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Role of the Philosophy of Law in the process of unifying the legal systems of the members of the European Union in the context of the Common Framework of Reference Project

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Abstract

The study discusses the role of the philosophy of law in the process of unifying legal systems through the prism of the principles of the Draft Common Framework of Reference in Europe. The application of the philosophy of law in unification processes is also a necessary condition for the implementation of these processes about human rights and the sovereign interests of the State, which implements the unification of the legal order. Hence, the issue of European integration determines the strategic direction of the state, and this leads to the unification of law. The study aims to identify the role of the philosophy of law in the processes of unifying the legal systems of the European Union and its importance in the use of principles in these processes, justifying the need to use the philosophy of law in any process of transformation. It is concluded that the philosophy of law is a bridge harmonized with the legal sphere of operation of both individual states and supranational associations.

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Keywords: philosophy of law; unification processes; principles of the common framework of reference; adequacy of legislation; national sovereignty.

Papel de la Filosofía del derecho en el proceso de unificación de los sistemas jurídicos de los miembros de la unión europea en el contexto del proyecto de Marco Común de Referencia

Resumen

El estudio discute el papel de la filosofía del derecho en el proceso de unificación de los sistemas jurídicos a través del prisma de los principios del Borrador del Marco Común de Referencia en Europa. La aplicación de la filosofía del derecho en los procesos de unificación es además una condición necesaria para la implementación de estos procesos con respecto a los derechos humanos y los intereses soberanos del Estado, que implementa la unificación del ordenamiento jurídico. De ahí que el tema de la integración europea determina el rumbo estratégico del estado, y esto, conduce a la unificación del derecho. El estudio tiene como objetivo identificar el papel de la filosofía del derecho en los procesos de unificación de los sistemas jurídicos de la Unión Europea y su importancia en el uso de los principios en estos procesos, justificando la necesidad de utilizar la filosofía del derecho en cualquier proceso de transformación. Se concluye que la filosofía del derecho es un puente armoniza con la esfera legal de funcionamiento tanto de los estados individuales como de las asociaciones supranacionales.

Palabras clave: filosofía del derecho; procesos de unificación; principios del marco común de referencia; adecuación de la legislación; soberanía nacional.

Introduction

In today's world, in the international arena, much attention is paid to the unification, cohesion of the parties. This is explained by the fact that in resolving certain issues and facilitating the implementation of planned tasks is of great importance the support of other full participants in this relationship, which allows to achieve the goal. At present, in the international community, the role of such a participant in legal relations is played, in particular, by the European Union (hereinafter – the EU).

Only taking into account the interests of as many members of the human community as possible while adhering to clear rules and principles of coexistence can lead to the development of a full-fledged society and state (Shyshka and Tkalych, 2020).

The conceptual foundations of the philosophy of European integration are as follows:

1. to develop theoretical and conceptual principles of European integration.
2. implement the legal framework, which should be pro-european.
3. public authorities must be adapted to function in terms of membership in the European Union.
4. the method of exercising the powers of state authorities in the process of implementing European integration policy must be democratic, legal, and humane (Voronkova, 2006).

Currently, Ukraine is pursuing a course of European integration, which, in turn, determines the features of state policy in all spheres of public life and ways to implement it. This integration and the legal sphere, which is based on the legal system of the state, have not escaped. Thus, the reform of the legal sphere will, in the future, facilitate the process of integration of all other vital areas, as it will serve as a kind of platform for them, the basis for integration.

Legal consciousness, as an organic part of the spiritual reality, acquires an independent spiritual and cultural status among the foundations of social and legal life (Kharytonov *et al.*, 2019). It is clear that the main task of the moment for humanity is to survive and successfully overcome the global crisis caused by the pandemic. However, in the fight against the virus, the ideological and cultural achievements of Western civilization must not be lost (Tkalych *et al.*, 2020).

The work aims to analyze the importance of the philosophy of law in the unification of the legal system taking into account the principles of Draft Common Frame of Reference (hereinafter – DCFR) (2009), as well as to establish the need to apply the philosophy of law in integration processes to preserve the identity of the legal system and sovereignty of the state.

