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## APPROACHES TO FOOD SAFETY COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY FOR CROSS-BORDER TRADE BETWEEN THE EU AND UKRAINE

**Background.** Food safety, nutritional value and food security are interrelated concepts. The consumption of unsafe foods contributes to disease and malnutrition, especially among vulnerable groups such as infants, children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. In addition to its impact on health, food safety contributes to economic growth, tourism and international trade, which are important factors for sustainable development. Food security is also affected by market globalization, demographic change, environmental challenges and the transformation of food systems. The identification of product quality indicators with indicators of current standards often indicates a decrease in the nutritional value of food products and an excess of the maximum content of a contaminant in the product, which does not allow it to be classified as a safe product. In turn, a safe food product is a food product that does not create a harmful effect on human health directly or indirectly under the conditions of its production and circulation in compliance with the requirements of sanitary measures and consumption for its intended purpose.

**Methods.** The methodological basis of the research is a set of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, comparison) and special methods of economic research, in particular: economic and statistical analysis, content analysis of regulatory legal acts, comparative legal analysis, case method, as well as a graphical method for visualizing results. A special attention is paid to the methods of risk analysis and compliance cost analysis, which are characteristic of research in the field of food safety management.

**Results.** Some Ukrainian exporters, realizing the relevance of compliance with European standards, have switched to their application independently, without waiting for the official adoption of adapted national versions. However, this approach is risky, since independent translation and interpretation of standards can lead to ambiguous understanding of individual provisions. To avoid such situations, it is advisable to translate and implement standards in cooperation with EU technical committees, which allows ensuring the accuracy of wording and compliance of standards with real practices at the international level. A successful policy in this area should be based on a clearly formulated national strategy. Such a strategy should include long-term priorities, basic principles of action and provide for a coordination mechanism between state bodies, scientific institutions, business representatives and consumers. Defining common goals avoids fragmentation of management decisions, strengthens trust in the system and creates conditions for equal dialogue between all parties to the process. An effective food safety policy should be based on the principles of transparency, scientific validity, institutional capacity and openness to international cooperation. The IFC offered several strategic steps that can significantly improve food security in Ukraine and at the same time contribute to the development of international trade.

**Conclusions.** As part of the strategic course for European integration, Ukraine must develop institutional and technological tools that will ensure compliance of national legislation in the field of food safety with modern international requirements. One of the key solutions in this direction is the creation of the National Coordination Center for Harmonization of Standards, which will unite the efforts of state bodies, business, educational institutions and international partners. Such a platform will allow not only to centrally manage the processes of adapting Ukrainian regulatory acts to EU standards, but also to ensure constant monitoring of their implementation, coordination of educational initiatives, as well as effective management of technical assistance projects. In parallel with institutional changes, a system of support for food businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones, needs to be developed. This includes both financial mechanisms – granting grants and preferential taxation for enterprises that certify production according to ISO 22000, HACCP, IFS, BRC standards – and the organization of consulting assistance. It is important to create regional support centers where businesses will receive professional assistance in implementing standards, as well as to ensure access to specialized training and advanced training programs.

**Keywords:** food safety, compliance standards, food quality, cross-border trade, international economic relations, regulatory framework.

### Background

Food safety is a concept that includes the processing, preparation and storage of food in such a way as to prevent foodborne illnesses. It means that food producers and sellers must follow several procedures to avoid potentially serious health hazards (Office of Food Safety and Veterinary Medicine, 2021). In the Law of Ukraine "On Food Safety and Quality" (2007) the quality of a food product is defined as the degree of perfection of the properties and characteristics of a food product that can satisfy the needs (requirements) and wishes of those who consume or use this food product. FAO/WHO (2025) defines food safety as "the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when prepared and/or consumed as intended".

The identification of product quality indicators with indicators of current standards often indicates a decrease in the nutritional value of food products and an excess of the maximum content of a contaminant in the product, which does not allow it to be classified as a safe product. In turn, a safe food product is a food product that does not create a harmful effect on human health directly or indirectly under the conditions of its production and circulation in compliance with the requirements of sanitary measures and consumption for its intended purpose. That is, an unsafe food product is a product whose quality indicators and consumer properties do not meet the requirements of regulatory documents and/or contains a

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hazardous factor (chemical, physical, biological) that can negatively affect human health through nutrition.

As noted by the WHO, a sufficient safe and balanced nutrition is an important factor in maintaining life and strengthening health. The issues of food safety, nutrition and food security are inextricably linked. Unsafe foods create a vicious circle of diseases and malnutrition, which particularly affects newborns and infants, the elderly and the sick. Today, the food supply chain is international in nature. Effective cooperation between governments, food producers and consumers contribute to ensuring food safety. Ukraine, including at the legislative level, is trying to address food safety issues, but this is not only a matter for the state, but also for each of us personally. Responsibility in choosing products and compiling one's own diet is the key to maintaining health and preventing a whole range of diseases related to the way of eating. Food poisoning, in addition to harming the health of a particular person, causes significant losses to the economy and image of the state, manufacturing enterprises, trade, and tourism (Office of Food..., 2021).

The population growth leads to increased demand for food, which necessitates the active development of agriculture in middle- and low-income countries. However, there is growing concern about the safety of products, including vegetables, fruits, meat, eggs and dairy products. Inadequate regulation of food safety measures in the agricultural supply chain can lead to an increase in foodborne diseases. Every year, about 600 million people (almost one in ten people in the world) suffer from foodborne diseases, causing 420,000 deaths.

Food safety issues have become widespread due to food shortages, market fluctuations and restrictions on the import and export of various food products. Some unscrupulous traders exploit regulatory loopholes to profit, leading to the spread of fraudulent food practices. As a result, the number of diseases caused by the consumption of products containing dangerous bacteria, viruses, mycotoxins, pesticides, heavy metals and pharmaceutical residues is increasing. M. Kharel, B. D. Dahal and N. Raut suppose that the problem of food-borne infections is relevant in both developed and developing countries, where the risk of spreading such diseases is much higher. In addition, food adulteration, including substitution, improper labeling and violation of sanitary standards, is of serious concern (Kharel et al., 2022).

A global food trade increases health risks as supply chains span multiple countries. Establishing effective national food control standards is therefore crucial to protecting consumers. Public health is therefore directly dependent on the effectiveness of national control systems to ensure that only safe and quality food is supplied. Codex Alimentarius was developed to set international standards for food quality and safety and to facilitate international trade in agricultural products (Tibebu et al., 2024).

