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*Ivanova Tetiana***AWARENESS OF UKRAINIAN COMMUNITIES AND ENTERPRISES ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE DANUBE REGION****National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Polytechnic Institute”, Kyiv, Ukraine**

The article is devoted to studying the level of awareness of Ukrainian communities and businesses about the problems of the Danube Region, which is an important environmental, economic and social factor for the country. The study includes responses of the population and entrepreneurs to important questions aimed at determining the level of awareness of the region’s problems, identifying the main challenges faced by the Danube region, and evaluating initiatives and projects aimed at restoring the Danube. The scientific contribution of the article is to formulate recommendations for the development of the Danube Region. The article analyzes the respondents’ views on the importance of attracting investment in infrastructure and environmental projects in the Danube Region to promote socio-economic development. The study takes into account the opportunities in the region and the issue of engaging the public and businesses to work together on the development of the Danube Region. The study also assesses the importance of Ukraine’s cooperation with the European Union for the restoration and development of the Danube Region, given its geostrategic importance and potential for joint initiatives and projects. In addition, the article provides recommendations that should be developed to improve the condition of the Danube Region of Ukraine and its adjacent territories. The results of this study may be useful for further strategic decisions and improvement of living conditions in the Danube Region. This article will contribute to deepening knowledge about the current state of the Danube Region, its problems and development opportunities, opening the way for further research and joint work on solving important problems in the region. These recommendations can be offered as a basis for further elaboration of the State Strategy for the Development of the Region, which will be aimed at improving the environmental, economic and social situation in the Danube Region, and will contribute to strengthening cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union for the joint development of this important region.

Keywords: Danube region, problems and challenges, community, enterprises.**DOI:** 10.32434/2415-3974-2023-18-2-44-55***Introduction and problem definition***

Successful development of a country requires not only domestic efforts, but also attention to regional issues and international cooperation. It is in this context that the Danube Region is important – a region that unites Ukraine and other European countries across the river, but at the same time faces numerous difficulties and challenges. In the context of current

challenges and the need to ensure Ukraine’s sustainable integration development in the international market, as well as given the difficult political situation and military events that have affected the Danube Region, the issues of awareness of Ukrainian communities and businesses about the problems of the Danube Region are becoming extremely relevant. They determine the willingness to cooperate, invest, and

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make the necessary decisions to improve the region's condition, as well as influence the further development of the economic and social spheres. Therefore, in order to study this issue and reveal its importance for national and international economic science and practice, this study was conducted to provide recommendations for the development of the Danube Region, as well as to highlight the level of awareness of Ukrainian communities and enterprises about the problems of this region.

Analysis and research of publications

Sielker F. [1], Ignjatijevic S. et al. [2], Slavic A. and Berber N. [3] investigate the activities of enterprises in the Danube Region. The works of scholars also consider certain aspects of the impact of communities or enterprises on the Danube Region. For example, Bostan I. et al. [4], through a survey of business representatives, identified a positive relationship between the economic, social and environmental performance of SMEs in the Danube Delta and the attraction of European funds. Profiroiu A.G. et al. [5] analyze the implementation of the Integrated Territorial Investment mechanism in the Danube Delta in 2014-2020. The study uses a survey of communities to investigate investments in the socio-economic development of the region. However, according to our analysis, insufficient attention has been paid to the awareness of Ukrainian communities and enterprises about the development of the Danube region.

Purpose of the article

The purpose of the article is to provide recommendations for the development of the Danube Region of Ukraine in the post-war period based on the study of the awareness of Ukrainian communities and enterprises of the existing problems of the region. The main objectives of the study are: to assess the level of awareness of Ukrainian communities and enterprises in the Danube Region regarding the existing problems; to determine the attitude of the population and business to the opportunities for development and investment in the Danube Region; to analyze the readiness of Ukraine to cooperate with the European Union for the restoration and development of the Danube Region and the role of this cooperation in solving the problems of the region; development of practical recommendations for the development of the Danube region of Ukraine. The main contribution of the publication is to provide concrete measures that will contribute to the development of the Danube Region in the postwar period.

Presentation of the main material

The study was conducted in the Danube region of Ukraine, covering communities and businesses active in the region. Participants in the study included

representatives of these communities and employees of enterprises active in the region. It is worth noting that the study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards and with respect for the confidentiality of participants' responses.

To collect and analyze data, the study used scientific methods aimed at obtaining objective results. A critical analysis of the scientific literature on regional issues and the development of the Danube Region was conducted to improve understanding of the research areas.

Semi-structured interviews with respondents were used to obtain detailed answers to questions related to the level of awareness of the Danube Region's problems by communities and businesses.

The study included four main stages: preparation for data collection, data collection, data analysis, and summarizing the results. The use of qualitative and quantitative approaches made it possible to obtain objective information and understand the views of communities and businesses on the problems of the Danube Region.

This study aims to identify the level of awareness of the region's problems and opportunities for improvement, which will contribute to the development of strategies and initiatives for the further development of the Danube Region.

The study was conducted using an online survey with the participation of communities and businesses living and operating in the Danube Region. The Danube Region in Ukraine includes Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and Odesa oblasts. This method was chosen due to the conditions of martial law in Ukraine, which makes it difficult to conduct traditional surveys. GoogleForms platform was used for the survey. The structure of the questionnaire was based on a preliminary analysis of the literature and key research questions.

The survey consisted of two main parts. The first part contained questions aimed at obtaining general information about the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire contained questions related to the views and awareness of the challenges and opportunities in the Danube Region. The survey was conducted between August and October 2023.

