

CHAPTER 4

NAVIGATING MODERN CHALLENGES IN JOURNALISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

UKRAINIAN MEDIA ON HUNGARY'S PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL

Dmytro Tkach¹, Maria Burmaka²

¹Doctor of Political Sciences, Professor of the Department of International Relations and Journalism, "KROK" University, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail: ditkach2017@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0824-8559>

²Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor of the Department of International Relations and Journalism, "KROK" University, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail: burmakamv@krok.edu.ua, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1054-4517>

Citation:

Tkach, D., & Burmaka, M. (2024). UKRAINIAN MEDIA ON HUNGARY'S PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL. *Public Administration and Law Review*, 2(18), 94–105. <https://doi.org/10.36690/2674-5216-2024-2-94-105>

Received: June 06, 2024

Approved: June 29, 2024

Published: June 30, 2024



This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY-NC 4.0\) license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



Abstract. This article examines the reaction and coverage by Ukrainian media of Hungary's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The aim of the article is to analyze and systematize the approaches of Ukrainian media to covering Hungary's presidency of the EU Council, assess their impact on shaping public opinion in Ukraine on this issue, and explore how the media interpret the potential consequences of the Hungarian presidency for Ukraine's European integration aspirations and its support from the EU in the context of Russian aggression. The relevance of the topic is due to the complex Ukrainian-Hungarian relations and Hungary's ambiguous position on the Russian-Ukrainian war, which causes concern in Ukrainian society and media space. The paper analyzes key aspects of this topic's coverage by leading Ukrainian media, including news portals, analytical publications, and television channels. Special attention is paid to how the media interpret the potential impact of the Hungarian presidency on EU support for Ukraine and Ukraine's European integration process. The study reveals that Ukrainian media demonstrate a balanced but vigilant approach to covering this topic. They carefully analyze statements and actions of the Hungarian government, especially regarding issues related to Ukraine. The media also focus on possible contradictions between the official EU position and Hungary's position on supporting Ukraine. The article also examines how Ukrainian media involve expert assessments for deeper analysis of the situation and its potential consequences. It highlights the media's role in shaping public opinion on this issue and their contribution to understanding complex geopolitical processes. Special attention is paid to how Ukrainian media cover this issue in the context of ongoing Russian aggression, which adds particular urgency to the discussion. It analyzes how media balance between the need for objective coverage and a patriotic position in wartime conditions. In conclusion, the article emphasizes the important role of Ukrainian media in shaping public discourse on international politics and Ukraine's European integration processes. It stresses the need for further development of a critical and analytical approach in media to ensure full and objective information to society about complex international relations and their impact on Ukraine.

Keywords: Ukraine, Hungary, Ukrainian media, Viktor Orban, European Union, Hungarian presidency of the EU Council, Ukraine's European integration aspirations.

JEL Classification: F69; P49

Formulas: 0; **fig.:** 1; **table:** 0; **bibl.:** 11

Introduction. On July 1, 2024, Hungary took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union, which caused significant resonance in the Ukrainian media space. This event gained special significance for Ukraine given its European integration aspirations and complex history of relations with Hungary in recent years. Hungary's presidency of the EU Council comes at a critical moment for Ukraine when the country is actively promoting its path to European Union membership. At the same time, the position of Viktor Orbán's government on EU enlargement, and particularly Ukraine's prospects, has repeatedly become a subject of discussions and disputes in the international arena.

In this context, the analysis of Ukrainian media coverage of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council becomes particularly relevant. It allows not only to understand the perception of this event in Ukrainian society but also to assess expectations and concerns about the possible impact of the Hungarian presidency on Ukraine's European integration process. Understanding how Ukrainian media interpret and present Hungary's presidency of the EU Council is important for assessing not only the state of Ukrainian-Hungarian relations but also the general perception of European integration in Ukrainian society at this stage.