1. Methodology

The methodological basis of the work consisted of both general and special methods, including, in particular, analysis and synthesis, dialectical, systemic, and logical-legal methods. Thus, the analysis made it possible to study the philosophy of law within the principles of DCFR and European

integration processes, which are interrelated. Synthesis served as a basis for combining original ideas, principles, developments for the effective use of the philosophy of law in unification processes. Moreover, the dialectical method was used to establish the truth in modern unification processes that take place when a country becomes a member of the European Union, by identifying the role of the main ideas of the philosophy of law in European integration using the principles of DCFR.

That is more, the systematic method allowed us to identify the general properties, connections, and patterns that arise when applying the principles of DCFR through the prism of the philosophy of law, as well as to identify the dependence of DCFR principles on the fundamental principles of philosophy of law within the unification of legal systems. Further, the formal-legal method has become indispensable in interpreting the content of basic concepts, their fundamental characteristics, as well as legal norms relating to the concepts used. Besides, generalization, as a method, made it possible to draw conclusions and identify the main problems and vectors of the application of the philosophy of law in European integration processes. Finally, the logical-legal method is reflected in the formulation of proposals for further improvement of the process of unification of the legal systems of the Member States of the European Union.

2. Analysis of recent research and publications

A large number of works by domestic and foreign scholars, both within the philosophy of law and comparative law, the law of the European Union, is devoted to the study of issues related to the research topic. Thus, Vyshnyakov (2012) studied the issues of international integration, emphasizing the existence of integration law, within which he considered, in particular, integration levels and methods of creating integrated norms.

Besides, Voronkova's (2006) works outline the idea of the existence of the philosophy of European integration, which is manifested in the paradigm of European integration policy, as well as define the conceptual foundations of the philosophy of European integration, its "historiosophy".

Kharytonov and Kharytonova (2015) co-authored a detailed analysis of the principles of civil law enshrined in Ukrainian law and the principles of DCFR, identified their features in the objective meaning and fundamental content, explored the definition and essence of private law.

Thanks to Blazhivska (2015), issues related to the possible unification of European private law and harmonization of civil law of the member states of the European Union have reached a new level of research. Thus, the scientist studied the purpose of the formation and implementation of the principles of DCFR, considered the prospects for the unification of European private law, in particular within the unification of legal systems.

Equally important was Akimenko's (2019) study, which examined the principles of the DCFR through the prism of harmonizing the private law of the European Union and the private law of the member states of the association. In the framework of the above work, the factors of the process of further integration of European private law were identified, and the "Project of the Common System of Approaches (DCFR)" was analyzed.

Peculiarities of the process of unification were studied by Nevmerzhytska (2014), who, in her work, outlined the interpretation of the concept of unification, its goals, and the order of implementation of unification processes in the state. In addition, the scholar also focused on the need to improve legislation, in particular, by unifying the structural elements of its system; the need for unification has been identified.

These scientific works were aimed at studying certain issues related to the unification of law, taking into account the philosophical thought and principles of DCFR, but, currently, the importance of philosophy of law within the unification processes of legal systems through the prism of DCFR principles is insufficiently studied.

3. Results and discussion

The integration of legal systems should take place, in particular, through their unification. Unification should be understood as the process of approximation, the entry into each other of the legal norms of one legal system to similar in purpose norms of another system. Thus, with the help of unification you can achieve the following goals:

1. eliminate duplication of law;
2. to fill the existing gaps in the legislation, and;
3. to achieve certainty and prediction of results both in rule-making and in the regulation of controversial issues (Nevmerzhytska, 2014).

The authors are also convinced that unification is, perhaps, the most important step towards achieving ideal legal relations at the level of international law, which will ensure unconditional observance of the interests of each state, as well as human and civil rights and interests within national law within states.

Unification should be considered activities related to the creation of the same type of regulation of relevant social relations through the adoption of similar rules of law that will legally eliminate existing gaps in legal regulation and heterogeneity of the latter.