Food safety and quality hazards can arise at any stage of production, from cultivation to consumption. The main hazards are biological, chemical and physical factors that can increase the risk associated with the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Before entering the international market, countries must ensure that their food products meet established standards, while imported products must meet national requirements. This involves careful control of food hygiene at all stages of production – from preparation to storage. All processes must comply with good agricultural practices and a system of hazard analysis and critical control points. The WHO

recommends the implementation of a control system based on risk assessment, and the World Organization for Animal Health promotes the monitoring of animal diseases that may pose a threat to humans. At the same time, sanitary and phytosanitary control measures implemented by small-scale farmers often cause export rejections (Gizaw, 2019).

Food safety, nutritional value and food security are interrelated concepts. The consumption of unsafe foods contributes to disease and malnutrition, especially among vulnerable groups such as infants, children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. In addition to its impact on health, food safety contributes to economic growth, tourism and international trade, which are important factors for sustainable development. Food security is also affected by market globalization, demographic change, environmental challenges and the transformation of food systems. The World Health Organization (WHO) works to strengthen countries' capacities to prevent, detect and respond to threats posed by unsafe foods, both nationally and internationally (WHO, 2025).

Ensuring safe food has both immediate and long-term positive effects on society, the environment and the economy. Good food contributes to the normal absorption of nutrients, supports health and improves living standards. It is important to understand that only safe food can be freely traded on the international market. Eating unsafe food negatively affects human development and can be an obstacle to achieving the global sustainable development goals. According to a 2019 World Bank report, food safety problems cost low- and middle-income countries USD 110 billion annually in lost productivity and high health care costs. Contaminated or unsafe food often leads to trade restrictions, economic losses and increased food waste. At the same time, producing safe food opens new markets, increases competitiveness and contributes to economic growth.

#### ***The purpose of the article***

The purpose of the research is to analyze a system for ensuring the safety and quality of food products in Ukraine in the context of cross-border trade with the EU and to develop recommendations for improving the efficiency of adaptation of Ukrainian producers to EU requirements. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to complete the following tasks as: to define the concept and importance of food safety and quality in international trade; to describe approaches to ensuring food safety in international trade; to identify key international and regional food safety and quality standards; to analyze the current state of cross-border trade between the EU and Ukraine in the food sector; to investigate compliance mechanisms and control systems in the field of food safety; to identify problems and gaps in compliance with food safety requirements for cross-border trade; to provide recommendations on trade facilitation and food safety policies.

In the current conditions of globalization and liberalization of the international trade, when the issue of ensuring proper quality and safety of products comes to the fore, the sphere of food trade attracts special attention. Its importance for the development of international economic relations is constantly growing, given the growing demands of consumers, increased regulatory control, as well as the export orientation of developing economies, particularly Ukraine. The European Union, as one of the world's largest importers of agricultural and food products, sets high standards for the quality and safety of products imported into its territory. In this context, the harmonization of Ukrainian standards and procedures with EU requirements is an extremely important factor not only for the development of the national agrarian sector, but also for

the general deepening of economic integration between Ukraine and the EU. Ukraine has significant export potential in the field of food production. However, for effective entry into European markets, compliance with the requirements of EU Regulations on food safety (in particular, Regulations (EC) No. 178/2002, No. 852/2004, No. 853/2004) is a necessary condition. That is why the topic of ensuring compliance with quality and safety standards of food products for cross-border trade between the EU and Ukraine is relevant, strategically important and deserves a comprehensive economic and legal study.

#### **Literature review**

Ensuring food safety in international trade is based on a comprehensive approach that encompasses legal, scientific and managerial regulatory mechanisms. The basic concept is to systematically monitor the entire food chain – from the production of raw materials to the final consumer. This means implementing preventive measures that reduce the risks of product contamination and guarantee its quality in accordance with international standards.

The level of development of the problem in the scientific literature indicates its importance for the international trade. Among Ukrainian scholars who studied the issues of harmonization of technical regulation and food safety systems with EU requirements, it is worth noting the works of O. I. Tarasenko, Y. M. Makogon, I. V. Prokopenko, A. Ya. Mazaraki. In the international literature, a substantial contribution to the development of the topic was made by J. Swinnen, K. Anderson, P. van der Meulen, M. Jansen, as well as the organizations FAO, OECD, WTO, IFC, World Bank. Of great importance for analyzing the state of the Ukrainian market are official statistical and analytical data from such institutions as the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the State Service for Food and Consumer Protection, IFC, Eurostat, UN Comtrade, Trademap.

The globalization of the food market has led to the need to address the problem of food safety and the need to reduce the risks of their negative impact on human health. The problem is so serious and large-scale that governments and leading associations of food producers are increasingly addressing food safety issues and looking for ways to ensure and control it. O. Orlenko considers that the most effective solution is the introduction of uniform international standards and requirements for ensuring food safety (Orlenko, 2016, p. 92). In opinion of V. Kotelevych, S. Guralaska and V. Goncharenko, a significant part of humanity has always been rightly concerned about satisfying its consumer needs with environmentally friendly food products grown without the use of components in the technological cycle that are harmful to health or potentially threaten the health of the population (Kotelevych et al., 2023, p. 10). Research by scientists N. Trusova, N. Prysyzhnyuk, T. Mazur, N. Rohl, N. Fedoruk confirms that food security characterizes relations at different levels of the human community: global, national, regional and local. At the present stage, it is associated with international trends in scientific support for the development of all branches of agro-industrial production (Trusova et al., 2024, p. 10–12).

Before entering the international market, countries must ensure that their food products meet established standards, while imported products must meet national requirements. This involves careful control of food hygiene at all stages of production – from the preparation to storage. All processes must comply with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. The WHO recommends implementing a risk-based control system, and the World

Organization for Animal Health (OIE) promotes the monitoring of animal diseases that may pose a threat to humans. At the same time, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) control measures implemented by small farmers often cause export refusals.

The issue of food security, as we have already noted, is at the epicenter of the research of international organizations and foreign scholars. They reveal the contradictory interaction of endogenous and exogenous factors in terms of their impact on food security at different levels of its implementation. Thus, the works of V. Zaliznyuk outline the significant role of state policy in ensuring the food problem at the national level (Zaliznyuk, 2018, p. 13). At the same time V. Franchuk, M. Kopytko, S. Melnyk propose to consider food security as an integral factor in preserving national sovereignty, the most important component of state demographic policy, to ensure the quality high standards of livelihood of the population not only in the medium term, but also in the long term (Franchuk et al., 2022, p. 9–17).