The main questions in the questionnaire were.

First. Are you aware of the existing problems in the Danube Region of Ukraine?

Second. Are the problems currently faced by the Danube Region critical?

Third. Are you familiar with the initiatives and projects aimed at restoring the Danube?

Fourth. Do you think that attracting additional investments will contribute to the socio-economic development of the Danube Region?

Fifth. Do you have information about existing business and entrepreneurship opportunities in the Danube Region?

Sixth. Do you think it is important to involve businesses in the development of the Danube Region?

Seventh. Do you think it is important to involve the public in the development of the Danube Region?

Eighth. Do you consider cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union for the restoration and development of the Danube Region appropriate?

Respondents had the opportunity to evaluate each of the questions in the questionnaire using a five-

point Likert scale, where the answer options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

As a result of the survey, 54 questionnaires were received (29 from enterprises of various forms of ownership, 26 from the community).

Knowledge of the existing problems of the Danube Region of Ukraine. The results of the company’s survey on the problems of the Danube region are shown in Fig. 1.

The survey results show that the majority of enterprises are aware of the main problems of the region (50% strongly agree and 38% partially agree).

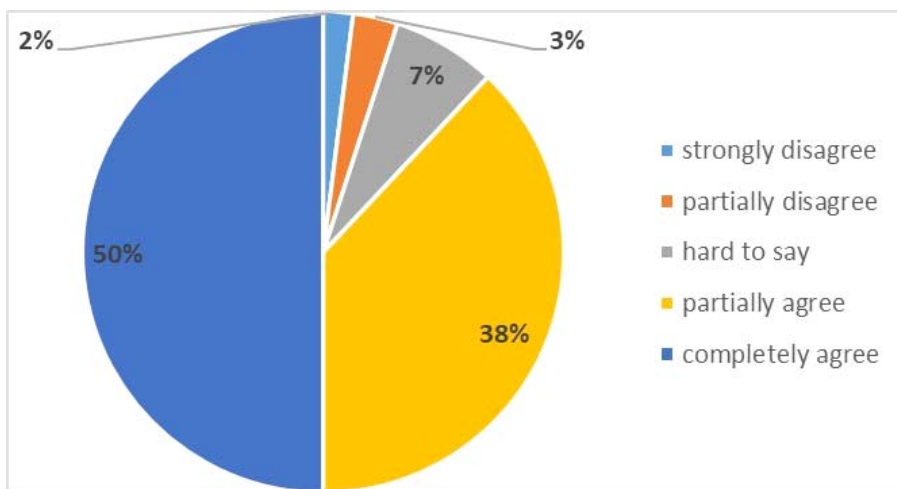


Fig. 1. Results of the survey of enterprises on the possession of information about the problems of the Danube Region
Source: created by the author

Only a limited number, 12% of enterprises, indicated that they are not fully or not at all aware of all the problems faced by the Danube Region.

The responses of community representatives regarding their knowledge of the issues facing the Danube Region of Ukraine were analyzed (Fig. 2).

The results of the analysis of the community survey show the following picture: only 4% of respondents are completely or partially unaware of the problems of the region; 5% claim to have heard about these problems; 35% admitted that they partially understand the problems of the region; while 56%

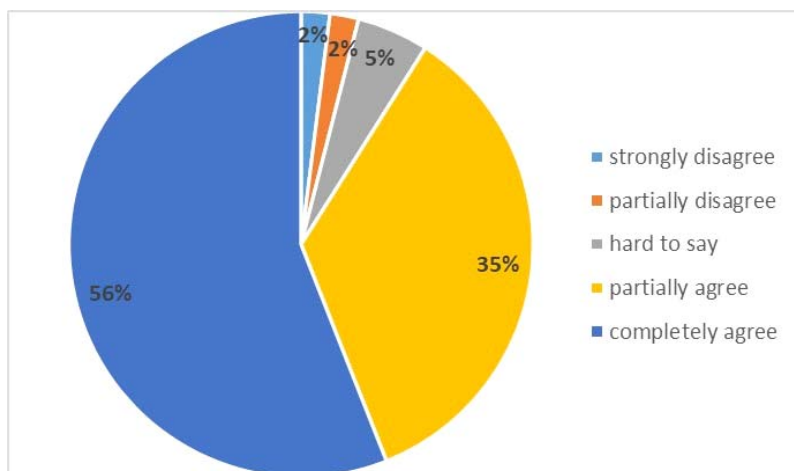


Fig. 2. Results of the community survey on awareness of the problems of the Danube Region
Source: created by the author

reported that they are fully aware of the problems of the region.

Criticality of the problems of the Danube Region. Analyzing the results of the survey of enterprises on the identification of critical problems in the Danube

Region, we can distinguish the following distribution of responses: only 1% strongly disagree with this opinion, 2% partially disagree, 4% have difficulty in identifying, 42% partially agree, and 51% strongly agree (Fig. 3).