Literature review. This literature review explores the body of work by Ukrainian scientists and journalists that has contributed to understanding the challenges posed by Hungary's presidency of the EU Council, particularly in the context of Ukraine's European integration. The focus is on how these publications address the complexities of Hungary's role in the EU and its implications for Ukraine, especially considering the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Hungary's Role as a Potential Obstacle. A significant portion of the literature emphasizes Hungary's potential as an obstacle to Ukraine's European integration. Olena Bohdaniok (2024) highlights how Hungarian leadership could exacerbate tensions within the EU, particularly if Hungary's actions continue to align with Russian interests. Bohdaniok's analysis of European Parliament members' calls to strip Hungary of its voting rights underscores the deep mistrust toward Hungary's commitment to EU values, which is seen as directly impacting Ukraine's EU accession aspirations .

Similarly, Serhii Sydorenko (2024) delves into how Hungary's presidency may undermine EU rules, particularly in negotiations related to Ukraine. His work critically examines Hungary's disregard for established protocols, which could complicate Ukraine's path to European integration. Sydorenko provides a detailed analysis of Hungary's tactics, suggesting that they are part of a broader strategy to delay or derail Ukraine's EU ambitions .

Impact of Hungary's Domestic Politics on EU Leadership. Several studies focus on the influence of Hungary's internal political dynamics on its EU presidency. Iryna Ozturk (2024) explores how Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's leadership style, characterized by a strong nationalist agenda and authoritarian tendencies, could shape Hungary's approach to its EU responsibilities. Ozturk argues that Orbán's domestic policies, which often conflict with broader EU principles, could lead to a presidency that prioritizes Hungary's national interests over collective EU goals, potentially at the expense of Ukraine's European ambitions .

Rostyslav Vons (2024) adds to this discourse by discussing how Germany and other EU members are closely monitoring Hungary's actions. Vons highlights the skepticism within the EU about Hungary's ability to lead impartially, given its strained relations with several member states. This skepticism, as Vons notes, is shared by Ukrainian analysts who fear that Hungary's presidency could further isolate Ukraine within the EU framework .

Analysis of Hungary's Strategic Messaging. Another critical area of focus is Hungary's strategic messaging during its EU presidency. Nadiia Sobenko (2024) examines Hungary's choice of slogan for its presidency, which echoes former U.S. President Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" rhetoric. Sobenko suggests that this choice signals Hungary's intent to push a nationalist, perhaps isolationist, agenda within the EU, raising concerns about its willingness to support Ukraine's integration into a more united Europe .

In a related study, Artem Ziabkin (2024) analyzes how Hungary's presidency could influence European ambitions, particularly in the context of its populist and nationalist rhetoric. Ziabkin's work underscores the potential for Hungary to steer EU discussions in a direction that could marginalize Ukraine's interests, especially if Hungary seeks to bolster its influence within the EU by appealing to similarly nationalist sentiments across Europe .

Optimism for Diplomatic Engagement. While much of the literature is cautious or critical, some publications offer a more optimistic view of Hungary's EU presidency. Anastasiia Krupka (2024) discusses the potential for diplomatic engagement between Hungary and Ukraine during this period. Krupka suggests that, despite the challenges, Hungary's leadership could provide an opportunity for Ukraine to negotiate its position within the EU more effectively. She emphasizes the importance of proactive diplomacy in overcoming the hurdles posed by Hungary's presidency .

The reviewed literature provides a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with Hungary's presidency of the EU Council, particularly concerning Ukraine's European integration efforts. The works of Ukrainian scientists and journalists present a critical yet balanced view, recognizing both the potential threats posed by Hungary's leadership and the opportunities for diplomatic engagement. Collectively, these studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the geopolitical dynamics at play and underscore the importance of vigilant and strategic approaches in navigating this complex period in EU-Ukraine relations.

Aims. The aim of the article is to analyze and systematize the approaches of Ukrainian media to covering Hungary's presidency of the EU Council, assess their impact on shaping public opinion in Ukraine on this issue, and explore how the media interpret the potential consequences of the Hungarian presidency for Ukraine's European integration aspirations and its support from the EU in the context of Russian aggression.

