasingly global and interconnected, many politicians and figures are engaged in resolving international disputes militarily. For all this time, Brussels and Washington have proposed sanctions against the Russian energy sector to force Russia to end its military intervention in Ukraine. However, there were still opinions about replacing energy sanctions with others and continuing to use sources from the aggressor country (Goldthau and Boersma, 2014).

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has already shown the real threat of energy dependence of the whole of Europe on the aggressor country and the total dependence of the energy situation on the events in Ukraine. After all, some European countries have decided to abandon Russian fuel and introduce alternative energy sources, finding suppliers. Such important and difficult steps in the future will lead to the supply of clean energy, the achievement of sustainable development goals.

The energy issue was considered one of the most important for the geopolitical security of Europe (Kuzemko *et al.*, 2022). The use of Russian gas has become costly and unreliable for Europe, and the war and uncertainty surrounding the natural gas it produces will play an important role in the future development of the European energy transition. "At what will likely be one of the defining moments of European history, the fate of Europe's energy transition will be decided in the suburbs of Ukrainian cities" (Osička and Černoch, 2022: 21).

Access to energy becomes an instrument of influence for political entrepreneurs and undermines citizens' trust in power institutions (Grossmann *et al.*, 2021). Poland, as a European country on the border with Ukraine, is interested in purchasing energy sources, and fuel in Ukraine, solving the "Ukrainian-Russian issue" and ensuring peace in Ukraine.

Together with the energy war in Ukraine, it threatened the world's food crisis. As a result of the hostilities, the supply of a significant portion of crops from Ukraine has been cut off, leading to higher prices, inflation, fewer jobs, and slowing the world's recovery from COVID-19. Unemployment has skyrocketed in Germany and could grow in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. The main impact of the war is yet to come and will lead to poverty and loss of purchasing power in European countries (Pereira *et al.*, 2022).

Ukraine is a major supplier, the "breadbasket" of wheat, sunflower oil, and other crops to Europe, with 41.5 million hectares of fertile land, compared to 11 million hectares in Poland, 18 million hectares in France, and 12 million hectares in Germany. Therefore, any obstruction of food

production across Ukraine could cause upheaval and conflict in other countries. In addition, the massive displacement of the population, the economic crisis, and the scarcity of resources suffered by Ukrainian farmers as a result of the war indicate that, in addition to the direct consequences, indirect ones may also be important (Deininger *et al.*, 2023).

The war has provoked dramatic changes in the global economy and geopolitics, changes in the humanitarian situation, and changes in the environment. The threat of ecological catastrophe due to intense fighting has emerged, as the consequences of military actions extend beyond Ukraine (Pereira *et al.*, 2022). Poland is one of the first to be affected by the environmental consequences of the war. Therefore, it is important to negotiate and work in this area.

Ukraine began the process of integration into the European Union, this was accompanied by various socio-economic, historical, political, legislative, international processes, which lasted more than a decade. If anyone had doubts about Ukraine's desire to join the European Union, then with the beginning of the war in February 2022 it became clear what vector of development Ukraine was seeking, and the majority of the population supported European integration and the end of any partnership with Russia (Shelemba, 2022).

The European Union, including Poland, in turn, changed its views and approaches to cooperation with Ukraine and considered Ukraine's membership in the EU to ensure peace in it. Views on cooperation with enterprises and entrepreneurs from Ukraine have changed, and the role of Ukrainian oligarchs in international cooperation has decreased.

These changes will determine the future vector of relations of Poland and other countries with Ukraine (Davydchyk *et al.*, 2018). Ukraine has passed the maturity test of its power institutions, law enforcement agencies, and defense sector, has shown coherent performance and law and order during the war (Kaplina, 2022), has made a number of changes in legislation, is active in combating corruption, is considering the circulation of firearms (Zakharchuk, 2022).

International management and cross-border cooperation depends on Central and Eastern Europe, which is a defining geopolitical territory, so it has been investigated since 2014 that strengthening relations between the EU and Ukraine is of importance for both sides politically and economically, given Ukraine's size and geographic location. Ukraine's accession to the EU will cause increased international trade, and promote Ukraine's economic modernization and integration with the EU's internal market (Spiliopoulos, 2014).

