

## Impact of economic crises on obligations in civil law: Analysis of current European social and legal context

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**Abstract.** The study aimed to analyse the main factors affecting compliance with civil law during the economic crisis. The study was based on an analysis of external factors such as political stability, economic development, social conditions, technological progress, environmental challenges and the effectiveness of the regulatory framework. The study included a content analysis of the regulatory framework of the EU and Ukraine on crisis response; a PESTEL analysis of factors (political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal) to determine the effectiveness of crisis response; and case studies of European companies Lexbase (Sweden), Walltopia (Bulgaria) and Vedanta (UK), which demonstrated typical violations of labour and environmental legislation in the context of the economic crisis. Based on the analysed experience, the study concluded that although some companies view violations of civil law as a way to remain competitive during economic instability, the long-term results of such a strategy are devastating in terms of reputational damage and the impossibility of sustainable development. A more effective response to economic instability involves macroeconomic measures with a focus on fiscal stimulus, monetary policy and investment in innovation; social measures aimed at expanding social protection for various segments of the population, supporting employment and ensuring access to basic services; legal instruments and measures to strengthen labour rights, anti-crisis regulatory measures and the development of anti-

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corruption policy; integration and international support from EU member states and international partners; and strategic planning for the future, with a priority on the development of digital manufacturing and management decentralisation. The results obtained are of practical importance for the formation of a strategy for sustainable development of Ukraine aimed at minimising the effects of economic shocks and ensuring compliance with civil law even in times of deep crisis

**Keywords:** business strategies; sustainable development; labour law; environmental law; social equality; digitalisation; decentralisation

## Introduction

The economic crisis significantly affected the fulfilment of economic obligations in civil law, which is manifested in delayed performance of obligations, changes in contractual terms and conditions and bankruptcy. During economic crises, there may also be changes to employment contracts that lead to changes in working conditions, staff reductions or the transfer of employees to flexible working arrangements. The importance of these influences is determined by their connection with national development and the quality of life of the population. As of 2025, Ukraine is in a state of economic instability caused by full-scale military aggression, occupation of certain territories and mass migration processes. Ensuring sustainable development of the country is possible only if the impact of the economic crisis on the fulfilment of civil law obligations is minimised. Achieving this goal is possible, among other things, through the analysis and implementation of experience gained from the European social and legal context.

K. Chyzhmar (2023) defined civil law as a legal system that regulates property and non-property relations between legal entities and individuals or other entities. O.O. Kolybylina (2023) emphasised that the principles of civil law defined by the Civil Code of Ukraine include the following: good faith and good intentions, enforcement of obligations, protection of property rights, protection of the right to inviolability of the person, freedom of will, equality of parties to a civil law transaction, compliance with contractual obligations, economic freedom and recognition of legal capacity.

The economic crisis is one of the key obstacles to the fulfilment of obligations in civil law (Adamus, 2023; Alishli et al., 2024). K. Ariyaratne (2023) investigated the relationship between the economic crisis and the enforcement of civil law obligations in the context of Sri Lanka, which in 2022 had a public debt of more than 51 billion USD and 22% of the population was in a state of food insecurity. According to the researcher, the national economic crisis has led to massive layoffs, which were particularly significant in the LGBT community, whose members are subject to discrimination and social exclusion. In addition to social inequality, the economic crisis is exacerbating negative phenomena such as corruption (Kostiushko, 2024). S. Saha and K. Sen (2023) analysed data collected in 130 countries from 1800 to 2020 and concluded that there is a correlation between economic status and corruption, which is moderated by a set of factors. The researchers argued that strong institutions can control corruption in cases of political and civil violence and economic downturns, but their ability to control corruption is significantly reduced in the face of democratic breakdown, coups, armed conflict or currency crises. The results of the study thus indicate that there are safeguards against violations of civil law in times of crisis.

The impact of the economic crisis on the deepening of corruption phenomena was also confirmed by M.V. Korniienko et al. (2020) in a study of a sample of 166

countries. The researchers emphasised that corruption, which is a consequence of the economic crisis in a particular country, also determines its long-term development. This conclusion means that countries that can fight corruption in the legal field have a better chance of sustainable economic development than countries that pay insufficient attention or ignore corruption in various areas. According to T.A. Maniou and E. Ketteni (2020), the media can be effective in the fight against corruption, but they are prone to participate in corrupt schemes in times of economic instability. The cited sources highlight the correlation between economic decline and corruption as a manifestation of violations of key civil law norms.

The impact of the economic crisis on compliance with civil law was also studied by M.A. Arco-Castro et al. (2024) in an analysis of data from 1,933 companies in 26 countries. Based on regression analysis, the researchers concluded that during an economic crisis, the number of violations of social responsibility norms by companies increases. To minimise the impact of the economic downturn, some companies ignore violations of environmental standards, which are the basis of the principle of good faith and good intentions in the civil law field. Researchers, however, emphasised the existence of conditions under which the risk of violating civil law in the context of the economic crisis is minimal or non-existent.