The researcher D. Krylov emphasizes that achieving food security objectives should be carried out at three hierarchical levels: national, regional and micro-level. Among the key factors that are destabilizing factors of the food security, he highlights economic crises, the deployment of military operations, natural disasters and changes in natural and climatic conditions, the growth of the planet's population, etc. The author also highlights that a full-scale war on the territory of Ukraine has become a risk for food security and the security of the country, therefore the priority issue for today should be finding effective ways to mitigate its negative consequences (Krylov, 2023, p. 2–4).

The close connection between the environmental and food security as important components in ensuring the economic security of Ukraine is determined by another Ukrainian researcher, O. Shevchenko. An assessment of global food security in the context of the interaction of factors of different levels of mutual influence is carried out in the work of A. Maryna and Ya. Yankovska. The authors note that understanding the key reasons that are the prerequisites for the emergence and exacerbation of food crises has not only theoretical but also applied significance. This is because through scientific discourse the variability of the use of the most effective tools and mechanisms for ensuring food security at the global level is assessed.

The issues of the research on the content, forms of manifestation and factors influencing the state of food security are inseparable from the search for a certain formalization of this dimension. Such attempts can be observed both at the level of individual national economies and at the global level. It is worth noting in this direction the efforts of experts L. Kudyрко and A. Kazanishen, who determine the content of global food security and its formalized manifestation through the integral index GFSI (Kudyрко, & Kazanishen, 2024, p. 4–7).

The best practices require that the national food safety policy in the country clearly defines the need to: protect public health by reducing the risk of foodborne diseases; to protect consumers from unsafe food products; to promote economic development by creating a reliable regulatory system for domestic food production, as well as for food trade in domestic and international markets.

The international experience shows that an effective tool for implementing a national food safety policy is a national strategic plan that identifies the actions needed to achieve the objectives set out in the national food safety policy. According to best practices, a strategic plan should include information on: areas of intervention/tasks;

responsible central executive bodies and competent authority/authorities; budget expenditures; timeframes for implementing the tasks set out in the strategic plan; reporting mechanisms to monitor progress (Assessment of the food safety..., 2024).

Y. Kucher and N. Logvinenko noted that the main areas of food quality management at the state and regional levels include: 1) improving the regulatory framework in the field of food quality and safety, namely, adopting the experience of countries around the world. It is necessary to comprehensively study their approach to prohibiting the consumption of a certain product, always emphasizing that it cannot be prohibited without reason, and this must be investigated; 2) regulatory and methodological support for the development of regulatory documents in the field of food safety, in particular national standards, technical regulations, adoption of these standards from developed countries, which will help our country improve the quality and safety of food products in its country and will allow us to trade with other countries where this support has been adopted; 3) conducting extensive educational work, familiarization with international requirements, introducing courses on the study of product quality and safety, the study of labeling and organoleptic evaluation of the product into the school curriculum (Kucher, & Logvinenko, 2017, p. 560).

An important theoretical aspect is the harmonization of international safety standards. One of the main regulatory documents in this area is the Codex Alimentarius, which contains recommendations on food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, as well as methods for controlling contaminants, pesticide residues and veterinary drugs. Implementation of the Codex contributes to the elimination of trade barriers and ensures mutual recognition of standards between countries.

A particular attention in theoretical approaches is paid to the concept of preventive control, which is aimed at preventing problems from occurring, rather than eliminating them after they are detected. This approach is implemented through the implementation of good manufacturing practices (GMP), good hygiene practices (GHP) and ISO 22000 standards, which establish general requirements for food safety management. The international cooperation and information exchange between countries play a significant role in ensuring food safety. Rapid response mechanisms, such as the EU RASFF system or the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), help to identify unsafe products in a timely manner and take measures to withdraw them from the market. Table 1. shows the key authorities, laws and certifications that are most important in the field of food safety.

Table 1

Key Food Safety Compliance Bodies & Standards in International Trade

Organization / Standard / Regulation	Region / Country	Responsibility / Function	Type	Notes
Codex Alimentarius (FAO/WHO)	International	Sets international food safety standards	International Standard	Basis for WTO SPS and national regulations
WTO SPS Agreement	International	Ensures fair trade in food using sanitary and phytosanitary rules	Trade Agreement	Prevents unjustified trade barriers
FDA (Food and Drug Administration)	USA	Regulates food safety for domestic and imported foods	Government Agency	Enforces food labeling, recalls, inspections
FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act)	USA	Shifts focus to prevention in food safety	National Law	Requires safety plans from exporters to the U.S.
EFSA (European Food Safety Authority)	EU	Scientific assessment of risks related to food	Government Agency	Advises EU Commission on food policies
General Food Law (EC Regulation 178/2002)	EU	Sets general principles and requirements of EU food law	Regulation	Foundation for traceability and food law in the EU
ISO 22000 (Food Safety Management System)	International	Provides framework for food safety management systems	ISO Standard	Certifiable, globally recognized
HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points)	International	Identifies and controls food safety hazards	Risk Management System	Mandatory in many countries
GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative)	International	Benchmarks food safety standards to harmonize global trade	Industry Initiative	Recognizes BRCGS, IFS, SQF, FSSC 22000, etc

Source: CREC № 1935/2004, CREC № 1881/2006, CREC № 1107/2009, CREC № 1169/2011.

Thus, the ensuring food safety in the international trade is based on multi-level theoretical approaches that combine the risk assessment, harmonization of standards, preventive control and international coordination. They allow minimizing threats to consumer health and ensuring the stable development of the global food market.

**Methods**

The methodological basis of the research is a set of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, comparison) and special methods of economic research, in particular: economic and statistical analysis, content analysis of regulatory legal acts, SWOT analysis, comparative legal analysis, case method, as well as a graphical method for visualizing results. A special attention is paid to the methods of risk analysis and compliance cost analysis, which are characteristic of research in the field of food safety management.

**Results**

The globalization has significantly transformed approaches to harmonizing international food safety standards, creating both new opportunities and serious challenges due to cultural, social and economic factors. The cultural environment plays a key role in food safety standardization. In different countries, cultural norms and dietary traditions influence the perception of risks, hygiene requirements and even the definition of a "safe food product". For example, approaches to meat processing, the use of certain additives or storage methods may be acceptable in some cultures but unacceptable in others. This creates the need for strategic intercultural dialogue in the development of unified standards.