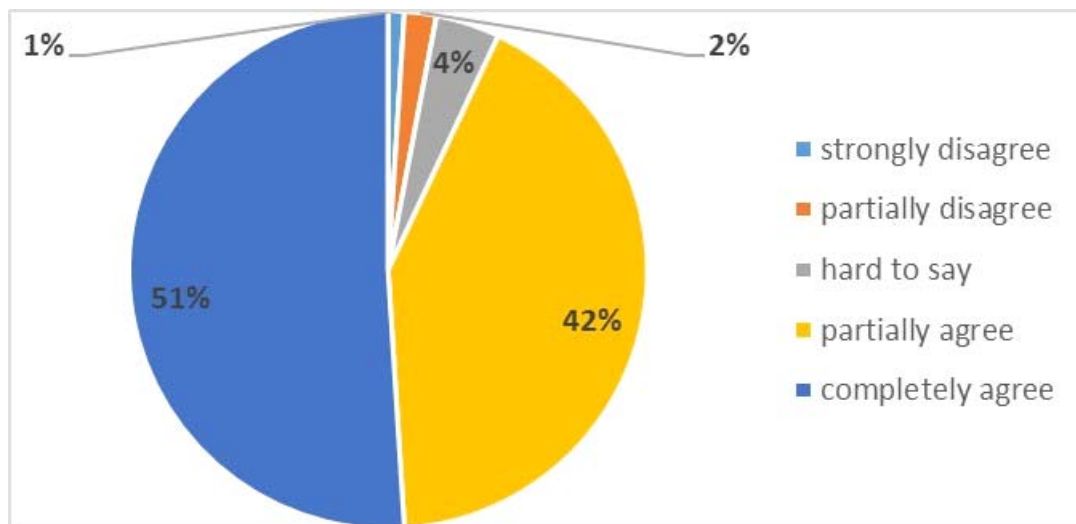


Fig. 3. Results of the survey of enterprises on the criticality of existing problems in the Danube Region

Source: created by the author

Communities see the problems (Fig. 4) as partially (44%) or fully (53%) critical.

There are also community members who do not consider the problems to be critical partially (1%) or not at all (2%). In addition, 3% of

respondents have not yet formed their own opinion on the matter.

Awareness of existing initiatives and projects to restore the Danube. The results of the survey of enterprises on this issue are shown in Fig. 5.

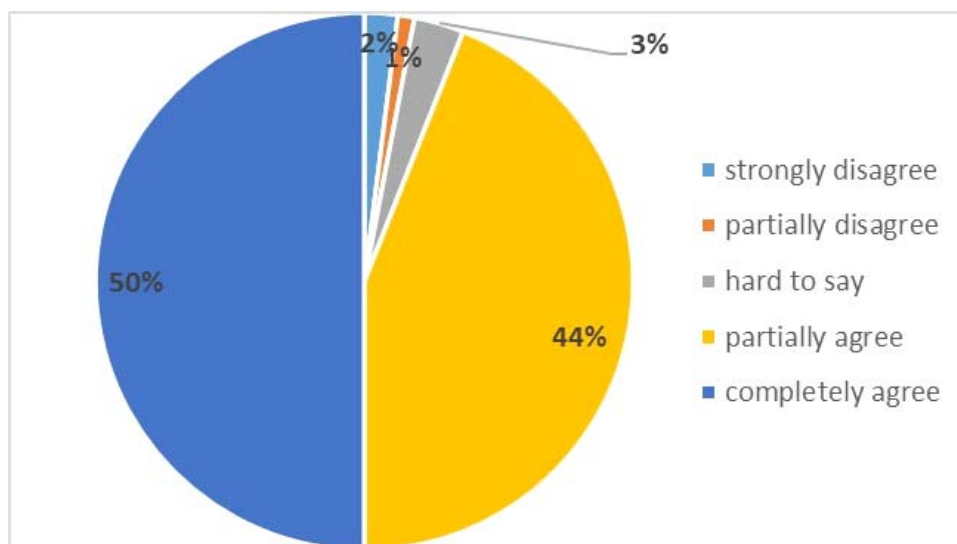


Fig. 4. Results of the community survey on the criticality of existing problems in the Danube Region of Ukraine

Source: created by the author

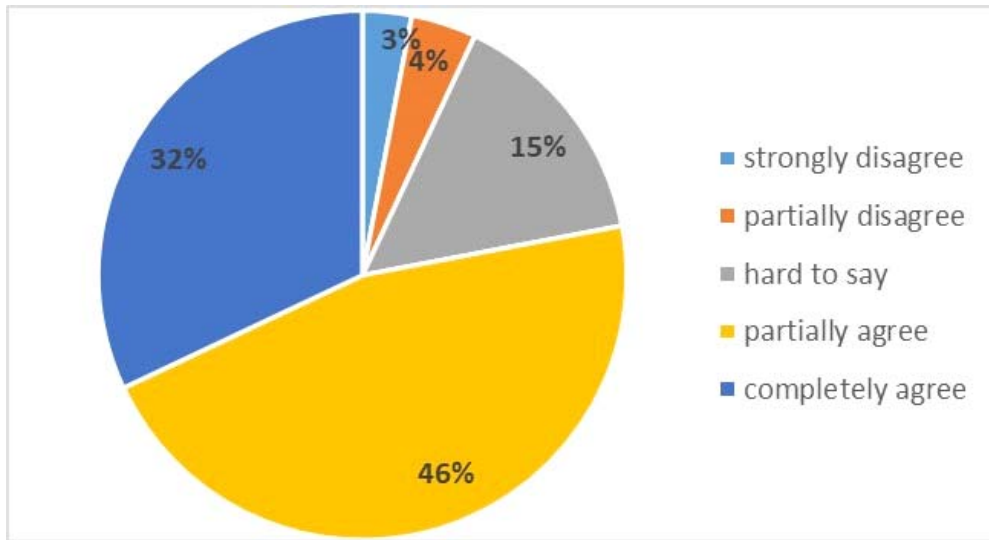


Fig. 5. Results of the survey on awareness of Danube restoration initiatives and projects in the survey of enterprises
Source: created by the author

Partially or fully aware are 78% of the respondents. 15% found it difficult to answer. Partially unaware or not at all are 7%.