Although the impact of the economic crisis on the fulfilment of obligations in civil law is a well-researched topic, there are some gaps in terms of adaptation of the experience gained in the context of martial law. The study aimed to analyse compliance with civil law in the context of the economic crisis. The objectives were to study the impact of the economic crisis on the fulfilment of obligations under European civil law and to explore the possibilities for adapting this experience to the Ukrainian context.

## Materials and methods

The materials of the European Law Institute to search for cases of the impact of the economic crisis on the fulfilment of obligations in the European social and legal context were used in the study. The following materials were also used for the content analysis: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2008/48/EC “On Credit Agreements for Consumers and Repealing Council Directive 87/102/EEC” (2008); Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2014/17/EU “On Credit Agreements for Consumers Relating to Residential Immovable Property and Amending Directives 2008/48/EC and 2013/36/EU and Regulation (EU) No. 1093/2010” (2014) and Law of Ukraine No. 504-IX “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Aimed at Ensuring Social and Economic Guarantees in Connection with the Spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)” (2020).

The study was conducted using a combination of research methods, including PESTEL analysis, which was

aimed at investigating external factors modulating the relationship between economic situation and compliance with civil law. The analysis was based on the idea that the functioning of an economic entity, including in terms of compliance with civil law, is influenced by a set of factors: political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal (Mahadiansar *et al.*, 2023). One of the objectives of the analysis was to identify the factors that facilitate or, conversely, hinder compliance with civil law in the context of the economic crisis.

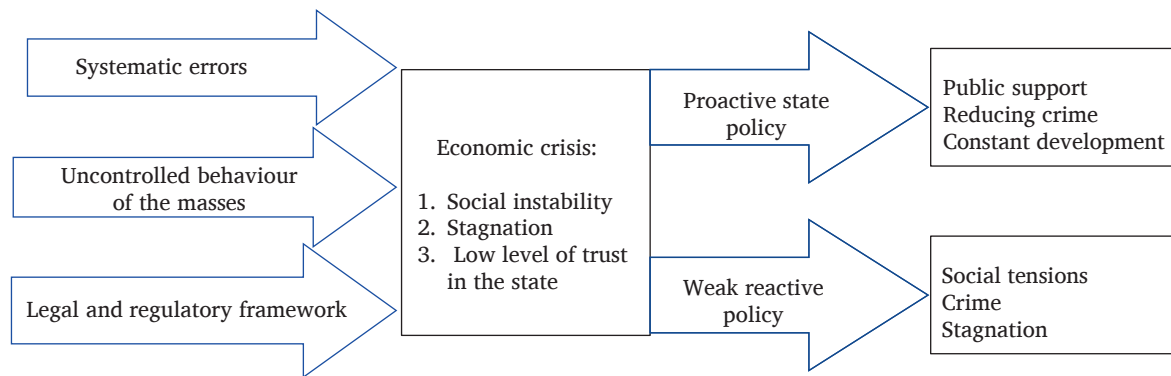
The contextual analysis was the basis for the model of the economic crisis presented later in this paper. The proposed model identifies the following elements: the general causes of the economic crisis; the factors that moderate the relationship between the economic crisis and the violation of civil law; and the consequences of the violation of civil law. The model was created to illustrate the importance of the proposed research and to create recommendations for sustainable development in times of crisis. The theoretical model also substantiates the feasibility of recommendations for the implementation of European experience in responding to crises in the Ukrainian civil law context.

In addition to the aforementioned methods, case study analysis was also employed to evaluate the impact of the economic crisis on violations of civil law in the European social and legal context. The study used cases of European companies: Lexbase (Sweden), Walltopia (Bulgaria) and Vedanta (UK). The selection of cases was based on the following inclusion criteria: the companies that violated civil law during the crisis are based in the EU member states; the violation

was recorded not earlier than 2008 when the EU and the world experienced the economic crisis; information about the violation of civil law by companies appeared in reliable sources, including industry reports, professional articles, etc. The cases were analysed in terms of the factors that led to the violation of civil law; the socio-economic consequences of these violations; and the companies' strategies to remedy the consequences. The conclusions drawn from the cited cases were considered in the context of their implementation in the work of Ukrainian companies and associations.

## Results

**Theoretical model of economic crisis and factors of compliance with civil law in a state of economic uncertainty.** An economic crisis is a complex phenomenon, the emergence and development of which is influenced by several factors. The dominance of certain factors depends on the specific historical, cultural, social and political context. The emergence and development of crisis phenomena are also influenced by global processes and the reaction of society to them. Despite these differences, it is also possible to identify certain universal causes of economic crises, including the following: systematic mistakes in the management of a business entity, region or country; social tensions leading to revolutions, coups d'état and other situations of instability; ineffective management, including unreasonably risky decisions; and the lack of a sufficient legal framework to regulate key aspects of social activity. The identified factors were outlined in the theoretical model presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** A theoretical model of the economic crisis