Social factors, in particular urbanization, the educational level of consumers and the impact of digital technologies, increase the transparency of food safety systems. Today's consumers expect quick access to information about the

origin, composition and production conditions of products. This stimulates countries and companies to implement integrated digital traceability and public communication systems. Economic considerations are equally important. High-income countries often have access to the latest quality control technologies and more stringent regulations. In contrast, developing countries may face a lack of infrastructure, laboratory capacity and funding, which limits their ability to meet international standards. This requires the establishment of technical support mechanisms, training and investment in the development of national control systems.

The unification of standards involves bringing their content into line with the requirements of other regulatory documents to achieve consistency in test results and

formulations of technical information. The integration of national standards with international and European ones allows Ukrainian manufacturers to adapt products to the requirements of world markets, which, in turn, contributes to improving the quality of goods, updating production processes and expanding export opportunities. However, if the harmonization of the regulatory and technical framework is superficial or with errors, even minor differences in the interpretation of European standards can turn into significant technical barriers to trade. One of the main reasons for the delay in the harmonization process is insufficient funding and the lack of necessary resources for the full implementation of this work at the state level.

**Table 2**

**Standards and Regulations that are not Fully Harmonized**

Regulation/Standard	Name	Characteristics
Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011	on the provision of food information to consumers	Sets out detailed requirements for labelling, allergen declaration, nutritional value, and origin of the product. In Ukraine, there is no full legislative reflection of these requirements, regarding a unified approach to allergens and digital labelling
Regulation (EU) No. 2017/625	on official controls throughout the food chain	Sets out modern approaches to inspections, audits, and checks. The Ukrainian control system only partially complies with the new approaches to risk-based supervision provided for in this document
ISO 22005:2007	Traceability in the food chain	Although traceability is declared in Ukrainian legislation, the mechanisms for its technical implementation (especially digital) are not properly regulated
Regulation (EC) No. 2074/2005	on the implementation of hygiene standards and laboratory control	Ukraine does not have a sufficiently updated laboratory infrastructure to fully implement the provisions of this regulation
BRC Global Standard for Food Safety / IFS Food		These are private but generally recognized European standards for manufacturers seeking to enter the markets of EU retail chains. Ukrainian legislation does not yet have instruments to stimulate or support the implementation of such standards at enterprises

Source: CREC № 1935/2004, CREC № 1107/2009, CREC № 1169/2011.

Some Ukrainian exporters, realizing the relevance of compliance with European standards, have switched to their application independently, without waiting for the official adoption of adapted national versions. However, this approach is risky, since independent translation and interpretation of standards can lead to ambiguous understanding of individual provisions. To avoid such

situations, it is advisable to translate and implement standards in cooperation with EU technical committees, which allows to ensure the accuracy of wording and compliance of standards with real practices at the international level.

The following Table 3 presents the main challenges and opportunities of international quality standards.

**Table 3**

**Challenges and opportunities of international service quality standards**

Challenges	Characteristics	Opportunities	Characteristics
Cultural variation	Different cultural perceptions of service quality	Exchange of best practices	Exchange of successful service delivery models and practices at the international level
Regulatory differences	Different regulatory frameworks in different countries	Harmonization of standards	Development of a unified framework through international cooperation
Technological disparities	Access to technologies affecting service delivery capabilities	Technological integration	Using technologies for standardized service delivery
Economic disparities	Economic inequalities affecting investment in service quality	Capacity building	Supporting developing countries in improving service infrastructure
Consumer expectations	Diverse consumer demands and expectations	Customer-centric approaches	Adapting services to local preferences while maintaining global standards

Source: Compiled by the authors.

In the process of harmonizing standards and practices in the field of food safety, it is important to consider both the challenges and opportunities that arise in the international environment. One of the key barriers is cultural differences, as different countries have their own ideas about the quality and safety of food products. This can complicate the implementation of uniform standards. However, it is these differences that create the basis for constructive dialogue and exchange of best practices that

allow adapting global approaches to the local context without losing the basic principles of safety. Regulatory differences between countries also complicate the process of harmonization. Different legislative requirements and quality control practices create barriers to mutual recognition of certificates and compliance. At the same time, international cooperation in this area opens opportunities for the development of common standards and procedures that will contribute to mutual trust and reduce trade barriers.

Technological disparities between countries, especially between developed and developing countries, often lead to different levels of capacity to ensure product safety control. At the same time, the development of digital technologies and international technical assistance projects allow the dissemination of modern solutions even in remote regions, contributing to the creation of a unified quality infrastructure. Economic disparities are also a significant obstacle. The lack of investment in food safety control systems, laboratory facilities and personnel significantly hinder the ability of individual countries to comply with international standards. In this context, harmonization requires support from international organizations in the form of capacity-building programs, institutional development and technical support.

An equally important factor is the diversity of consumer expectations. In different regions, buyers have specific requirements for quality, naturalness, environmental friendliness and product labeling. This creates additional complexity in standardization. However, at the same time, it provides an opportunity to implement flexible, consumer-oriented approaches that allow combining compliance with global requirements with respect for local traditions and customs. Thus, harmonization of food safety standards is a multidimensional process that requires a comprehensive approach. It should be based on cooperation between states, international organizations, scientific institutions and the private sector, aimed not only at removing barriers, but also at unlocking the potential to improve the overall safety of food systems on a global scale.

As part of the strategic course for European integration, Ukraine must develop institutional and technological tools that will ensure compliance of national legislation in the field of food safety with modern international requirements. One of the key solutions in this direction is the creation of the National Coordination Center for Harmonization of Standards, which will unite the efforts of state bodies, business, educational institutions and international partners. Such a platform will allow not only to centrally manage the processes of adapting Ukrainian regulatory acts to EU standards, but also to ensure constant monitoring of their implementation, coordination of educational initiatives, as well as effective management of technical assistance projects.

In parallel with institutional changes, a system of support for food businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones, needs to be developed. This includes both financial mechanisms – granting grants and preferential taxation for enterprises that certify production according to ISO 22000, HACCP, IFS, BRC standards – and the organization of consulting assistance. It is important to create regional support centers where businesses will receive professional assistance in implementing standards, as well as to ensure access to specialized training and advanced training programs.

The national legislation also needs significant improvement. Its adaptation to European Union regulations (in particular, to such acts as EU Regulations 178/2002, 852/2004) will eliminate legal discrepancies and contribute to the reduction of technical barriers to trade. This process should be accompanied by an active educational policy. Therefore, it is necessary to modernize educational programs at universities, develop courses for civil servants, inspectors, and specialists of food industry enterprises, and establish cooperation with international educational institutions to exchange experience and train a new generation of personnel.