As for communities, their results are shown in Fig. 6.

It can be argued that community representatives are quite aware of this issue, as 79% of respondents are fully or partially aware of this issue.

Socio-economic development of the Danube Region through investment attraction. The results of the survey on the effectiveness of attracting investments for the development of the Danube Region (shown in Figure 7) show that 68% of enterprises consider them effective, 18% are undecided, and the rest do not share this opinion (because they partially or completely disagree with this statement).

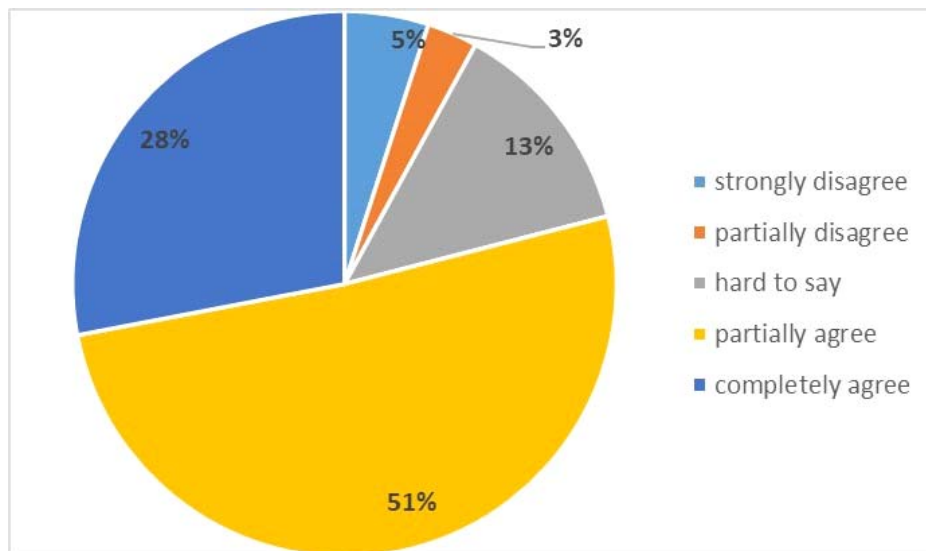


Fig. 6. Results of awareness of Danube restoration initiatives and projects in the survey of community representatives
Source: created by the author

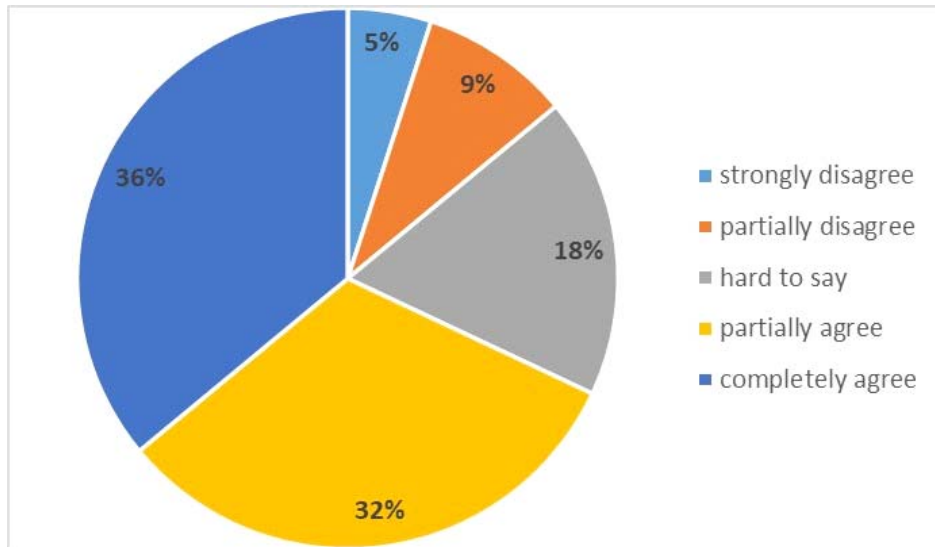


Fig. 7. Results of the survey of enterprises on investment attraction and socio-economic development of the Danube Region
Source: created by the author

Fig. 8 shows data from a survey of communities on the feasibility of attracting investment to improve the situation in this region of Ukraine.

Community representatives expressed the need to attract investment to solve the region's problems and develop it as follows: 4% strongly disagree, 8% partially disagree, 16% find it difficult to say, 30% partially agree, and 42% strongly agree.

partially agree, and 42% strongly agree.

Awareness of development opportunities of entrepreneurship in the Danube Region. According to 76% of businesses, there are some business opportunities in the Danube Region, while other respondents found it difficult to answer or disagree (Fig. 9).