**Source:** compiled by the authors

The model shows that the impact of the economic crisis on the civil law sphere depends significantly on the state's response to the factors that caused the instability. In contrast to a reactive approach, proactive public policy helps to offset the effects of the economic crisis, reduce social tension and ensure sustainable development. Reactive public policy is, among other things, the creation of regulations that reduce the likelihood of violations of civil law in an uncertain environment. An example of such a legal mechanism is the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2008/48/EC "On Credit Agreements for Consumers and Repealing Council Directive 87/102/EEC" (2008) and Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2014/17/EU "On Credit Agreements for

Consumers Relating to Residential Immovable Property and Amending Directives 2008/48/EC and 2013/36/EU and Regulation (EU) No. 1093/2010" (2014). The purpose of the above-mentioned legal initiative is to develop a transparent credit market that would facilitate barrier-free financial and economic activity in the EU. Amidst the economic crisis, an efficient lending system allows businesses to maintain their competitiveness, support sustainable development and guarantee the observance of employees' rights, including the right to safe working conditions and timely payment. The proposed theoretical model also suggests that compliance with civil law in the context of the economic crisis is conditioned by a set of factors, the key ones of which are presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** Factors of compliance with civil law in the context of the economic crisis

Factor	Comment
Political	The stability of the political regime reduces the likelihood of violations of civil law in the economic crisis. Democratic governance regimes create less favourable conditions for violation of civil law than totalitarian ones
Economic	The economic aspect determines the decision to violate civil law in the context of the economic crisis: the probability of deciding to violate the law is higher if the severity of the potential punishment is lower than the potential benefits of violating the law
Social	The probability of a violation of civil law depends on the level of public tolerance for such violations. In some countries, certain offences, such as bribery, are common practice in the conduct of business
Technological	Technological advances may constrain decisions on civil law violations, as the emergence of the cloud, interactive databases, etc. therefore more possible and faster to collect evidence and prosecute violations
Environmental	Environmental disasters increase the instability of society and can be an additional argument in favour of violating civil law. In the context of the economic crisis, some companies see violations of environmental regulations (and, consequently, society's right to a clean environment) as a way to deal with the consequences of the economic crisis
Legal	There is an inverse relationship between the elaboration of the regulatory framework and the risk of violation of civil law in a crisis: gaps in legislation increase this risk, while a detailed regulatory framework reduces it

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on M. Mahadiansar *et al.* (2023), S. Saha and K. Sen (2023) and M.L. Arco-Castro *et al.* (2024)

The analysis of the Table 1 demonstrates that, depending on the context, each of the aforementioned factors can both increase and minimise the risks of civil law violations during the economic crisis. An illustration of this point is the technological factor, which involves the use of the cloud and other interactive databases to collect and store information for subsequent reporting to stakeholders. Regulations, including the “Treaty on European Union on the Fight against Corruption Involving Officials of the European Communities or Officials of Member States of the European Union”, provide for the use of digital technologies to investigate abuse of office and subsequently bring offenders to justice. An example is the initiation of an investigation into the case of former Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, who is suspected of involvement in a USD 2 million fraud (Former Czech PM..., 2022). In this case, the creation of a transparent information environment contributed to the decision of the lower house of the Czech parliament to lift Babiš's immunity and further investigate the case.

In the context of the economic crisis, legal guarantees of the interests of company employees and consumers are important, as set out, in particular, in Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2008/48/EC “On Credit Agreements for Consumers and Repealing Council Directive 87/102/EEC” (2008), which provides for the protection of consumers from unfair commercial practices, including by providing inaccurate or misleading information about a product or service. The provisions of the above document stipulate that EU member states use universal criteria for the presentation of information, which reduces the risk of manipulation by companies that resort to unfair competition in times of economic instability. The severity of the penalty for violations, such as refusing to inform consumers about the maximum limit of the loan and the terms of its repayment, depends on the legislation of a particular EU country.

The factors that determine the relationship between the economic crisis and the violation of civil law can be used to determine the consequences of such a violation and plan minimisation strategies. The presented theoretical model demonstrates that one of these consequences is the stability of the state during the economic crisis and sustainable development during remission. Previous studies, in particular, R. Mukherjee (2024) and G.R. Bras and M. Robaina (2025), indicate that the existence of state mechanisms for regulating the crisis and bringing to justice for committed offences

contributes to the sustainable development of the state, despite economic difficulties. The inability of the state to regulate the crisis causes the exacerbation of deep-rooted problems, such as low levels of trust in the government, and may lead to radical changes in the state form of government. The ability of the state to respond promptly to violations of civil law during an economic crisis may cause stagnation and even collapse.