A special emphasis in the harmonization process should be placed on issues of environmental responsibility. The implementation of environmental management standards,

such as ISO 14001, should be accompanied by the creation of a motivation system for enterprises – in particular, co-financing of eco-projects, the formation of open ratings of environmental efficiency and informing consumers through open registers. This will allow strengthening transparency and increasing trust in manufacturers.

An important final element is the establishment of a system of transparent monitoring of standards. The creation of a single public database of certified enterprises indicating the level of implemented standards, as well as the involvement of independent auditing organizations will ensure quality control not in words, but in practice. At the same time, the development of international cooperation through participation in global forums, signing agreements with ISO, Codex Alimentarius, GFSI and exchange of experience with leading countries will contribute to the acceleration of transformation processes.

One of the key technological solutions to improve compliance of national legislation of Ukraine with international standards in the field of food safety is the creation of a single coordination platform (Fig. 1).

Such a platform should unite the efforts of all key participants in the process: state bodies, agrarian sector enterprises, scientific institutions, business associations and international organizations. Its main goal is to ensure effective interaction between these entities for the coordinated implementation of international standards, such as HACCP, ISO 22000, Codex Alimentarius and others, which determine the safety of food production and circulation.

The creation of such a platform will contribute not only to the modernization of the regulatory framework, but also to the elimination of technical barriers to trade, opening access to European and global markets for Ukrainian producers. Within the framework of its activities, it is advisable to provide for the development of a roadmap for harmonization of standards, monitoring the implementation of relevant EU regulations, providing consulting support to enterprises, organizing certification programs, and implementing educational initiatives for business and the public sector.

Of particular importance will be financial support for enterprises seeking to adapt production to international requirements. This includes mechanisms for providing grants, preferential taxation, and partial financing of certification costs. The platform will also become a coordinator in attracting external technical assistance, both financial and expert. Special attention is planned to be paid to monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of standards. This will include the creation of an open database of certified enterprises, reporting on the results of harmonization, as well as interaction with independent auditors and conformity assessment bodies. In addition, an important part of the platform's activities will be active international cooperation – concluding partnership agreements with ISO, FAO, GFSI, participation in specialized international conferences and experience exchange programs.

It is expected that the platform will result in an increase in the number of enterprises certified according to international standards, strengthening the competitiveness of Ukrainian products, increasing the level of consumer protection and environmental responsibility, as well as the gradual integration of Ukraine into the global food safety regulation system. Due to an integrated approach that combines digital solutions, modernization of legislation, institutional coordination and international integration, Ukraine has all the prerequisites for building a modern, effective food safety system focused on both the domestic market and the requirements of the global consumer.

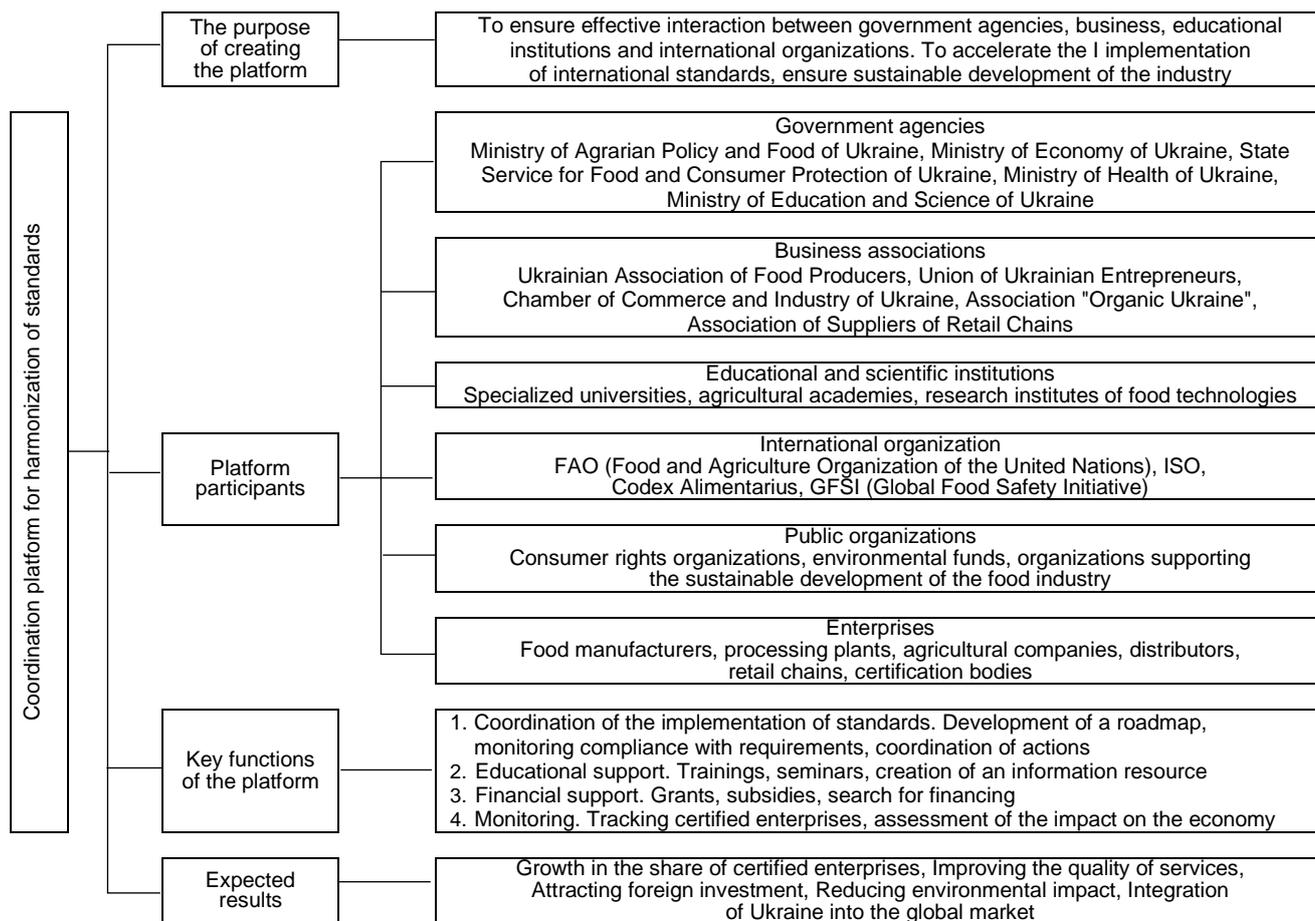


Fig. 1. Coordination Platform for Harmonization of Standards

The food safety policy is one of the key instruments that allow simultaneously guaranteeing the protection of consumer health and promoting economic growth by supporting exports. In the context of globalization and intensive international food trade, the need to harmonize regulatory approaches, ensure transparency of state control and adapt to international requirements becomes of particular importance. Building a national system that would meet international standards requires a strategic vision, interagency coordination and active involvement of all market participants.