Poland was the first, since Ukraine took its course to the EU, to interact with Ukraine to establish socio-economic ties, so millions of refugees (about

2.5 million), mostly women, children, and the elderly, crossed the border with Poland in the first days of the war. This necessitated a rapid response to new domestic threats to that country, such as the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19 (Lewtak *et al.*, 2022). This strengthens international cooperation, cross-border mediation of Poland and Ukraine.

In order to provide adequate assistance to Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war, Poland passed the law "On Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of that State" (O pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium ego państwa, 2022). This law provided various types of assistance for Ukrainians, which was an example of a quick response to the challenges and prevention of a humanitarian disaster due to a large number of refugees (Matviichuk and Ryzhenko, 2022).

Ukrainians were provided access to social services, temporary free housing, legal, medical, psychological, and humanitarian assistance (Dulia, 2022). The Polish Ministry of Justice ensures access to free legal assistance, counseling, and legal education.

For this purpose, the Ministry of Justice of Poland collects information on the availability of free legal aid services in Ukrainian, Russian, and English in all points of assistance works on the possibility of increasing the working hours of the specialist in the field of foreigners' rights in the points of free assistance, created a 24-hour hotline (Legal Aid, Undated). Free legal assistance is aimed at providing legal information about the rights and obligations of persons in need of temporary protection; assistance in solving legal problems and drawing up documents; mediation; representation in court.

Free civil consultations include individual consideration of a problematic situation by a civil advisor; selection of ways and means of solving it; explanation of rights and obligations; support for persons in solving the problem independently; assistance in developing an action plan to solve the problem and their implementation (About nieodpłatnej pomocy prawnej).

The Polish government website contains a list of services provided to Ukrainian citizens in need of temporary protection, including legal services and services for mediation and pre-trial dispute resolution. Where a citizen of Ukraine can fill out an interactive feedback form and ask a question about mediator's participation in dispute resolution (Legal Aid, Undated).

Poland adopted legislation on mediation in 2005, amending the Code of Civil Procedure, which establishes the basic principles of mediation (Stepanenko, 2021). Due to the large number of refugees from Ukraine, the latter had disputes with persons who were in other countries. Crossborder mediation was suggested for their resolution. Mediation in crossborder cases mainly concerns disputes and conflicts in family cases,

such as determination of a child's place of residence, exercise of parental authority, contact with the child, resolution of issues important for the child, child abduction abroad by one of the parents, property issues in civil and economic disputes to fulfill the terms of contracts (Mediacja w sprawach transgranicznych, n/y). In addition to the Ministry of Justice, the Public Council for Alternative Dispute Resolution, whose offices are located in each regional court and courts of appeal, and the mediation centers of notary councils (Stepanenko, 2022).

Mediation and conciliation are more demanding means of dispute resolution than arbitration because they involve the cooperation of the conflicting parties to reach an agreement. In addition to social issues and disputes over the fulfillment of economic and civil contracts, cross-border mediation can be applied in various spheres.

Thus, Grzybczyk (2022) pointed out the usefulness of mediation and conciliation in intellectual property disputes. Melnychuk (2022) concluded that mediation works successfully in administrative proceedings in European countries. Scholars have also noted the need to modernize the judicial process in view of digitalization, the decline of economic processes, and the need to change the format of the relationship between the participants (Melnychenko, 2021).

The military aggression of the Kremlin regime against Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, and support of pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas actualized the restoration of special sections of Ukrainian law governing relations in the system of military and civil-military law (Gorinov and Mereniuk, 2022), also showed the need to improve standards of civil, economic, criminal, international and other areas of Ukrainian law.

There was a question in solving many social and economic problems, interaction with international organizations, other states. In particular, as noted above, Poland has become the state most closely cooperating with Ukraine in various spheres. Both countries are interested in Ukraine's victory and the elimination of threats caused by the war, and in further cross-border cooperation in various sectors.

In particular, cross-border mediation between these countries should be used as a quick and effective way to resolve both public and private law conflicts. Scholars have noted the universality of the mediation procedure, which has evolved because of the increasing intensity and international contacts. Mediation developed in the U.S. and spread to different countries of the world and has evolved, depending on the experience of certain countries in using it (Kurylych, 2022).