An important consequence of the state's inability to respond to the crisis in the social and legal field is also the low level of public trust in governance institutions. Based on previous studies, including D. Macdonald (2020) and T. Besley and S. Dray (2024) and, it is possible to argue that in times of economic instability, the level of public trust is based on the actions taken or not taken by public administration. In times of declining demand and production, for example, state guarantees and support for employees who have been forced to be laid off or transferred to part-time work become relevant. Another example is state compensation for lost property or social support for people who have lost their homes as a result of economic turmoil. Supporting the most vulnerable categories of society through the implementation of civil law is a positive signal that increases the overall level of trust in the authorities and consolidates society to fight the consequences of the crisis. The opposite situation is observed when public authorities tolerate violations of certain civil law provisions, seeing their violation as a way to overcome the economic crisis. Examples include the absence of fines for violations of labour laws or the imposition of restrictions on citizens' withdrawals of savings from bank accounts. These and other violations can have long-term consequences in the form of low levels of public trust and support for government initiatives, the expansion of the shadow economy and an increase in the number of offences.

In addition to these consequences, the state's inability to respond to violations of civil law during the economic crisis significantly worsens its image in the international arena. For instance, the state's inability to guarantee decent working conditions makes it unattractive to foreign specialists who could become the driving force behind innovation and sustainable economic development. Another example is the lack of deposit guarantees as one of the factors against investing in certain segments of the economy and their subsequent decline. The above examples prove that the lack of effective functioning of civil law protec-

tion of individuals and legal entities in the economic crisis reduces the authority of the state at both the national and international levels.

**The impact of the economic crisis on the fulfilment of obligations in the European social and legal context.** The economic crisis is affecting the fulfilment of key obligations in the European social and legal context, as seen in the cases of Lexbase (Sweden), Walltopia (Bulgaria) and Vedanta (UK). The key aspects of the selected cases are presented in Table 2, that shows that well-known European companies that declare that they respect the rights and freedoms of citizens are not immune to violations of civil law, especially in times of crisis and intense competition. Two-thirds of the offences under consideration relate to violations of em-

ployees' rights to safe working conditions. In the case of the Bulgarian company Walltopia, the violation of employees' rights to decent working conditions was manifested in the use of a pallet on a telescopic forklift for scheduled work, which is unacceptable from a safety point of view (Lee *et al.*, 2020). An essential detail of the case under analysis is that the recorded violation was not the first and occurred after the company was given a written warning about the inadmissibility of working at height without the use of insurance. Systematic violations of labour law indicate that the company has not made effective changes to control its working practices, has not instructed employees on how to perform work at height safely, and has not provided the necessary equipment to perform such work.

**Table 2.** Fulfilment of civil law obligations in the context of selected European companies

No.	Company	Case description	Violated civil law provisions
1	Lexbase (Sweden)	The owners of the Lexbase website provided information about individuals' criminal records for free. In 2014, about 300 complaints for defamation were filed against the company that owned the website. The Swedish court was tasked with determining whether the company's activities violated the right to personal data protection or exercised the constitutional right to freedom of information	As Lexbase is protected by the principle of public access, the case was referred to the Chancellor of Justice, who declined to press charges against the company. Following a court ruling published in March 2014, Lexbase resumed its operations
2	Walltopia (Bulgaria)	Walltopia is a well-known Bulgarian manufacturer of climbing walls with operations in various European countries, including the UK. In 2016, the company was fined USD 663,235 for failing to comply with safe conditions when installing an obstacle course	The incident was investigated by the head of the occupational health and safety department, who found that the installations were conducted on a roof area 11 metres above the ground and without the use of any fall protection equipment. The case involved systematic violations of employees' rights, including the right to safe working conditions
3	Vedanta (UK)	The British company Vedanta has subsidiaries in various parts of the world, including Zambia. Employees of the Zambian subsidiary and citizens of the country filed a complaint in a British court, claiming that the operation of a copper mine was worsening their health. As of 2025, the court case is still pending and could be a turning point in ensuring equally high labour standards across the company's branches in different countries	The case study is necessary because violations of labour standards by European companies are not uncommon. Similar violations were found in the case of the Dutch company Ogoni 9. Investigating systematic violations will help to understand compliance with civil law in times of crisis and reduced demand for the company's goods and/or services

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on K. Lee *et al.* (2020), S. Varvastian and F.K. Kalunga (2020), G.M. Abdel Aziz and A. Abouahmed (2024)

The analysis of this case suggests that the main reason for violations of labour laws is the desire to remain competitive despite the lack of resources. Walltopia's managers attempted to save resources by using cheaper equipment and not monitoring the safe conduct of height operations. The case study also suggests that the company decided to save resources on training employees to comply with universal safe working standards because practices that were not noticed in Bulgaria were publicly reported in the UK. This resulted in a guilty plea and a fine from Walltopia officials. In addition to immediate financial losses, the company also suffered long-term negative financial impacts related to reputational losses. Based on the case study, it is possible to argue that violation of civil law, such as labour law, during an economic crisis, is an unreliable strategy that leads to long-term reputational and related financial losses. The case study also illustrates the idea that in the European social and legal context, there are many deterrents to violations of civil law. One of these tools is public disclosure of violations that motivate individuals and legal entities to comply with the applicable civil law.