The unification of the legal system, first of all, means the unification of national legislation as its main component.

In the case of the creation of an international association, issues of unification play an important role, because in the regulation of relations that have a legal relationship with the legal systems of two or more countries, there may be a conflict of legal systems of states with which subjects or objects legal relations, or legal facts that influenced their emergence, change or termination (Atamanchuk, 2018).

At the same time, the approximation of legal systems should not be chaotic, ie it should meet certain standards developed and agreed by all participants in the relevant unification. Thus, through the prism of this, the EU can be considered a model, because facilitating the tasks of EU member states, as well as those countries seeking to join the international community, the EU has developed and generalized principles, concepts, and models of private European law. A platform has been created for member states to unify national legislation within, first of all, private law. These principles, concepts, and model norms are contained in the DCFR – a project specifically developed by EU working groups on legal issues.

The value of DCFR, in our opinion, is that it does not claim to create a “single-faith” universally binding rule of law that will establish legal conduct and the limits of its regulation. The adoption of the DCFR pushed into the background the idea of creating a European Civil Code or other acts that would extend to European countries. On the contrary, this project aims to preserve the identity of national legislation, as the basis of any legal system is legal awareness, which in turn is closely linked to the mentality, genesis, and philosophy of law, which is inherent in each individual state.

Currently, the role of philosophy of law in unification processes, according to the authors, is insufficiently assessed and balanced, as the philosophy of law is theoretical, but the basis for this area are both past and present relations and those that should serve as a guide for improving the legal system. Within the philosophy of law should be studied reality, the current state of affairs, in terms of the interaction of everyday life with the normative systemic world, ie norms, laws, rules, regulations, prohibitions, etc., which should regulate its behavior and therefore to some extent form the boundaries of its existence. It is this interaction that determines the legal reality, which is based on the general principles of existence, understanding, knowledge, and change of legal reality.

Thus, in the implementation of any modification of the usual reality, including legal, it is impossible to do without the application of postulates developed by the science of philosophy of law.

Thus, the philosophical substantiation of law aims to apply the achievements of philosophical thought, combining the rule of law with fundamental values that should form the foundation for the legal system of each state, including the values of freedom, justice, equality.

Philosophy of law expands the scope of jurisprudence by seeing the general picture of the world, allows jurists to ask and solve a much wider range of issues compared to traditional issues. Jurisprudence concretizes the idea of legal philosophy about the general picture of the world, about the legal space, about the human dimension of law (Shemshuchenko, 2003).

Given that philosophy examines the law in terms of ontological rethinking of its place and role in the formation and development of each individual and society as a whole, the implementation of any transformational processes within legal systems, including their unification when entering the or other supranational unions, without using the achievements of the philosophy of law should be considered incorrect, because, in this case, there is a risk of overturning the balance between the national legal system and the so-called European law.

According to the authors, each legal system has its own idea, integrity, and identity. The sovereignty of the state, in particular, is based on these three aspects, as it testifies to the existence of the foundation of its internal independence and autonomy, the origins of which lead to external independence. Thus, the unification of legal systems may result in the loss of their individuality, which in turn will entail the possibility of dependence on the prevailing principles and norms that became the basis for unification, but failed to adapt to the peculiarities of public life in a particular historical territory and its legal regulation. In the event of a delineated situation, it is not possible to achieve a balance between unified norms of law and generally accepted norms of morality, legal and other customs, rules of coexistence in a particular society, and hence legal consciousness. That is why the philosophy of law in its application in the process of unification of legal systems is designed, in particular, to preserve the identity of each legal system, taking into account the common heritage and fundamental values that represent the core of the philosophy of law.

The philosophy of law allows for a deep understanding and perception of the transformations of the legal system following the real social needs and challenges of today. The authors believe that there must be a certain balance between personal and public interests in the state, and the tendency to satisfy personal interests, which implies libertarianism, will inevitably lead to the weakening and subsequent disappearance of the state. Thus, the EU has different countries in size, by the number of population, and the amount of and economic resources, so they have different models of government, but none of them has absolute libertarianism as the dominant ideology and absolute freedom. Therefore, it is necessary to define in the state those limits of freedom that cannot be crossed.