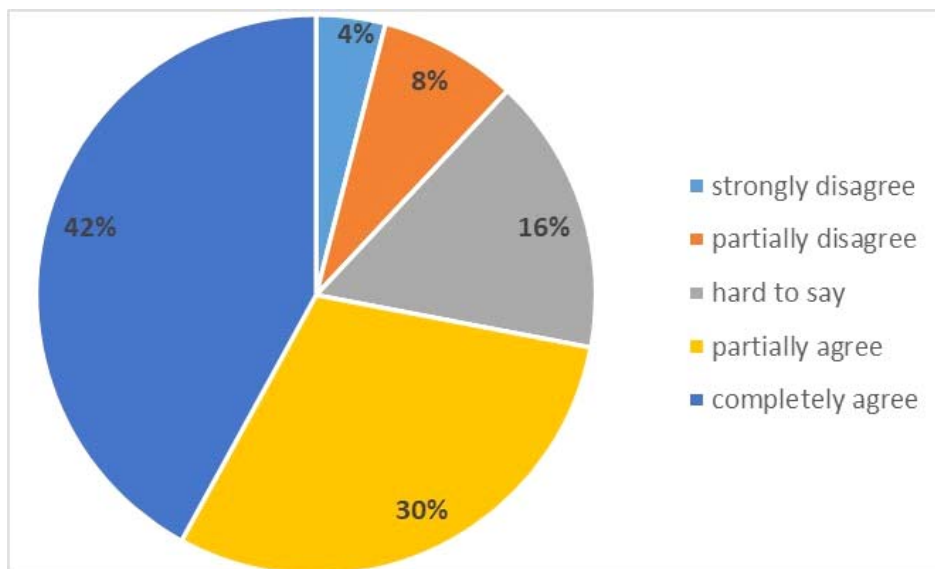


Fig. 8. Results of the survey of community representatives on attracting investment for the socio-economic development of the Danube Region
Source: created by the author

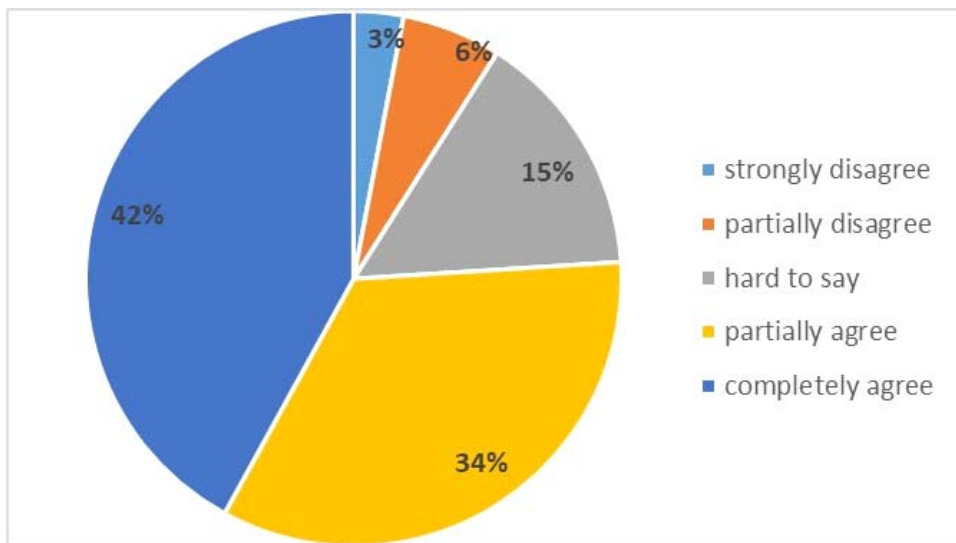


Fig. 9. Results of the survey of enterprises on certain opportunities for their development in the region

Source: created by the author

The results of the public opinion survey are shown in Fig. 10.

The majority of community respondents (49% strongly agree and 31% partially agree) with the proposed statement.

Feasibility of involving enterprises in the development of the Danube Region. According to the companies, they should be involved in the development of the Danube Region (Fig. 11).

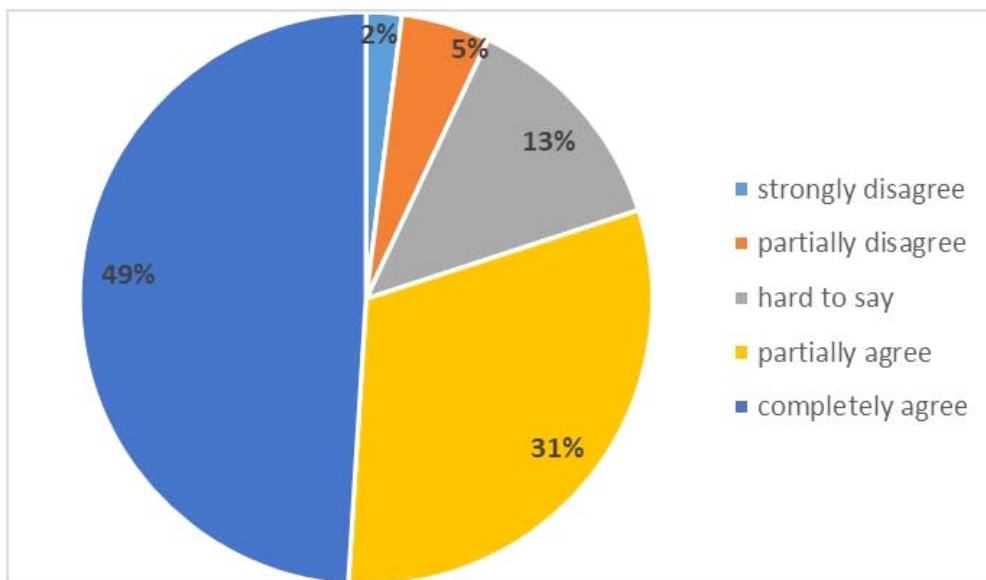


Fig. 10. Results of the community survey on business development opportunities in the region