A successful policy in this area should be based on a clearly formulated national strategy. Such a strategy should include long-term priorities, basic principles of action and provide for a coordination mechanism between state bodies, scientific institutions, business representatives and consumers. Defining common goals avoids fragmentation of management decisions, strengthens trust in the system and creates conditions for equal dialogue between all parties to the process. An effective food safety policy should be based on the principles of transparency, scientific validity, institutional capacity and openness to international cooperation. The IFC report outlines several strategic steps that can significantly improve food security in Ukraine and at the same time contribute to the development of international trade (IFC, 2024). First, it is about the need to formalize the national food safety policy – a document that defines the vision, strategic priorities, implementation mechanisms and responsible bodies. Such a policy should be officially approved by the government and serve as the basis for the harmonization of all relevant

legislative and regulatory acts. Its purpose is to align the interests of the state, business and consumers within the framework of a common goal: creating an effective system for protecting the health of the population.

The report particularly emphasizes the importance of harmonizing national legislation with international requirements, in particular WTO Agreements (especially the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures – SPS), as well as European Union legislation. This should concern aspects such as the procedure for state control, requirements for HACCP systems, labeling, product traceability, as well as import-export procedures. Therefore, one of the main tasks is to update the regulatory framework in the field of food safety. It is necessary to ensure its compliance with international trade obligations, including the principles of fairness, scientific validity, non-discrimination and transparency. The unification of national requirements with global approaches facilitates the access of Ukrainian products to foreign markets, reduces the costs of adapting products to external requirements and at the same time protects the domestic market from low-quality imported products.

To increase the effectiveness of state control, it is advisable to implement risk-based approaches. This means focusing on those parts of the supply chain where the probability of violations or harmful effects on public health is highest. Such an approach not only optimizes the use of regulatory authorities' resources but also increases the efficiency of inspections and contributes to the formation of business trust in the state inspection. An important element here is the development of an electronic accounting and traceability system, which allows real-time

monitoring of product movement and ensures a prompt response to potential threats. Digitalization of processes, including the creation of an electronic portal for registering market operators, submitting documentation, reviewing inspection results and submitting reports, should become one of the priorities. It simplifies communication between business and regulatory authorities, reduces the level of subjectivity in decision-making, and reduces corruption risks.

Considerable attention should be paid to the institutional capacity of food safety authorities. This includes not only providing them with modern material and technical resources, but also continuous staff training, developing analytical and

laboratory infrastructure, and implementing international approaches to risk assessment. It is particularly important that training processes are aligned with new challenges, such as climate change, the emergence of new pathogens, and changes in global food chains. An important component of effective policy is close cooperation with the private sector. Business should not only be the object of control, but also an active participant in the process of developing rules, standards, training programs, and surveillance systems. This model helps to increase the responsibility of market operators, reduce the number of violations, and create a corporate culture of compliance.

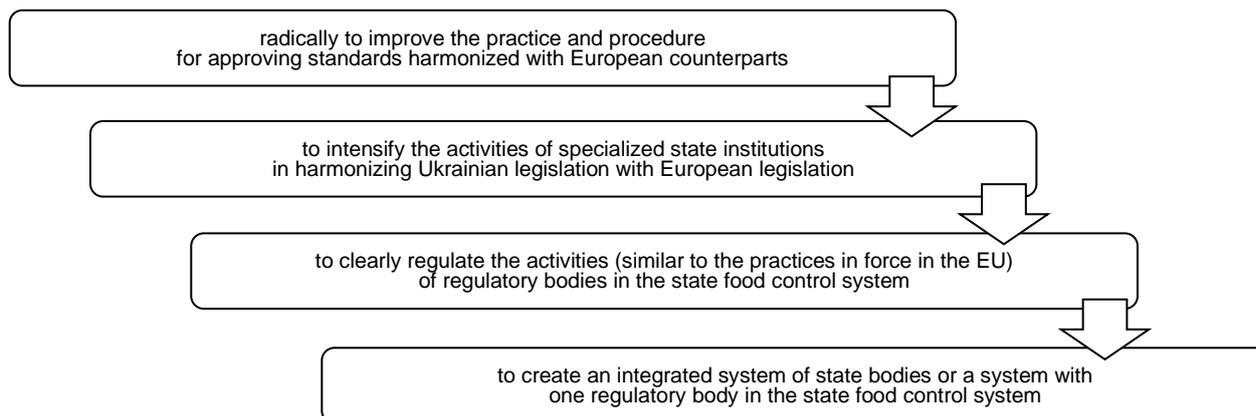


Fig. 2. Steps in Harmonizing Ukrainian Legislation with European Legislation

The successful policy implementation also requires the establishment of support mechanisms for small and medium-sized enterprises. This sector is most in need of assistance in implementing quality systems, such as HACCP or ISO 22000. Providing technical assistance, preferential access to certifications, creating platforms for training and exchange of experience significantly increases the overall level of safety of products entering the market. It is also worth considering informing and involving consumers as part of state policy. A culture of safe consumption, access to objective information about products, openness of state registers on the quality of food products – all this strengthens citizens' trust in the system and increases their ability to influence the market through public control mechanisms. As a result of the implementation of the above measures, a holistic, effective, integrated food safety system can be created, which combines the interests of the state, business and society, meets international obligations and serves as the basis for sustainable development of the agricultural sector and expansion of foreign economic relations.

**Discussion and conclusions**

The Ukrainian legislation contains several regulatory acts that provide for the need to harmonize Ukrainian legislation with EU requirements and international legal systems. Adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to the legislation of the European Union is a priority component of the process of Ukraine's integration into the EU.

The EU legal system contains over 14 thousand different types of legal acts and almost 9 thousand decisions of the EU Court. In March 2014, the EU Food Safety Project began operating under the title: "Improving the Food Safety Control System in Ukraine" (EU project, 2014). The project, whose budget was over EUR 6 mln,

was implemented from March 2014 to September 2019. The main results of the project are presented below.