The strategy of periodically reviewing labour legislation to adapt it to changes in the labour market, including the emergence of new categories of employees, is also effective. An example is the adoption by the European Parliament of new rules for working on digital platforms (Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2024/2831, 2024). The Directive, which was voted for by 544 parliamentarians, obliges EU countries to establish a legal presumption of employment at the national level to correct the imbalance of power between the digital work platform and the person working on it. According to the new directive, the burden of proof of an employment relationship is on the platform to prove that there is no such relationship. Adoption of the directive at the national level will reduce the risk of labour exploitation of employees and improve the quality of life of more than 40 million EU citizens working for Uber, Deliveroo and other platforms.

The adoption of the new rules underscores the importance of systematically combating violations of civil law at various levels. Vedanta's case is an example of a violation of not only labour law, but also the right of citizens to a

clean and safe environment, as not only the mine's employees but also residents living near the mine filed a lawsuit in the British court (Varvastian & Kalunga, 2020). Based on the analysis of the case, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the conditions under which the violation of labour and environmental laws became possible. One of the likely reasons is the ongoing economic crisis in most African countries, which pushes employers to exploit the local population by providing unsafe working conditions, lowering wages, exploiting child and adolescent labour, etc. The geographical remoteness of the subsidiaries makes it difficult to detect and investigate such abuses. It is also possible to assume that the operation of subsidiaries in different countries and different political and socio-economic conditions makes it impossible to comply with universal safety and quality standards. Due to the difficulties in communication between divisions, information on violations of civil law is provided with a long delay and often takes the form of a high-profile public case. As in the case of Walltopia, the main method of combating abuses is publicity and prosecution for violations of civil law. Publicity helps to promote the idea that, despite different political, economic, socio-cultural and other realities, individuals and legal entities must comply with universal civil law norms that ensure sustainable development of society.

In contrast to the cases cited above, the Swedish case illustrates the idea that the desire for competitiveness can push companies to make strategic decisions that are ethically ambiguous. On the one hand, the dissemination of potentially sensitive information, such as criminal records, is a violation of the right to privacy of citizens (Abdel Aziz & Abouahmed, 2024). To generate additional revenue, especially in a highly competitive environment, companies often buy telephone databases or transfer their customers' information to third parties without permission. On the other hand, the Lexbase case proves that the line between providing potentially sensitive information and guaranteeing

citizens' freedoms, including the right to collect and disseminate information, is rather arbitrary. To define this line, it is often necessary to conduct judicial investigations, which require a lot of time and resources, and create precedents for new violations in the industry.

**Strategies for overcoming the effects of the crisis on the fulfilment of obligations in civil law.** Based on the experience of certain European countries, it is possible to conclude that prevention or overcoming the consequences of default in civil law due to the economic crisis is a set of measures that can be divided into five key categories. The classification of strategies for overcoming the consequences of the economic crisis in the civil law field of certain European countries is presented in Table 3, that shows that combating the consequences of the economic crisis in the social and legal field is a multi-component strategy, the elements of which are interdependent and in constant contact with each other. A detailed analysis of the identified categories provides an understanding of European strategies to prevent and/or overcome violations of civil law caused by the economic crisis. Some of these strategies, including the guarantee of citizens' rights to safe working conditions, were adapted to Ukrainian realities through the adoption of the Law of Ukraine No. 504-IX "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Aimed at Ensuring Social and Economic Guarantees in Connection with the Spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)" (2020). The Law provides for a tax rebate to individual entrepreneurs and enterprises for the purchase of disinfectants and medicines, sick leave payments, etc. Despite some progress in protecting the rights of citizens, the implementation of the European experience is hampered by the restrictions of the martial law regime, the unstable financial situation and the lack of resources, as well as the unwillingness of some business entities to compete fairly in an uncertain environment (Cherevko, 2024).

**Table 3.** Overcoming the consequences of the economic crisis in the European civil law field

Category	Recommended strategies
Macroeconomic measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fiscal stimulus.</li> <li>2. Monetary policy.</li> <li>3. Investing in innovation.</li> </ol>
Social events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expanding social activities.</li> <li>2. Employment support.</li> <li>3. Ensuring access to basic services.</li> </ol>
Legal instruments and measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthening labour rights.</li> <li>2. Anti-crisis regulatory measures.</li> <li>3. Anti-corruption policy.</li> </ol>
Integration and international support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial support from EU member states.</li> <li>2. International cooperation.</li> </ol>
Strategic future planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support of the green economy.</li> <li>2. Digitalisation of the economy.</li> <li>3. Decentralisation.</li> </ol>

**Source:** compiled by the authors based on P. Arestis et al. (2023), D. Manko et al. (2023), J. Harris (2024)

It is possible to argue that macroeconomic measures are one of the main strategies for overcoming the consequences of the economic crisis in the civil law field. Macroeconomic measures include fiscal stimulus, i.e., an increase in public spending on infrastructure, healthcare and education. The effectiveness of the proposed strategy lies in the direct link between economic growth and compliance with civil law. The effectiveness of the proposed strategy has been

proved empirically, in particular, in the study by R. Ferguson (2022), who argued that unemployment was associated with increasing rates of antisocial behaviour among young people. There is a statistically significant relationship between fiscal stimulus, social well-being and relatively low levels of civil law violations.