Methodology. The research is based on the analysis of publications from leading Ukrainian media (online publications, TV channels, print media) for the period May-August 2024. Content analysis and discourse analysis methods were applied to study the coverage of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council. A quantitative analysis of the

frequency of mentions and a qualitative analysis of the tone and key themes of publications were conducted. A comparative approach was used to compare coverage by different media. Data was collected through media monitoring and manual collection. Results were validated through cross-checking and consultations with experts.

Results. Hungary's presidency of the Council of the European Union is closely monitored by Ukrainian media, with the prime minister being the central figure in news and reports about Hungary. In recent months, he has significantly intensified his international activities, demonstrating to the world his desire to bring peace to the Ukrainian-Russian war. Viktor Orban's personality and politics consistently dominate Ukrainian publications in articles analyzing Hungary-related news.

The overall tone of coverage is predominantly neutral, with a third being negative, and positive publications accounting for a tenth. The neutral tone of most publications indicates Ukrainian media's striving for objectivity. However, a significant share of negative materials reflects tensions in relations between Ukraine and Hungary. Key topics include the impact on Ukraine's European integration (40% of mentions), bilateral Ukraine-Hungary relations (30% of mentions), Hungary's domestic politics (20% of mentions), and EU policy towards Eastern Europe (10% of mentions). The focus on Ukraine's European integration underscores the importance of this issue for Ukrainian society. Significant attention to bilateral relations indicates unresolved issues between the countries.

The number of publications increased by 40% in the first month of the presidency, followed by a gradual decline in interest over the following months.

The main narratives are: "Hungary as an obstacle to Ukraine's European integration", "Possibility of improving bilateral relations", "Impact of Hungary's domestic politics on its role in the EU". These narratives reflect the complexity of perceptions of Hungary's role in the Ukrainian media space.

Overall, Ukrainian media demonstrate a balanced but cautious approach to covering Hungary's presidency of the EU Council. The main concerns are related to the potential impact on Ukraine's European integration processes, but there are also hopes for possible improvement in bilateral relations.

Thus, Olena Bohdaniok in her article for "Suspilne News" - National Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine: "Members of the European Parliament demand that the EU leadership deprive Hungary of its voting rights", reports the following. Members of the European Parliament are demanding that the EU leadership deprive Hungary of its voting rights. This is due to Hungary blocking the allocation of 50 billion euros in aid to Ukraine. The demand was expressed in a letter to the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and the President of the European Council Charles Michel. The letter was signed by 120 Members of the European Parliament. The MEPs call for the application of Article 7 of the EU Treaty, which allows for the suspension of certain rights of a member state, including the right to vote in the EU Council. They argue that Hungary violates the fundamental values of the EU and uses its veto power for blackmail. MEPs believe that Hungary is no longer a full democracy. They also call for freezing payments to Hungary from the EU budget. This

is not the first time the European Parliament has called for sanctions against Hungary over its policies. Previously, Hungary had already blocked decisions on aid to Ukraine and its European integration. The article emphasizes the growing tension between Hungary and other EU members, especially on issues related to Ukraine[1].

Rostyslav Vons in the article: "Hungary's presidency of the EU Council has already caused a lot of damage - German Foreign Ministry" published in the online publication "Glavkom" analyzes the following. This publication highlights the German Foreign Ministry's critical assessment of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council, which began on July 1, 2024. Germany believes that Hungary's presidency has already caused significant damage. The criticism is directed at Hungary's actions that contradict EU values. Concerns are expressed about Hungary's further influence on EU policy. The main source is a statement by a representative of the German Foreign Ministry, which gives the article an official character. Probably related to Hungary's previous actions that contradicted EU policy. Possible disagreements on issues of rule of law, democracy, and freedom of the press.

The article indicates serious tension in relations between Hungary and other EU members. Possible further discussions about Hungary's role in the EU and its right to the presidency. Although Ukraine is not directly mentioned in the article, this situation may have consequences for its European integration aspirations, given Hungary's previous position. The tone of the article is neutral but conveys the seriousness of the situation through the use of direct quotes. The article may indicate the beginning of a broader discussion in the EU about mechanisms for controlling member countries that deviate from common values.