A prerequisite for legal integration is a certain state of the legal system. Thus, continental European civil law, similar systems of constitutions and economics, allow us to come to the idea of a real possibility of unification

in the field of contract law, property law, company law, competition law, as these norms follow not so much from the historical and cultural features of individual nations, but from the needs of ensuring the functioning of the economy, consolidation of customary international law in the economic sphere as a source of law, the formation of scientific beliefs common with experts from other European countries (Vyshnyakov, 2012). And in this way, a lot has been done in Ukraine, because civil law has included such a principle as freedom of contract, included new types of contracts, including rent, leasing, factoring, and others, which enriched the legal system of Ukraine.

Joining the European Union is accompanied by several mandatory changes, including within the framework of legal regulation. At the same time, there is no need to talk about forcing member states or states aspiring to join the union to unify legal systems, as the Copenhagen criteria, approved by the European Council in June 1993, do not provide for a direct commitment to unification. Along with this, the third criterion is the ability to take on the obligations of membership, i.e. the obligations arising from accession to the EU, including strict adherence to the objectives of the political, economic, and monetary union (the criterion of membership) (Falaleeva, 2017).

The analysis of the content of this criterion shows the need to adapt the legislation of the state to the requirements of the European Union, as only a state that has a strong legal basis for the undertaken obligations can meet the criterion of membership. Thus, the confirmation of this is, in particular, the focus of state policy on the approximation of national law to the rules of so-called European law. The same policy is supported by Ukraine to bring closer the possibility of joining the European Union, and therefore as a result may be a step towards possible further unification of the legal system (Law Ukraine, 2004).

As noted earlier, the European Union has proposed DCFR to facilitate the adaptation of legislation under private law.

Private law means a set of concepts, ideas, principles, and norms that determine based on dispositiveness, legal equality and initiative of the parties, the grounds for acquisition, and the implementation and protection of rights and obligations of individuals who are not in power (subordination to each other) and freely establish their rights and responsibilities in the relations arising from their initiative (Kharytonov and Kharytonova, 2015). Thus, DCFR offers assistance in the adaptation processes of the area of law that does not involve direct participation in the relationship between the state and its public authorities and, therefore, gives the EU member state unlimited rights to determine and establish ideas, principles, and norms of public law.

It should be noted that the adaptation of legislation is not aimed at full unification of the legal system of the state, but, in essence, DCFR is a factor of unification, as it presupposes the existence and adoption of common origins and ideas, which in the future may lead to the creation of a common legal system for all Member States of the European Union.

The authors are convinced that the creation of a single unified legal system will lead to the loss of identity and sovereignty of member states and make them too vulnerable to change within the European Union, i.e. will not allow any manifestations of independence in matters of legal regulation within the state and at the level of international cooperation. Besides, the level of opposition to the European Union itself as a governing body, which has its own shortcomings, will decrease. According to the authors, such shortcomings include excessive interference of European officials in the economy of certain countries to prevent domestic competition, etc., and this affects the level of the economy of certain countries, the sphere of production, and employment.

As the practice of law enforcement shows, modern attempts to harmonize private law have led not to the exclusion of national jurisdictions, but the continued operation of European and national legislation. This necessitates the need to address which of the rules are more important – enshrined at the European or national level (Bar, 2013).

At the same time, the DCFR can be considered a starting point for the formation of private law of the European Union, the development and operation of which in general seems to be a rather controversial process; perceived very ambiguously by various institutions of the European Union and the Member States (Akimenko, 2019).

At the same time, DCFR is characterized by positive features. Thus, the purpose of DCFR as a standard rule, based on a comparative analysis of the laws of the European Union, is not to provide recommendations for resolving a conflict in the law, but to create the most comfortable conditions for resolving conflicts in the legal field, which is to offer an alternative intermediate way to reach an agreement in contentious situations. At the same time, as practice shows, it is quite difficult to decide which rule is better to apply in a given case. This means that law enforcers must act at their discretion and be guided by their own interpretation of these norms (Blazhivska, 2015).