Another recommended macroeconomic measure is an effective monetary policy, which consists of lowering

interest rates implementing quantitative easing programmes and facilitating access to credit. Monetary policy easing becomes especially important during an economic crisis, when household incomes are falling significantly, while financial liabilities remain at the same level or increase. Establishing effective support programmes reduces the risks of tax evasion and other labour law violations. In addition to these strategies, an effective macroeconomic measure is an investment in innovation, including stimulating new technological breakthroughs. Empirical studies, including S. Nagy and M.V. Somosi (2022), and L. Zeynalli *et al.* (2022), confirmed the link between innovation, economic development and social stability. The latter can be seen as a deterrent to violations of civil law.

The second group of strategies is social measures aimed at establishing social stability as a guarantee of compliance with civil law in various areas. Social measures include, first and foremost, support for the most vulnerable groups of the population: the unemployed, the poor, orphans, people with disabilities, etc. Support for vulnerable groups is provided through social payments and free access to education and other opportunities. Social measures also include employment support, which is particularly relevant in times of economic crisis and related mass layoffs. Employment support takes the form of unemployment benefits, as well as retraining and professional development for the unemployed. The creation of an extensive system of training and re-profiling of the unemployed helps to attract workers to the public sector and reduce the risks of shadow schemes and other violations. In the context of the economic crisis, unimpeded access to basic services such as healthcare, education and housing is also of particular importance. Meeting basic needs helps to reduce social tensions and overcome the effects of the economic downturn. Where free healthcare, education and housing are not possible, subsidised support is recommended. Examples of such support include a guarantee of free basic medical care or subsidies for utilities.

Preventing and overcoming the consequences of violations of civil law in the context of the economic crisis is also possible using legal instruments, such as strengthening labour rights, anti-crisis regulatory measures and anti-corruption policy. Strengthening labour rights means protecting the rights of employees regulating working conditions and ensuring the minimum wage (Leitner & Liepert, 2024). During the economic crisis, some companies have sought to increase their efficiency by violating labour laws, such as by employing people informally, taking unpaid leave or increasing the number of working hours without a corresponding increase in wages. Although such violations may bring short-term economic benefits, they cannot cover the reputational damage to the company and ensure its sustainable development.

The legal instruments for regulating the consequences of the economic crisis also include anti-crisis regulatory measures, such as temporary moratoriums on bankruptcies and tax incentives for small businesses. Supporting small businesses is a priority in times of economic crisis, as these businesses are an important driver of the economy and social stability. The importance of such support is evident in the context of Ukraine's small and medium-sized enterprises, which account for 99% of all enterprises in the country, are the key employers and generate at least 20% of all innovations (Miroshnyk & Prokopieva, 2020; Minina, 2023).

State support in the form of tax breaks, grants and subsidies allows such enterprises to remain competitive in the crisis without violating the law.

Amid the economic crisis, financial support from the EU is of particular importance, which takes various forms, including the European Stability Mechanism. Established on 27 September 2012, the European Stability Mechanism provides instant access to financial assistance programmes for eurozone member states in financial difficulties, with a maximum lending capacity of 500 billion EUR (Korablin, 2023). An example of the European Stability Mechanism's work is the response to the 2019-2020 coronavirus pandemic: in May 2020, the Union offered EU member states 240 billion EUR in loans, in addition to the 750 billion EUR recovery fund established with the assistance of the European Council in March of that year. Instantaneous assistance helps to minimise the short-term effects of the financial crisis and allows for planning the long-term development of society following accepted civil law. International cooperation, with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, is an effective tool for overcoming the economic crisis and the resulting violations of civil law. The advantage of cooperation with these international institutions is that they have universal standards of compliance with civil law and provide their members with resources and tools to comply with these standards.

The strategies analysed above highlight the importance of strategic planning for the future as a key to economic growth, social stability and compliance with civil law. Strategic planning includes actions aimed at developing a green economy, digitalising key activities and decentralising governance. A green economy means investing in environmentally friendly technologies and transitioning to sustainable energy to respect the rights of citizens to a clean environment and efficient use of resources. Digitalisation involves the development of digital infrastructure and support for information technology start-ups that increase the efficiency of enterprises and minimise the effects of the economic crisis. Decentralisation involves the transfer of powers to local authorities to better manage crises. The importance of decentralisation lies in the rational allocation of resources and the choice of strategies to prevent or overcome the consequences of civil law violations that are effective for a particular region.