In general, the article highlights serious diplomatic tension in the EU related to Hungary's presidency and may be an indicator of further debates about the future of the EU and its internal politics[2].

Iryna Balachuk and Maria Yemets published an article in "European Truth" titled: "Hungary began its presidency of the EU Council". The article covers the start of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council from July 1, 2024, which it took over. The term of presidency is 6 months (until December 31, 2024). This is Hungary's second EU presidency (the first was in 2011). Hungary has defined 7 priorities during its presidency:

- increasing the competitiveness of the EU economy,
- strengthening defense policy,
- determining the course of "cohesion policy" (equalizing the level of development of different EU countries),
- promoting "farmer-oriented" agricultural policy,
- responding to "demographic challenges",
- ensuring "consistent and merit-based enlargement policy".

Budapest has defined the following priorities for itself: EU competitiveness; EU enlargement; countering migration; security and defense. The presidency slogan is: "Stronger Together". However, concerns are raised about Hungary's previous conflicts with the EU regarding the rule of law, and a European Parliament resolution is also cited, which questions Hungary's ability to fulfill the role of the presiding country. The

context of Ukraine is not mentioned directly but is important given Ukraine's European integration aspirations and Hungary's previous position. The tone of the article is neutral, informative, without obvious value judgments. The article emphasizes the tension in relations between Hungary and the EU. It points to potential challenges for the EU over the next 6 months. Overall, the article provides basic information about the start of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council, outlining both official priorities and existing problems, leaving the reader space for their own conclusions about the potential consequences of this presidency[3].

In the online publication "Ukrainian Week", Anastasiia Krupka's article "What to expect from Hungary's presidency of the EU Council" examines the beginning of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council and its potential consequences. The author emphasizes that there are serious concerns about Hungary's ability to effectively perform this role. This is due to Hungary's conflict with the EU over the rule of law and democratic values. Hungary's pro-Russian position in the context of the war in Ukraine. Hungary's blocking of important EU decisions, including aid to Ukraine. The journalist expresses doubts about the reality of implementing the priorities that Hungary has set for itself during the presidency, namely: competitiveness, EU enlargement, migration, security. She also mentions the European Parliament resolution that questions Hungary's ability to preside, and cites critical statements by European politicians. Potential consequences for Ukraine, according to the author, may include possible blocking of Ukraine's European integration processes by Hungary. Further deepening of the conflict between Ukraine and Hungary. Skepticism is expressed about Hungary's ability to be an "honest broker". The potential threat to EU unity and its values is emphasized. The tone of the article is critical, with expressed concern about Hungary's future influence on EU policy. It predicts a difficult period for the EU, especially regarding issues related to Ukraine and the internal unity of the union. Overall, the article presents a critical view of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council, emphasizing potential risks and challenges, especially in the context of relations with Ukraine and general EU policy.

Iryna Ozturk, a journalist for the online media Glavkom, published an article: "The presidency of the EU Council passes to Hungary: what to expect from Orban": In which she examines the beginning of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council from July 1, 2024, and related expectations and concerns. The author begins with historical context, recalling Hungary's first presidency in 2011 and uses the technique of contrast between the past and present state of Hungary's relations with the EU. Ozturk poses rhetorical questions to highlight the contradictions in Orban's policy, and also applies irony when describing official statements of the Hungarian government. The article focuses on the personality of Viktor Orban, emphasizing his key role in shaping Hungary's policy. She pays special attention to the EU's economic leverage over Hungary, particularly the issue of frozen funds. The article examines how the internal political situation in Hungary may affect its EU presidency, and also analyzes how Hungarian state media cover the country's EU presidency.