Source: created by the author

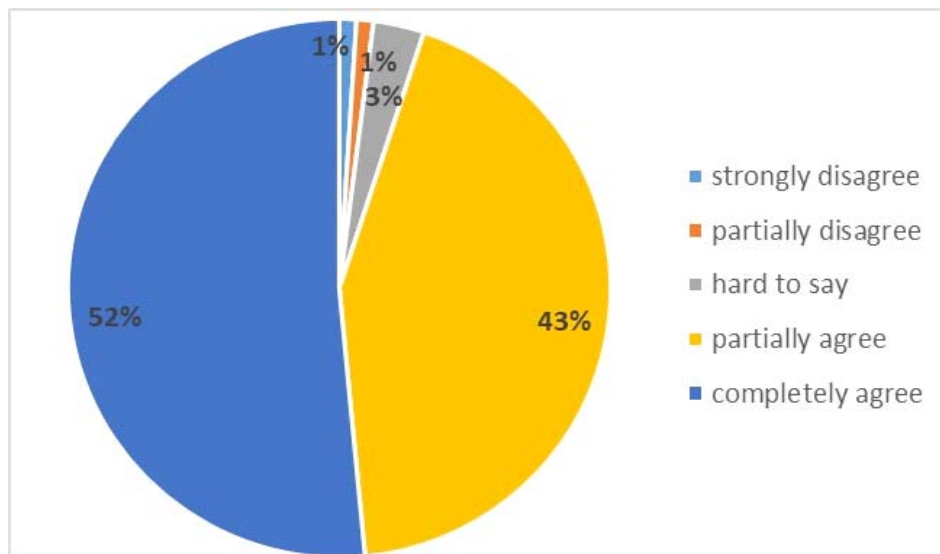


Fig. 11. Results of the survey of private enterprises on the feasibility of their involvement in the development of the Danube Region

Source: created by the author

The majority of respondents believe that their involvement will have a positive impact on the development of the region (43% and 52% respectively consider it partially appropriate or fully appropriate). The results of the public opinion poll on this issue can be seen in Fig. 12.

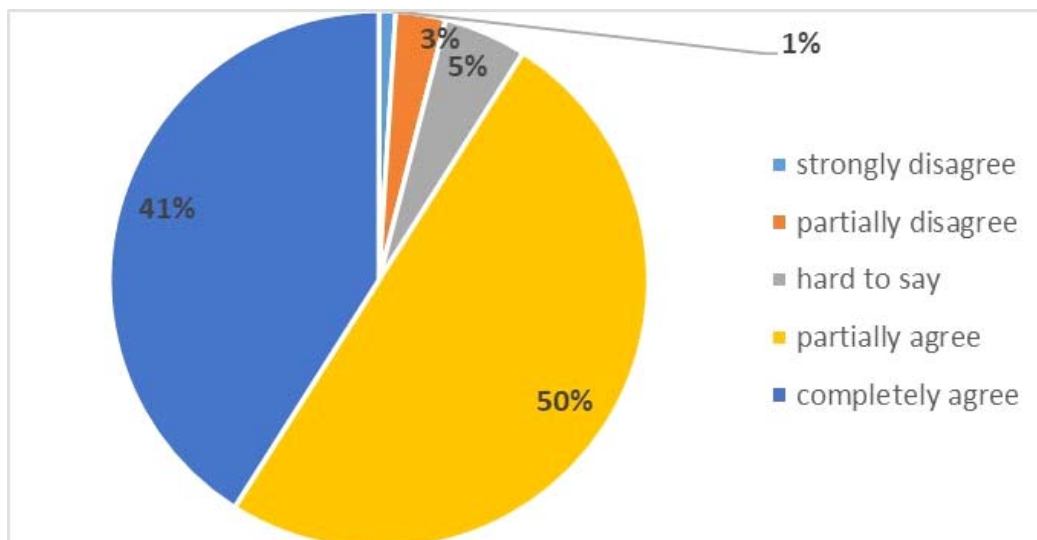


Fig. 12. Results of a community survey on the feasibility of involving businesses in improving the situation in the Danube Region

Source: created by the author

Yes, according to community representatives, it will have a positive impact: 50% – fully agree; 41% – partially agree; 5% – find it difficult to answer; 4% – fully or partially disagree.

The role of communities in promoting the development of the Danube Region. Fig. 13 shows an analysis of the opinion of enterprises on the feasibility of involving the region’s communities in its development.

Thus, business representatives believe that there will be positive consequences in the process of community involvement in the development of the region (95% of respondents partially or fully support this opinion).

Communities also believe that they will be able to have some positive impact on the development of their region (Fig. 14).

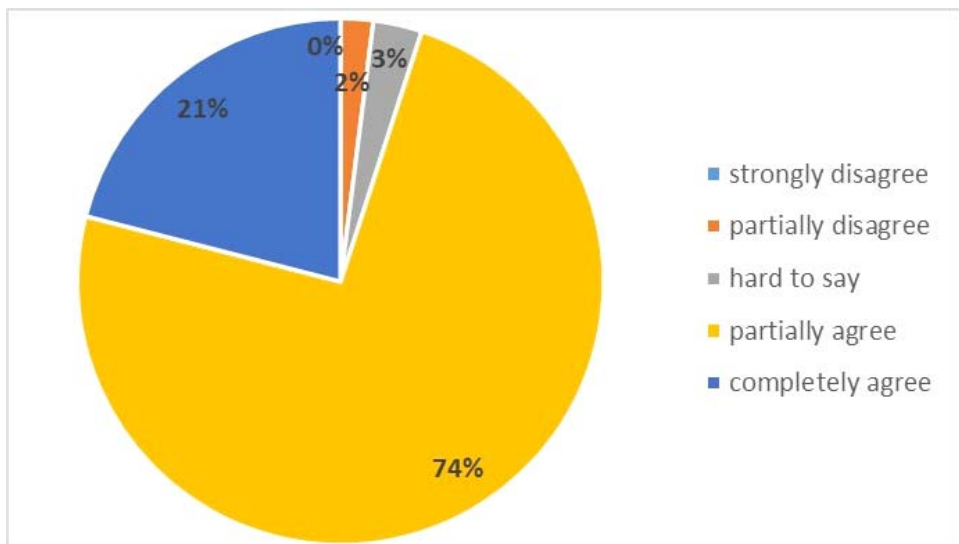


Fig. 13. Results of the survey of enterprises on the feasibility of involving communities in the development of the region
Source: created by the author