## Discussion

The key conclusion of this paper is the idea of a direct link between the economic crisis and the growing risk of violation of civil law. Confirmation of this thesis was also found in earlier studies by C. Batut *et al.* (2022). These authors examined data from various European companies to understand the effectiveness of five employment reforms that were implemented in the EU in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. According to the researchers, reducing working hours was one of the most common strategies for adapting to economic crises, which, however, did not lead to an increase in employment in the post-crisis period. The study thus proves that anti-crisis strategies that involve violation or restriction of citizens' rights to work are not effective in terms of overcoming the economic crisis and sustainable post-crisis development. Mass dismissals increase social tensions and create preconditions for violations of civil law (Ponomarenko *et al.*, 2014).

The strategy recommended in the study is social guarantees for employees, including safe working conditions and

fair pay. The effectiveness of the proposed strategy has also been confirmed in previous studies, including by P. Arestis *et al.* (2023), who analysed employment data collected in a longitudinal study in 16 European countries. According to the authors, labour reforms that reduced employment protection by reducing firing costs and facilitating the use of temporary contracts did not have the expected positive impact on employment and unemployment. Based on the study cited, it is possible to argue that in times of economic crisis, guarantees of labour rights and freedoms are of particular importance, as they reduce the probability of abuse and violations, and guarantee the sustainable development of enterprises and sectors of the economy in the post-crisis period.

The theoretical model proposed in the study emphasised the importance of supporting citizens to reduce social tensions and minimise the short- and long-term effects of the economic crisis. The significance of socially oriented initiatives was also highlighted in previous studies, in particular, by J. Harris (2024), who analysed the impact of the crisis on the social well-being of the population. After reviewing sources since 2022, author concluded that the economic downturn not only worsens the financial situation of society but also deepens social inequality, which becomes a source of violations in the civil law sphere. L.M. Natter (2025) analysed longitudinal data from 27 European countries and concluded that the global financial crisis of 2008 increased respondents' fears of certain types of crime, which confirms the link between economic instability and violations. Analysing the experience of individual countries, in particular, data collected in 47 Spanish provinces, J. Torres-Tellez and A.M. Soler (2023) conclude that the economic crisis creates preconditions for violations in the civil law sphere that have a long-term impact on the development of society. F. González and M. Prem (2025) highlighted that state support programmes launched during the economic crisis reduce the risks of violations and contribute to the sustainable development of society. Drawing on the experience of Latin America, the researchers proved that in the long run, state social support programmes brought the greatest political dividends in the regions most affected by the crisis. The cited study confirms the effectiveness of the mechanism of social measures to comply with the civil law norms presented in this paper.

The key point of the article was that state support is one of the main preventers of civil rights violations during the economic crisis. The effectiveness of such support was also confirmed by W. Zhang *et al.* (2022), analysed the experience of 199 companies and concluded that government support is a key factor in making important strategic decisions, including compliance with environmental regulations, during economic instability. Similar conclusions were drawn by G. Bang (2024), who analysed the impact of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 on the transition of US companies to alternative energy sources and compliance with environmental requirements for doing business. Based on the presented work and previous studies, it is possible to conclude that government initiatives are the main condition for creating a favourable social and legal environment and planning for sustainable development.

In addition to these ideas, the study analysed the importance of digitalisation to support transparent communication between stakeholders and guarantee equal compliance with civil law in times of economic instability. Considering

previous studies, the importance of digitalisation was also proved by T. Lynn *et al.* (2022), who emphasised that digital technologies shape the interaction between members of social society. An example is the rapid dissemination of information through interactive platforms, a phenomenon that acts as a safeguard for some companies against violations of labour laws or other civil laws. D. Manko *et al.* (2023) emphasised that public policy aimed at digitalising society is a driving force for changes in the social and legal context for its sustainable development. An example is the creation of digital databases that document the ownership of a particular source of information and significantly reduce the risks of intellectual property infringement. Digitalisation can be viewed as one of the incentives for creating a society whose members are aware of and motivated to comply with key civil law provisions (Llazo *et al.*, 2024).

The analysis of the European context presented in this paper also emphasised the role of local decisions in addressing the challenges of the economic crisis unique to each region. The analysis of the EU legal framework, in particular, Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2008/48/EC "On Credit Agreements for Consumers and Repealing Council Directive 87/102/EEC" (2008), highlighted the role of decentralisation in responding to the crisis. The idea of the importance of decentralisation in the observance of civil law, especially in times of economic crisis, has been confirmed in previous studies, in particular by K.A. Uddin *et al.* (2024), who investigated the impact of decentralisation on the socio-economic crisis caused by the coronavirus epidemic in Bangladesh. According to the experts, the centralised management system significantly reduced the level of involvement of local authorities in addressing the problems caused by the epidemic, which led to violations of labour laws, selective provision of medical care, etc. Based on their findings, K.A. Uddin *et al.* concluded that the transfer of resources and management tools to local communities facilitates faster decision-making and overcoming the challenges caused by the economic crisis. The rapid resolution of urgent issues is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of society and the observance of key civil law norms. At the level of the EU, the issue of decentralisation was studied by R. McIntyre (2023), who pointed out the tension between the Court of Justice of the EU and the European Commission in the field of competition law, which arose due to differences between the jurisprudence, policy and practice of these institutions. According to the researchers, these differences can be overcome by decentralising, fragmenting and, if necessary, re-centralising these institutions. The transfer of management functions to the local level will not only facilitate more active involvement of local communities but also reduce the risk of violations of civil law. This effect can be explained by the fact that the risks of violations of civil law differ from community to community and therefore require a community-oriented approach. The key ideas of digitalisation, decentralisation, etc. proposed in this paper have been confirmed in previous studies, which proves their relevance.