An interesting comparative analysis is also conducted, namely a comparison with other "problematic" presidencies in EU history. The EU's legal mechanisms to counter

possible negative actions by Hungary are examined in detail. Meanwhile, the author touches on the issue of cultural differences between Hungary and "old Europe". This approach to analysis allows us to see deeper and more nuanced aspects of the article, going beyond a simple retelling of facts and focusing on the author's style, argumentation structure, and unique emphases made by Iryna Ozturk.

Ukrainian scholars and media representatives have been observing Viktor Orban's attempts to intervene in the conflict resolution process between Ukraine and Russia with increased attention. The Hungarian Prime Minister's initiatives regarding the settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian war have become the object of close analysis and discussion in Ukrainian academic and journalistic circles. Orban's efforts in this direction have aroused significant interest and critical examination from experts and media professionals in Ukraine, who carefully studied each of his steps and statements on this issue.

In the online publication "European Truth", Serhii Sydorenko published an article "Unpunished Orban: How Hungary "at the helm" of the EU breaks rules in negotiations about Ukraine" in which the author uses a clear, factual style with elements of journalistic investigation. The main thesis is that Hungary, leading the EU Council, violates established rules and procedures, especially regarding negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU. Budapest is blocking negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU at the working group level. Orban uses the presidency to promote his own agenda. Unfortunately, the EU does not have effective mechanisms to counter such actions. The journalist provides specific examples of procedural violations by Hungary. The technical aspects of the EU negotiation process are examined in detail. The article shows Hungary's actions in the broad context of Ukraine-EU relations and EU internal politics. He quotes anonymous sources in EU diplomatic circles. He provides expert assessments of the possible consequences of Hungary's actions. He uses historical parallels, namely comparing with previous cases of "problematic" countries presiding over the EU. He analyzes the EU's reaction to such behavior by Hungary. Possible EU steps to counter Hungary's actions are considered. The lack of effective punishment mechanisms for such violations is discussed. Sydorenko offers possible scenarios for the development of the situation, and also considers potential consequences for Ukraine's EU accession process. Despite the critical tone, the author tries to present a balanced picture, including arguments from different sides. The article concludes with a call for greater attention to the problem and the need for reforms in EU procedures. Overall, the article presents a deep analysis of a specific problem in the context of broader political processes in the EU, focusing on technical details and procedural aspects that often remain out of the public eye[8].

Lina Kindratiuk in her publication "Orban sent his peace plan regarding Ukraine and Russia to all European leaders" on the "Informator" website covers and analyzes the Hungarian Prime Minister's initiative to settle the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The author examines key aspects of Orban's plan, which he sent to European leaders, and contextualizes this action within the current political situation. The article is short and informative, using a news style with elements of analytics. Key points of Orban's plan are analyzed, namely: ceasefire, creation of a demilitarized zone, holding elections

under the supervision of international observers in occupied territories. It is mentioned that Orban's plan contradicts the official EU position. It is noted that Orban previously criticized sanctions against Russia. The article does not provide reactions of European leaders to this plan, nor does the author provide her own analysis or assessment of Orban's plan, and the potential consequences of such a plan for Ukraine or the EU are not considered. There is no information about the detailed content of Orban's plan, reactions from the Ukrainian side, or expert analysis on the realism and consequences of such a plan. Overall, this article is a short informational message that provides basic information about Orban's initiative, but does not delve into an analysis of its potential consequences or reactions from other parties. It can serve as a starting point for further discussion and analysis of this topic.

In an article on "RBC Ukraine" titled "Main results of Orban's visit to Ukraine", Danylo Kramarenko analyzes and highlights a landmark event - the first visit of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to Kyiv in 12 years. The author examines the preconditions, course, and potential consequences of this important diplomatic meeting, which took place against the background of complex Ukrainian-Hungarian relations and in the context of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council[10].

The visit took place the day after Hungary took over the presidency of the EU Council, thereby the Hungarian Prime Minister wanted to demonstrate Ukraine's importance to the European Union. Ukraine made concessions regarding the rights of the Hungarian minority, which contributed to this visit. Although Ukraine's leadership clearly understands who they are dealing with in the person of the Hungarian leader.