- Harmonization of Ukrainian food legislation with European legislation: 11 draft laws and 92 by-laws have been developed. Among the adopted laws: "On Information for Consumers on Food Products" (2018), "On Safety and Hygiene of Feed" (2017), "On State Control over Compliance with Legislation on Food Products, Feed, Animal By-products, Animal Health and Welfare" (2017), "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on the Identification and Registration of Animals" (2014), "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Food Products" (2014).

- Helping business and the State Service of Ukraine for Food Safety and Consumer Protection to Adapt to the Requirements of the New Food Legislation: A 4-year comprehensive training program was conducted for specialists of the State Service for Food Safety and Consumer Protection from all regions of the country, consisting of both theoretical and practical courses; for business – seminars in each region, a webinar and a free online course.

- Advanced training of employees of the State Service for Food and Consumer Protection: purchased and configured software for the distance learning system; conducted trainings on the practical use of the system; developed internal training rules, a plan and training materials for distance learning courses.

- Education of future specialists: conducted a series of lectures in specialized educational institutions; developed proposals for the modernization of curricula; prepared and published a training manual.

- The EU transferred modern laboratory and IT equipment, as well as software worth over 2.5 million euros to the State Service for Food and Consumer Protection.

During 2014–2022, after signing the Association Agreement with the EU, Ukraine has implemented and continues to implement a large-scale reform of the technical regulation system in accordance with European norms and rules. In fact, the section of the Agreement on technical barriers to trade and Annex III to it have become a guide for the reform, the main goal of which is to gradually achieve compliance with technical regulations and systems of standardization, conformity assessment, accreditation, metrology and market surveillance of the European Union. Thus, horizontal (8 laws of Ukraine in the field of technical regulation were adopted), vertical EU legislation (102 technical regulations were adopted, of which 25 are provided for in Annex III to the Association Agreement) was adapted and implemented in Ukraine, and an extensive network of accredited and designated bodies, testing laboratories was created in accordance with European practice (over 100 bodies and over 500 laboratories). The Ukrainian accreditation system is recognized at the international and European levels (Ukraine is a member of IAF, ILAC and EA); More than 18,650 national standards harmonized with international and European standards have been adopted, including standards that provide a presumption of conformity with the requirements of technical regulations from Annex III to the Association Agreement (currently, the level of harmonization has reached 72.5 %). In implementation of the Program for the Development of the Reference Base of Ukraine, more than 20 national standards (a total of 83 national standards) and up to 313 SMS lines in the database of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures have been modernized and created.

The number of comparisons of national standards with the best national standards of developed countries has increased, and Ukraine has become a member of the Metric Convention and a full member of the International Organization for Legal Metrology. In accordance with the adopted legislation adapted to European legislation, authorized bodies carried out state market surveillance of the safety of non-food products. A preliminary EU assessment mission on the readiness of Ukraine's quality infrastructure for the conclusion of the ACAA Agreement has begun. In particular, the state of adaptation of horizontal and vertical legislation, the standardization and metrology system were positively assessed. At the same time, the Ukrainian side is working on the recommendations of European experts and ensuring their consideration. In addition, in September 2021, the Government adopted an Action Plan aimed at further improving the domestic system of technical regulation for the period until 2025 and fully fulfilling the obligations stipulated by the Association Agreement in this area. The unprecedented military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2022 accelerated the European Union's consideration of Ukraine's application for EU candidate country status based on the analysis of the provided questionnaire describing the large-scale reforms implemented to implement the Association Agreement and the progress achieved in the adaptation and implementation of European legislation, in the field of technical regulation. As a result, in June 2022, the European Union made a corresponding positive decision.

The compliance mechanisms and food safety control systems during Ukraine's trade with the EU provide for a few procedures and requirements aimed at ensuring the compliance of Ukrainian products with European Union standards. First of all, market operators must apply to the

territorial bodies of the State Service for the Supervision of Food Safety and Consumer Protection of Ukraine with a request, indicating the country of destination, a description of the food products and special requirements for them, if any. In the absence of state control at the export facility during the last year, an unscheduled inspection is mandatory. The application is accompanied by a foreign economic contract, documents confirming the compliance of the products with the requirements of the country of destination, and other accompanying documents. The inspection of the export facility is carried out to verify its compliance with EU requirements, after which an international certificate is issued. Ukraine also operates the TRACES NT online platform, which is part of the European IMSOC control system and provides electronic accounting of market operators, certification of goods and management of lists of facilities allowed for export to the EU. It is gradually expanding its functionality and already contains electronic forms of certificates for export. In addition, a new Procedure for State Registration of Capacities and Maintenance of the Register of Market Operators will come into force from July 2024, which will replace previous regulations and ensure the updating of approaches to control and compliance in the context of European requirements. All these measures together form a system that ensures transparency, safety and compliance of Ukrainian products with the requirements of the EU market.

The introduction of an integrated food safety control system is an important element of the EU agricultural policy, which is aimed at ensuring high standards of safety and quality at all stages of production, circulation and consumption of food products. The main principle of this system is the responsibility of all participants in the process, from producers of raw materials to final consumers, which ensures full responsibility for food safety. The control system traces each stage of production and distribution, which allows for transparency at all levels. Traceability allows for immediate response to any violations and guarantees the possibility of recalling products that do not meet safety requirements.

The EU General Food Law, governed by Regulation (EC) 178/2002, lays down the basic principles and requirements for ensuring food safety, including mandatory labelling, food safety procedures and the role of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). This Regulation is the basis for all subsequent regulations concerning hygiene, microbiological criteria, the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and requirements for the packaging and labelling of foodstuffs. Another important aspect is the existence of a rapid alert system for detecting and responding to food safety crises, which allows for rapid action to be taken in the event of a threat to the health of consumers. In addition, the hygiene system, governed by Regulation (EC) 853/2004, plays a significant role in ensuring food safety. According to this regulation, food business operators are obliged to take measures to achieve the established hygiene standards, regarding microbiological criteria, temperature conditions and maintenance of the cold chain for products requiring such storage conditions. In addition, ensuring the proper quality of raw materials, especially of animal origin, is an important component of safety control, as the final quality of the product depends on it.

EU legislation also regulates specific aspects of food safety, including labelling requirements and information provided to consumers. It is important to ensure that

labelling does not mislead consumers, especially in the case of products containing allergens or genetically modified organisms. The regulations on allergens, hygiene and packaging of foodstuffs (Reg EU 1935/2004, 1924/2006, 1925/2006) provide the legal framework to ensure transparency and protect consumers from potential risks. The EU agricultural policy, which is focused on high safety and quality standards, therefore ensures not only national but also international requirements for food products, which significantly improves the competitiveness of European countries on the global market.