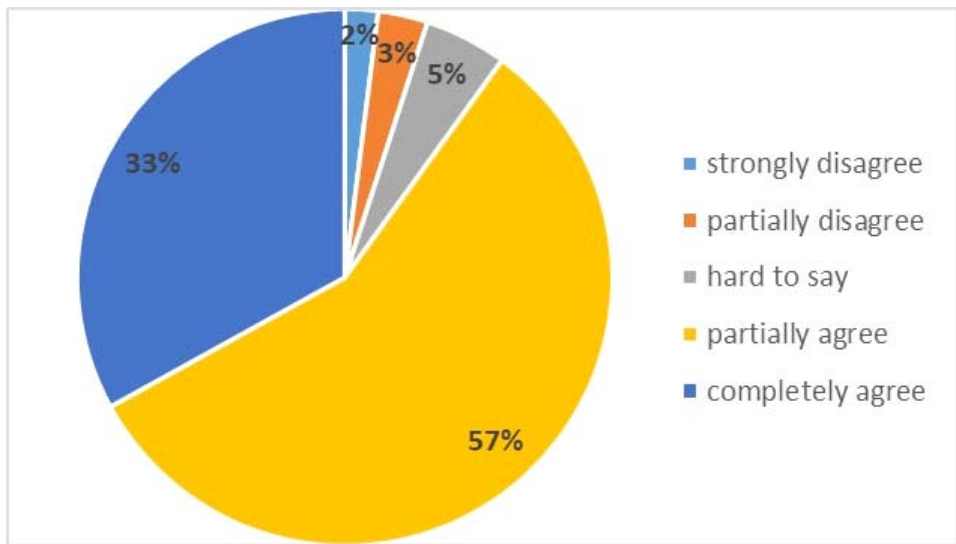


Fig. 14. Results of the survey of communities on their impact on the development of the Danube Region
Source: created by the author

We consider it positive that most community representatives believe that they should be involved in activities in the region and that they can positively influence the development of the region.

The need for cooperation between Ukraine and the EU on the development of the Danube

Region. It is also important to study the attitudes of businesses and the community toward EU involvement in the development of the Danube Region.

The results of the survey of enterprises are shown in Fig. 15.

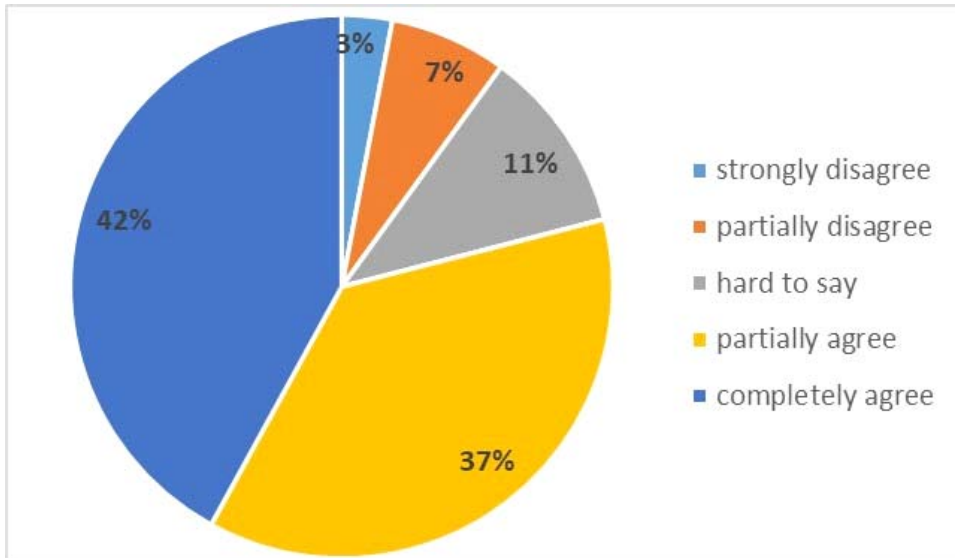


Fig. 15. Results of the survey of enterprises on the need for cooperation with the EU for the recovery of the Danube Region
Source: created by the author

The results of the survey of enterprises on the feasibility of cooperation with the EU are positive, as it opens up new opportunities for the region. It also shows that there is no resistance to the implementation

of certain initiatives.

A survey of communities was also conducted on their vision of cooperation with the FS for the region's recovery (Fig. 16).