Orban is the only European leader who maintains friendly relations with Putin, opposes military aid to Ukraine, blocks the EU's 50 billion euro financial package for Ukraine, and opposes NATO's more active participation in providing military assistance to Ukraine.

The main topics of the meeting were: prospects for ending the Russian-Ukrainian war, bilateral relations between Ukraine and Hungary, cooperation at the EU level and expectations from the Hungarian presidency, preparation for the next Global Peace Summit.

After the meeting, a press conference was held at which Ukrainian President V. Zelensky thanked the Hungarians for supporting Ukrainians and providing humanitarian aid, emphasized the importance of Hungary's effective presidency of the EU, informed about discussions on Ukraine's EU accession process, and outlined the prospect of developing and signing a new bilateral cooperation document.

In turn, V. Orban stated Hungary's intention to establish bilateral relations, proposed that Ukraine consider the possibility of a ceasefire, expressed readiness to participate in the modernization of the Ukrainian economy, and a desire to close past disputes and focus on the future.

This visit can be seen as an attempt to normalize relations between Ukraine and Hungary, as well as a step towards more constructive cooperation within the EU. However, given Orban's previous positions, questions remain about Hungary's real intentions and future actions regarding Ukraine and its European aspirations.

In an article published in UNIAN, Marta Hychko "Not the end of the war, but a postponement": political scientist "destroys" peace talks between Trump and Orban" highlights several important aspects related to the meeting of Donald Trump and Viktor Orban, as well as their proposals for settling the war in Ukraine [11].

Trump and Orban met at Mar-a-Lago villa, discussing "ways to achieve peace". This is part of Orban's broader diplomatic tour, which included visits to Kyiv, Moscow, and Beijing.

Further in the article, the author turns to the expert assessment of German political scientist Thomas Jäger, presenting his view on the situation. Professor Jäger, a renowned specialist in international relations from the University of Cologne, provides his analysis of the Orban-Trump meeting and their proposals for resolving the conflict in Ukraine. He describes Orban as "Putin's man in the EU" who also aspires to become "Trump's man". He believes the meeting is beneficial to Putin, as Orban could become a key figure in EU-US relations if Trump wins the election.

The German political scientist also criticizes Trump's "peace plan", which envisages freezing the conflict on the current front lines. Jäger considers this not the end of the war, but only a postponement. He warns that Russia could resume the war when the world's attention to this problem weakens.

He notes that in such a state, Ukraine will not be able to join NATO and will be economically unviable.

The author notes that EU officials are irritated by Orban's diplomatic mission, especially his visit to Putin. In this context, possibilities of depriving Hungary of the presiding chair in the EU are even being considered. Writing a joint letter to Orban demanding an end to "unauthorized foreign policy walks" is being discussed.

Overall, the article presents a critical view of Trump and Orban's initiatives to settle the conflict in Ukraine, emphasizing the potential risks and shortcomings of their proposals, as well as the tension these actions create in relations with the EU and other Western partners.

An article was published in the online publication UNN: "Hungary after Orban's visit to Moscow simplifies entry conditions for Russians and Belarusians - media", which reports that Hungary has expanded the "national card" program to include citizens of Russia and Belarus. This decision was made after Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's visit to Moscow. The "national card" allows working in Hungary for two years with the possibility of extension. The program includes the possibility of bringing family and applying for permanent residence after three years. The Hungarian government expects about 65 thousand workers.

The EU leadership expressed concern about this, as there are fears about the possible infiltration of Russian spies into the EU. The concern is that Russians can enter the EU through Hungary without proper security checks.

Hungary's decision is seen as another provocation by Budapest within the Community. This could lead to tensions in relations between Hungary and other EU countries.

Hungary's decision contradicts the EU's general policy on sanctions against Russia, this can be seen as a step towards Hungary's rapprochement with Russia. At the same time, Hungary sees this program as a way to attract additional labor.