## Conclusions

The study confirmed the close relationship between the financial crisis and violations of civil law, which is particularly noticeable in the context of global economic instability. The main results included the identification of factors that contribute to non-compliance with civil law obligations,

including violations of labour, environmental and social standards. The European experience shows that in times of economic instability, companies and public institutions face challenges that may lead to a decrease in compliance with legal norms due to the desire to reduce costs or maintain competitiveness.

An important aspect of the study was the identification of external factors that modify the relationship between the economic crisis, the state's response and the consequences at the societal level. The study determined that political stability, the effectiveness of institutions, the level of technology development and the social responsibility of businesses are substantial in reducing the probability of disruption. Based on the European experience, ensuring stability and supporting sustainable development in the face of economic uncertainty is not only at the national level but also at the regional level. The results also demonstrate that state support, especially in the form of financial programmes and social guarantees, is a key tool in preventing violations of civil law.

Based on the analysis of European experience, in particular, the functioning of Swedish, Bulgarian and British companies, five groups of strategies for preventing or overcoming the consequences of violations of civil law as a result of the financial crisis were identified. The groups of strategies considered in this paper include the following: macroeconomic measures with a focus on fiscal stimulus, monetary policy and investment in innovation; social measures aimed at expanding social protection of various segments of the population, supporting employment and ensuring access to basic services; legal instruments and measures that include

strengthening labour rights, anti-crisis regulatory measures and development of anti-corruption policy; integration and international support from the EU member states and international organisations. Based on the analysed European experience, it is possible to argue that violations of civil law during economic instability may seem to be a logical strategy, but the inherent risks significantly outweigh the possible benefits and do not contribute to sustainable development in the post-crisis period.

Limitations of this study included the focus on the European socio-legal context, which makes it difficult to fully extrapolate the findings to other countries with different political or economic conditions. In addition, the study did not sufficiently analyse the long-term consequences for states that systematically fail to respond to violations of civil law in times of crisis.

Recommendations for future research include expanding the analysis to other regions of the world to identify universal and region-specific patterns of the impact of the economic crisis on compliance with legal norms. It is also advisable to analyse the effectiveness of digitalisation, decentralisation of governance and innovative strategies in ensuring sustainable development in the face of economic instability.

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### Conflict of interest

None.

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## Вплив економічних криз на зобов'язання в цивільному праві: аналіз сучасного європейського соціального та правового контексту

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**Анотація.** Метою дослідження було проаналізувати основні фактори, що впливають на дотримання цивільного законодавства в умовах економічної кризи. Дослідження ґрунтувалося на аналізі зовнішніх факторів, таких як політична стабільність, економічний розвиток, соціальні умови, технологічний прогрес, екологічні виклики та ефективність нормативно-правової бази. Дослідження включало контент-аналіз нормативно-правової бази ЄС та України щодо антикризового реагування; PESTEL-аналіз факторів (політичних, економічних, соціальних, технологічних, екологічних та правових) для визначення ефективності антикризового реагування; тематичні дослідження європейських компаній Lexbase (Швеція), Walltopia (Болгарія) та Vedanta (Великобританія), які продемонстрували типові порушення трудового та екологічного законодавства в контексті економічної кризи. На основі проаналізованого досвіду в дослідженні зроблено висновок, що хоча деякі компанії розглядають порушення цивільного законодавства як спосіб зберегти конкурентоспроможність в умовах економічної нестабільності, довгострокові результати такої стратегії є руйнівними з точки зору репутаційної шкоди та неможливості сталого розвитку. Більш ефективна відповідь на економічну нестабільність передбачає макроекономічні заходи з акцентом на фіскальне стимулювання, монетарну політику та інвестиції в інновації; соціальні заходи, спрямовані на розширення соціального захисту різних верств населення, підтримку зайнятості та забезпечення доступу до базових послуг; правові інструменти та заходи щодо посилення трудових прав, антикризові регуляторні заходи та розвиток антикорупційної політики; інтеграцію та міжнародну підтримку з боку країн-членів ЄС та міжнародних партнерів; стратегічне планування на майбутнє з пріоритетом на розвиток цифрового виробництва та децентралізацію управління. Отримані результати мають практичне значення для формування стратегії сталого розвитку України, спрямованої на мінімізацію наслідків економічних шоків та забезпечення дотримання цивільного законодавства навіть в умовах глибокої кризи

**Ключові слова:** бізнес-стратегії; сталий розвиток; трудове право; екологічне право; соціальна рівність; цифровізація; децентралізація