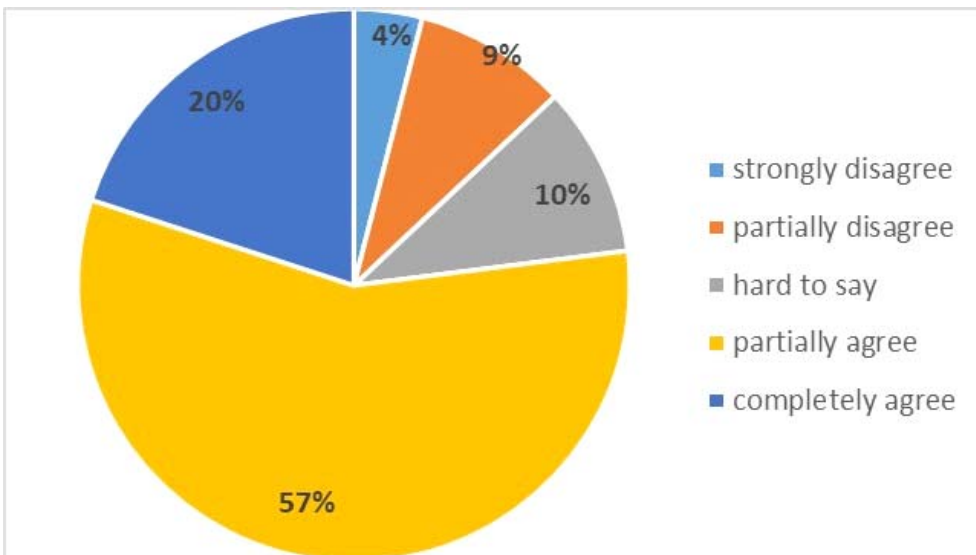


Fig. 16. Results of a survey of community representatives on the need to restore the Danube Region through cooperation with the EU

Source: created by the author

Fig. 16 shows that the community also supports these initiatives of cooperation with the EU (20% strongly agree and 57% partially agree with this statement).

Based on the study, we offer the following recommendations for the socio-economic development of the Danube region of Ukraine in the current conditions:

- development of tourism. The Danube Region of Ukraine has significant potential for tourism development. It is recommended to develop and implement attractive tourism programs, partner with travel agencies, invest in tourism infrastructure, and develop measures to ensure security for tourists in the post-war period;

- development of infrastructure and logistics. Improving the region's infrastructure and logistics capabilities could make it more attractive to businesses and foreign investors. It is recommended to invest in modernizing ports, roads, and railways, which will help improve trade ties;

- improving education and developing the workforce. The development of the region requires a skilled workforce. It is recommended to create educational programs aimed at training specialists in transportation, ecology, and other areas that are important for the development of the region;

- environmental sustainability. The Danube Region requires special attention to the environment and natural resources. It is recommended to introduce strict environmental standards, encourage projects using renewable energy sources, and preserve biodiversity;

- cooperation with international partners. The conditions of the conflict require additional involvement of international experts. It is recommended to establish partnerships with international organizations and donors to finance projects for the development of the region;

- involvement of the local community. It is important to include the local community in decision-making and new projects. It is recommended to create mechanisms for engaging citizens in discussions and decision-making related to the development of the region.

The above recommendations can be used as a basis for further elaboration of a strategy for the socio-economic development of the Danube Region of Ukraine in the context of war and instability.

Conclusions

The scientific novelty lies in the comprehensive approach to studying the awareness of the problems of the Danube Region and its impact on the socio-economic development of the region. The study complements existing approaches by focusing on the

active role of society and business in addressing these issues.

The findings are of practical importance for policy makers, NGOs, and businesses operating in the Danube Region. They provide an opportunity to understand in more detail the attitudes of society and business to the existing problems and opportunities in the region, which can be used to develop and plan further activities.

The development of a Strategy for the Development of the Danube Region of Ukraine in the Postwar Period at the state level could be a direction for further research.

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ОСВІДОМЛЕНІСТЬ ГРОМАД І ПІДПРИЄМСТВ УКРАЇНИ ЩОДО ПРОБЛЕМ ДУНАЙСЬКОГО РЕГІОНУ

Іванова Тетяна

Статтю присвячено вивченню рівня освідомленості громад та підприємств України щодо проблем Дунайського регіону, який є важливим екологічним, економічним і соціальним фактором для країни. Дослідження включає відповіді населення та підприємців на важливі запитання, спрямовані на визначення рівня обізнаності стосовно проблем регіону, ідентифікацію основних викликів, з якими стикається Дунайський регіон, та оцінювання ініціатив і проєктів, спрямованих на відновлення Дунаю. Науковий внесок статті полягає в формулюванні рекомендацій для розвитку Дунайського регіону. У статті проаналізовано погляди респондентів щодо важливості залучення інвестицій у інфраструктуру та екологічні проєкти в Дунайському регіоні для сприяння соціально-економічному розвитку. Дослідження враховує можливість в регіоні і питання залучення громадськості та підприємств до спільної роботи над розвитком Дунайського регіону. Дослідження також оцінює важливість співпраці України з Європейським Союзом для відновлення та розвитку Дунайського регіону, враховуючи його геостратегічне значення та потенціал для спільних ініціатив і проєктів. Крім того, у статті надано рекомендації, які варто розробляти для поліпшення стану Дунайського регіону України та його прилеглих територій. Результати цього дослідження можуть бути корисними для подальших стратегічних рішень та поліпшення умов життя в Дунайському регіоні. Ця стаття сприятиме поглибленню знань про сучасний стан Дунайського регіону, його проблеми та можливості розвитку, відкриваючи шляхи для подальших досліджень і спільної роботи над вирішенням важливих завдань у цьому регіоні. Надані рекомендації можна запропонувати у якості основи для розроблення у подальшому державної Стратегії розвитку регіону, яка буде спрямована на покращення екологічної, економічної та соціальної ситуації в Дунайському регіоні, і сприяти зміцненню співпраці між Україною та Європейським Союзом для спільного розвитку цього важливого регіону.

Ключові слова: Дунайський регіон, проблеми та виклики, громада, підприємства.

AWARENESS OF UKRAINIAN COMMUNITIES AND ENTERPRISES ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE DANUBE REGION

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