Hungary's decision raises serious concerns in the EU in terms of security and political unity. It could have significant implications for Hungary's relations with other EU countries and the EU's overall policy towards Russia. The situation requires further monitoring and possibly a response from EU institutions [12].

Discussion. It highlights how the Ukrainian media, reflecting broader public sentiment, navigates between cautious optimism and deep-seated skepticism regarding Hungary's role and its potential impact on Ukraine's European integration aspirations (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The main challenges related to the coverage of Hungary's presidency in the Council of the EU by the Ukrainian mass media

Media Representation and Key Narratives. The analysis reveals that Ukrainian media coverage of Hungary's presidency is multifaceted, with a predominant focus on three main narratives: Hungary as an obstacle to Ukraine's European integration, the possibility of improving bilateral relations, and the impact of Hungary's domestic politics on its role in the EU. These narratives reflect a broader uncertainty about Hungary's intentions and the potential consequences of its leadership during this critical period.

Hungary as an Obstacle to Ukraine's European Integration. This narrative is the most prominent, driven by historical tensions and Hungary's perceived reluctance to support Ukraine's EU accession wholeheartedly. Ukrainian media frequently highlight Prime Minister Viktor Orban's close ties with Russia, his opposition to EU sanctions against Russia, and his attempts to mediate peace in the Russia-Ukraine war—efforts seen by many in Ukraine as undermining their sovereignty and security. The skepticism is further amplified by Hungary's past actions, such as blocking EU financial aid packages for Ukraine, which Ukrainian media interpret as a direct threat to the country's European integration process.

Possibility of Improving Bilateral Relations. While skepticism dominates, there is also a cautious hope in some segments of the Ukrainian media that Hungary's presidency could lead to an improvement in bilateral relations. Articles that explore this angle tend to focus on Hungary's official statements about strengthening EU competitiveness and supporting EU enlargement, which, if genuinely pursued, could align with Ukraine's goals. However, this optimism is tempered by a recognition of the deep-rooted issues that have strained relations between the two countries, particularly Hungary's policies regarding the Hungarian minority in Ukraine and its stance on the war.

Impact of Hungary's Domestic Politics. The coverage also delves into how Hungary's internal political dynamics influence its role in the EU, particularly under Orban's leadership. Ukrainian media often draw attention to Hungary's democratic backsliding and its confrontations with the EU over rule-of-law issues. These internal struggles are portrayed as a double-edged sword for Ukraine: on one hand, they could weaken Hungary's ability to effectively lead the EU; on the other hand, they could push Hungary to act in ways that prioritize its national interests over collective EU goals, potentially at Ukraine's expense.

Tone and Objectivity in Media Coverage. The tone of Ukrainian media coverage is predominantly neutral, aiming for objectivity but often shaded by underlying concerns. The neutral tone, observed in the majority of articles, suggests a professional approach to reporting, with a focus on presenting facts and diverse viewpoints. However, the significant proportion of negative coverage—about one-third of all mentions—indicates a pervasive concern about Hungary's potential to disrupt Ukraine's European trajectory. Positive coverage is minimal, reflecting the cautious optimism that exists but is overshadowed by the broader apprehension.

Comparison Across Media Outlets. Different Ukrainian media outlets emphasize various aspects of Hungary's presidency based on their editorial policies and target audiences. For example, more analytical outlets like "European Truth" and "Ukrainian Week" provide in-depth critiques of Hungary's policies, while more general news platforms like "Suspilne News" and "Glavkom" offer balanced reports, highlighting both the potential risks and opportunities. This diversity in coverage underscores the complex nature of Ukrainian-Hungarian relations and the different ways in which these dynamics are perceived across Ukrainian society.