Cross-border mediation is capable of solving complex problems, can be the basis of fruitful international economic, legal, and social cooperation, a means of maintaining sustainable economic ties and cooperation. With the development of digital technologies for rapid resolution of disputes, especially in conditions of rapid development of relations between Ukraine and Poland, it is advisable to use online mediation through modern means of communication, videoconferencing, and the Internet. This method allows the resolution of disputes almost at the moment of their occurrence (Izbash, 2022). Online mediation is appropriate in the context of the rapid increase of cross-border agreements, especially those concluded online between Ukraine and Poland (Izbash, 2022).

Negotiation processes in cross-border mediation are conducted by mediators with appropriate communication culture and skills of dispute resolution, knowledge of both Polish and Ukrainian legislation. Ogliastri *et al.* (2023) identified three prototypes of negotiations:

- 1. Focused on personal relationships, expression of emotions, and a flexible agenda for a polychronic procedure;
- 2. Formal, fact-focused and monochronic, maximizing economic value but ignoring personal relationships;
- 3. Can point to contexts where different modes of negotiation coexist.

Conflicts are characterized by omnipresence and brutality toward the parties, so mediation and negotiation have remained important methods of dispute resolution, including cross-border disputes, for many years. The results are not imposed on the parties by the courts or an influential outsider (Zartman, 2022).

At the same time, mediation is a flexible tool for resolving cross-border disputes. The introduction of mediation procedures in the national legal system is a way to ensure the human right of access to justice. Due to the globalization of the economy, the implementation of Ukrainian legislation into European legislation, and the increasing influence of international law, mediation is increasingly used in international relations (Krestovska, 2020).

Ukraine enshrined in law the procedure for mediation in 2021, this legalized mediators, inspired public confidence in this legal procedure, established cooperation with the courts, brought it closer to international cooperation, and ensured compliance with the requirements of the Singapore Convention on Mediation - UN Convention on Cross-Border Agreements (Romanadze, 2022).

#### 3. Discussion

The results indicate that scholars have not sufficiently studied the problems of cross-border mediation in the context of contemporary threats.

However, threats arising from military action in Ukraine have been actively considered among scholars. Goldthau and Boersma (2014) proposed to pay attention to the energy independence of Europe from the Russian Federation since the beginning of its military aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and to take into account the creation of alternative energy sources and create an energy union.

As early as 2023, Cooper (2023) argued that the successful use of nuclear deterrence raises the specter of a paradox of stability and instability. The consequence of the lack of decisive swarms in 2014 was today's events and threats. Scholars are almost unanimous in agreeing on the crushing losses of this war, and its future threats, but in different ways emphasizing one consequence or another. Deininger *et al.* (2023) estimate war-induced crop losses, analyzing 10,125 rural councils in Ukraine, concluding a possible food crisis due to lack of supply.

Kuzemko et al. (2022) point out that the current situation in Europe is shaken, life in Europe is no longer carefree, Europe is phasing out imports of Russian fossil fuels, and is rethinking its approaches to energy security. Osička and Černoch, (2022) suggest further ways forward for European energy policy. Pereira et al. (2022) expressed sensible views that the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict is pushing back sustainable development goals. Matviichuk and Ryzhenko (2022), exploring the legal regulation of state and local government support for Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Poland, note the close cooperation and collaboration between Ukraine and Poland on social issues.

Izbash (2022), Grzybczyk (2022), Kurylych (2022), Krestovska (2020), Matviichuk and Ryzhenko (2022) Exploring the issues of mediation noted its usefulness for various state systems, expediency of further studying this institution and application in practice. This study was a logical continuation of scientific works, which raise many problems and require further study.

# **Conclusions and Implications**

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this study. Modern dangers of both global and local level have influenced all spheres of activity of the countries. The relations between Ukraine and Poland have acquired a new level, cooperation of these countries has intensified in all sectors.

The countries, interacting, are aimed at achieving common goals of preserving peace, the natural environment, the economy, a stable standard of living of citizens, and their social protection. Therefore, cooperation in the issue of alternative dispute resolution, including through cross-border mediation, in the future will be of practical value for use by citizens, businesses, and at the interstate level.

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