According to the European Commission report of early 2024, Ukraine is currently at the initial stage of preparation for accession in the field of agriculture and rural development. The EU's key and priority recommendations include the following: further to align national legislation with the EU *acquis* in the field of agricultural policy and rural development, with a particular focus on implementing the provisions of the Association Agreement, as well as strengthening the institutional capacity of authorities to develop evidence-based policies; to complete the National Strategy for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for 2023-2030 and ensure its proper implementation; to establish effective accounting of farms through the State Agrarian Register, which should be used for targeted financial support to farmers. In addition, preparations should be made to establish paying agencies and accounting systems for farms in accordance with EU standards.

In the EU countries the main criteria for detecting counterfeiting include checking the content of the main and secondary components, the origin of the product, the method of production, the year of manufacture, the raw materials used (for example, part of the carcass in meat products), as well as the presence of genetically modified ingredients. A variety of methods are used to identify counterfeits: from organoleptic analysis to complex physicochemical studies. The main scientific methods include microscopy, chromatography, electrophoresis, atomic emission and X-ray electron analysis, and spectroscopy and isotope mass spectrometric analysis. The combination of several methods allows for the most accurate determination of the quality and authenticity of products.

The problem of falsification is particularly relevant due to the globalization of the food market, which creates new threats of the spread of dangerous food products to large areas. The main risks to human health are microbiological pathogens (bacteria, viruses, parasites), pesticide residues, harmful food additives, heavy metals (lead, mercury), persistent organic pollutants (in particular dioxins), prions (causative agents of "mad cow disease"), as well as other zoonosis transmitted to humans through food. In addition, products manufactured with the use of hormones, antibiotics or irradiations are dangerous. Thus, ensuring food safety is one of the main challenges of the modern world.

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## **ПІДХОДИ ДОТРИМАННЯ ВИМОГ ДО БЕЗПЕКИ ТА ЯКОСТІ ХАРЧОВИХ ПРОДУКТІВ ДЛЯ ТРАНСКОРДОННОЇ ТОРГІВЛІ МІЖ ЄС ТА УКРАЇНОЮ**

**Вступ.** Безпека харчових продуктів, їхня поживна цінність і продовольча безпека є взаємопов'язаними поняттями. Споживання небезпечних харчових продуктів сприяє поширенню захворювань та недоїданню, особливо серед таких вразливих груп населення, як немовлята, діти, люди похилого віку та особи з ослабленою імунною системою. Окрім впливу на здоров'я, безпека харчових продуктів сприяє економічному зростанню, розвитку туризму й міжнародної торгівлі, що є важливими факторами сталого розвитку. На продовольчу безпеку також впливають глобалізація ринку, демографічні зміни, екологічні виклики та трансформація продовольчих систем. Визначення показників якості продукції за показниками чинних стандартів часто вказує на зниження харчової цінності продуктів і перевищення максимального вмісту забруднювача, що не дозволяє класифікувати його як безпечний продукт. У свою чергу, безпечний харчовий продукт – це харчова продукція, яка не створює шкідливого впливу на здоров'я людини прямо чи опосередковано в умовах її виробництва та обігу відповідно до вимог санітарних заходів і споживання за призначенням.

**Методи.** Методологічною основою дослідження є сукупність загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, індукція, дедукція, порівняння) та спеціальних методів економічних досліджень, зокрема: економічний і статистичний аналіз, змістовний аналіз нормативно-правових актів, порівняльно-правовий аналіз, метод кейсів, а також графічний метод візуалізації результатів. Особлива увага приділяється методам аналізу ризиків та аналізу витрат на дотримання вимог, що є характерними для досліджень у сфері управління безпечністю харчових продуктів.

**Результати.** Деякі українські експортери, усвідомлюючи актуальність дотримання європейських стандартів, перейшли до їх застосування самостійно, не чекаючи офіційного прийняття адаптованих національних версій. Однак такий підхід є ризикованим, оскільки самостійний переклад і тлумачення стандартів може призвести до неоднозначного розуміння окремих положень. Щоб уникнути таких ситуацій, доцільно перекладати та впроваджувати стандарти у співпраці з технічними комітетами ЄС, що дозволяє забезпечити точність формулювань і відповідність стандартів реальній практиці на міжнародному рівні. Успішна політика в цій сфері має базуватися на чітко сформульованій національній стратегії. Така стратегія повинна включати довгострокові пріоритети, основні принципи дій та передбачати механізм координації між державними органами, науковими установами, представниками бізнесу та споживачами. Визначення спільних цілей дозволяє уникнути фрагментації управлінських рішень, зміцнює довіру до системи та створює умови для рівноправного діалогу між усіма учасниками процесу. Ефективна політика у сфері безпеки харчових продуктів має базуватися на принципах прозорості, наукової обґрунтованості, інституційної спроможності та відкритості до міжнародного співробітництва. МФК запропонувала кілька стратегічних кроків, які можуть значно покращити продовольчу безпеку в Україні й водночас сприяти розвитку міжнародної торгівлі.

**Висновки.** У рамках стратегічного курсу на європейську інтеграцію Україна повинна розробити інституційні та технологічні інструменти, які забезпечать відповідність національного законодавства у сфері безпеки харчових продуктів сучасним міжнародним вимогам. Одним із ключових рішень у цьому напрямі є створення Національного координаційного центру з гармонізації стандартів, який об'єднає зусилля державних органів, бізнесу, навчальних закладів і міжнародних партнерів. Така платформа дозволить не тільки централізовано керувати процесами адаптації українських нормативних актів до стандартів ЄС, а й забезпечити постійний моніторинг їхнього виконання, координацію освітніх ініціатив, а також ефективне управління проєктами технічної допомоги. Паралельно з інституційними змінами необхідно розробити систему підтримки підприємств харчової промисловості, особливо малих і середніх. Це включає як фінансові механізми – надання грантів і пільгового оподаткування для підприємств, які сертифікують виробництво за стандартами ISO 22000, HACCP, IFS, BRC, – так і організацію консультативної допомоги. Важливо створити регіональні центри підтримки, де підприємства отримуватимуть професійну допомогу у впровадженні стандартів, а також забезпечити доступ до спеціалізованих навчальних та програм підвищення кваліфікації.

**Ключові слова:** безпека харчових продуктів, стандарти відповідності, якість харчових продуктів, транскордонна торгівля, міжнародні економічні відносини, нормативно-правова база.

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