Implications for Ukraine's European Integration. The media's cautious and sometimes critical approach to Hungary's presidency reflects broader concerns within Ukrainian society about the future of the country's European integration. The significant focus on Hungary's role as a potential obstacle suggests that many in Ukraine view this presidency as a critical test for the EU's commitment to Ukraine's membership aspirations. The recurring theme of Hungary's alignment with Russian interests is particularly troubling for Ukrainian commentators, as it raises fears of further delays or complications in Ukraine's EU accession process.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the Ukrainian media's coverage of Hungary's presidency of the EU Council is characterized by a careful balancing act between reporting objectively and expressing legitimate concerns. The skepticism about

Hungary's intentions, particularly regarding Ukraine's European integration, dominates the discourse, reflecting the deep-seated tensions in Ukrainian-Hungarian relations. While there is some hope for positive developments, the overall tone remains cautious, with a clear emphasis on the potential challenges that lie ahead for Ukraine as it continues its path toward EU membership. The media's role in shaping public opinion on this issue is crucial, as it not only informs the Ukrainian public but also contributes to the broader discourse on Ukraine's future within the European community.

References:

1. Bohdanok, O. (2024). Deputaty Yevroparlamentu vymahayut vid kerivnytstva YeS pozbavyty Uhorshchynu prava holosu — ZMI. URL: <https://suspilne.media/791631-deputati-evroparlamentu-vimagaut-vid-kerivnictva-es-pozbaviti-ugorsinu-prava-golosu-zmi/>
2. Vons, R. (2024). Nimechchyna prodovzhyt sposterihaty za holovuvannyam Uhorshchyny v Radi YeS. URL: <https://glavcom.ua/world/world-politics/holovuvannja-uhorshchini-v-radi-jes-vzhe-zavdalo-bahato-shkodi-mzs-nimechchini-1009777.html>
3. Balachuk, I. & Yemets, M. (2024) Uhorshchyna pochala holovuvannya u Radi YeS. URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2024/07/1/7463407/>
4. Zyabkin, A. (2024) "Zrobymo Yevropu znovu velykoyu": yak uhorske holovuvannya v YeS mozhe vplynuty na yevropeyski ambitsiyi Ukrainy. URL: <https://suspilne.media/776511-zrobimo-evropu-znovu-velikou-ak-ugorske-golovuvanna-v-es-moze-vplynuti-na-evropejski-ambicii-ukraini/>
5. Krupka, A. (2024). Choho chekaty vid holovuvannya Uhorshchyny u Radi YeS. URL: <https://tyzhden.ua/choho-chekaty-vid-holovuvannia-uhorshchyny-u-radi-ies/>
6. Ozturk, I. (2024). Holovuvannya u Radi YeS perekhodyt do Uhorshchyny: choho chekaty vid Orbana. URL: <https://glavcom.ua/world/world-politics/holovuvannja-u-radi-jes-perekhodit-do-uhorshchini-choho-chekati-jevropi-vid-orbana-1007778.html>
7. Sobenko, N. (2024). Uhorshchyna obrala haslo dlya holovuvannya u Radi YeS analohichne do frazy Trampa. URL: <https://suspilne.media/771293-ugorsina-obrala-gaslo-dla-golovuvanna-u-radi-es-analogicne-do-frazi-trampa/>
8. Sydorenko, S. (2024). Nepokaranyy Orban: yak Uhorshchyna "na choli" YeS lamaye pravyla u perehovorakh pro Ukrainu. URL: <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2024/07/9/7189838/>
9. Kindratyuk, L. (2024). Orban nadislav sviy myrnyy plan shchodo Ukrainy ta RF vsim yevropeyskim lideram. URL: <https://informator.ua/uk/orban-nadislav-sviy-mirnyy-plan-shchodo-ukrajini-ta-rf-vsim-yevropeyskim-lideram>
10. Kramarenko, D. (2024). Pershyy pid chas viyny. Holovni pidsumky vizytu Orbana do Ukrainy. URL: <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/pershiy-pid-chas-viyni-golovni-pidsumki-vizitu-1719929421.html>
11. Hychko, M. (2024) "Ne kinets viyny, a vidstrochka": politoloh "roznis" myrni perehovory Trampa i Orbana URL: <https://www.unian.ua/war/ne-kinec-viyni-a-vidstrochka-politolog-roznis-mirni-peregovori-trampa-i-orbana-12694740.html>