In this context, the philosophy of law is important because it allows you to compare approaches to the settlement of similar or related institutions of law using a rule, to perceive the legal logic and vision of the situation when applying the relevant comparable rules, which allows developing our own position on perception or deviation of certain legal norms to settle a particular dispute.

DCFR serves as an indicator of the level of similarity of national private law systems, which can be considered as a regional manifestation of the common European heritage, in connection with which DCFR has the opportunity to understand and promote collective discussion of private law in Europe (Bar, 2013).

According to the authors, the principles of DCFR are a clear example of the application of the philosophy of law in the practical dimension, which is manifested in the fact that the principles represent the quintessence of philosophical developments. In particular, according to one of the authors:

The last basic principle of DCFR is the principle of efficiency, which is considered here in two areas: efficiency for the parties to the legal relationship and efficiency for society. Effectiveness for the parties is ensured, in particular, by the establishment of minimum formal and procedural restrictions (Didkovska, 2012: 26).

The norms that establish information responsibilities, regulate the protection of consumer rights, are considered to be conducive to efficiency for broad public purposes. That is, perceiving this principle, in general, as a positive one, each country must decide and regulate the minimum of formal and procedural restrictions. Thus, notaries can be perceived as a formal and procedural restriction on the effectiveness of contract law, because without a notarization of the contract the parties could settle their rights faster and cheaper, but not so reliably. Therefore, in many EU countries, the notary exists and is developed, and in other countries, it performs minimal functions. The best way to develop the legal system of the state should be determined taking into account all the important criteria, and this can be done only from an objective standpoint, which should ensure the philosophy of law.

The differentiation of DCFR principles into basic and priority ones speaks of focusing on the main goals set by the developers of these principles. This means that for the implementation of such a division, a lot of work has been done to study the content of the principles of DCFR, which is impossible to imagine without the use of techniques and ideas of the philosophy of law.

Thus, the basic principles are the principle of freedom, security, justice, and efficiency. The priority principles of the DCFR include, in particular, the principle of protection of human rights, promotion of solidarity and social responsibility, preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity, protection and improvement of the welfare of citizens and entrepreneurs (Kharytonov and Nekt, 2017).

The development of these principles, in turn, indicates a high level of application of the philosophy of law for their separation and consolidation, as they are the result of the study of the mutual impact of the law on individual.

Conclusions

To summarize the above, it is worth emphasizing that due to the philosophy of law it is possible to understand the value of law, which is manifested, in particular, in the transformation processes that take place at the request of relevant subjects of supranational law, including the European Union. Thus, by signing an association agreement, the state recognizes the operation of the “legal system of the European Union” on its territory, which to some extent risks the sovereignty and independence of its own legal system. Therefore, each country must determine the extent to which it will apply these principles, anticipate the risks it will have in their implementation in the legal system, but taking into account the mentality of the people, etc., and this is a task for the philosophy of law.

Thus, only with the use of the philosophy of law of modification of rights, its unification with the legal system of the European Union is possible with minimal loss of identity and uniqueness of the legal system of a particular state. Philosophical substantiation of law allows us to analyze the content of paradigms, principles, models of law in general, and each individual legal norm, in particular, within the framework of its implementation in the national legal system. With the philosophy of law comprehension and awareness of the meaning of law in its integrity and at the same time the effectiveness of the impact of the law on man and his development reaches a new level and therefore is an indispensable factor in decision-making to unify the legal system of the European Union.

The importance of the philosophy of law for the unification of legal systems is also manifested in the ideas underlying the principles of DCFR. Thus, the consolidation into a single universally binding act of a norm that would be accepted by all member states of an international organization, without the application of philosophical ideas aimed at mitigating the convergence of different national legal systems, is difficult to imagine in practice.

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