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Institutional Barriers to the Development of Public Administration in the Process of European Integration

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the institutional barriers to the development of the public administration system of Ukraine in the context of European integration and determines their impact on the effectiveness of the implementation of reform processes and the adaptation of the national system of governance to the standards of the European Union. The main factors that hinder the modernization of the public administration system are considered, among which the imperfection of regulatory and legal support, fragmentation of legislative regulation, politicization of personnel processes, insufficient level of interdepartmental coordination, shortage of highly qualified personnel, corruption risks and limited level of digitalization of management processes are characterized. It was found that the insufficient institutional capacity of state authorities negatively affects the effectiveness of European integration reforms, complicates the process of harmonization of legislation and limits the possibilities of effective implementation of the principles of good governance in the practice of public administration. Based on the analysis of monitoring reports of SIGMA, OECD and the European Commission, key problems in the field of strategic planning, interdepartmental interaction and coordination of state policy have been identified. Special attention is paid to the study of the impact of politicization of the civil service and corruption practices on the effectiveness of the functioning of the public administration system. The directions of improving the public administration system of Ukraine in the context of European integration are characterized, among which the development of e-government, ensuring transparency of personnel policy, strengthening the independence of state institutions and the activation of international cooperation in the field of institutional modernization are of great importance. Conclusions have been drawn regarding the need for systemic reform of the regulatory, personnel, organizational and technological components of public administration as a prerequisite for increasing the institutional capacity of the state and effective implementation of Ukraine's European integration policy.

KEYWORDS

public administration, European integration, institutional barriers, good governance, civil service, digitalization, institutional capacity, European standards, anti-corruption policy, public administration reform.

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Публічне управління і політика

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Інституційні бар'єри розвитку публічного управління в процесі європейської інтеграції

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СТАТТЯ

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АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті проаналізовано інституційні бар'єри розвитку системи публічного управління України в умовах європейської інтеграції та визначено їхній вплив на ефективність реалізації реформаторських процесів і адаптацію національної системи врядування до стандартів Європейського Союзу. Розглянуто основні чинники, що стримують модернізацію системи публічного управління, серед яких охарактеризовано недосконалість нормативно-правового забезпечення, фрагментарність законодавчого регулювання, політизацію кадрових процесів, недостатній рівень міжвідомчої координації, дефіцит висококваліфікованих кадрів, корупційні ризики та обмежений рівень цифровізації управлінських процесів. З'ясовано, що недостатня інституційна спроможність органів державної влади негативно впливає на результативність євроінтеграційних реформ, ускладнює процес гармонізації законодавства та обмежує можливості ефективного впровадження принципів good governance у практику функціонування публічної адміністрації. На основі аналізу моніторингових звітів SIGMA, OECD та Європейської Комісії визначено ключові проблеми у сфері стратегічного планування, міжвідомчої взаємодії та координації державної політики. Окрему увагу приділено дослідженню впливу політизації державної служби та корупційних практик на ефективність функціонування системи публічного управління. Охарактеризовано напрями вдосконалення системи публічного управління України в контексті європейської інтеграції, серед яких важливе значення мають розвиток електронного урядування, забезпечення прозорості кадрової політики, зміцнення незалежності державних інституцій та активізація міжнародної співпраці у сфері інституційної модернізації. Сформовано висновки щодо необхідності системного реформування нормативно-правової, кадрової, організаційної та технологічної складових публічного управління як передумови підвищення інституційної спроможності держави та ефективної реалізації євроінтеграційної політики України.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

публічне управління, європейська інтеграція, інституційні бар'єри, good governance, державна служба, цифровізація, інституційна спроможність, європейські стандарти, антикорупційна політика, реформування публічної адміністрації.

1. Introduction

In the current conditions of Ukraine's European integration, the problem of modernizing the public administration system as a basic prerequisite for ensuring the institutional compatibility of the state with the legal and administrative space of the European Union is of particular importance. The EU puts forward comprehensive requirements for the functioning of public institutions, which include ensuring the rule of law, the efficiency of administrative procedures, transparency of management activities, an appropriate level of institutional capacity and the effectiveness of the implementation of state policy. Under such conditions, the insufficient efficiency of state institutions, the presence of structural dysfunctions and a low level of coordination of management processes significantly complicate the process of Ukraine's integration into the European political and legal space.

This problem becomes even more acute in conditions of martial law and the need for post-war reconstruction of the state, which is accompanied by an increase in the burden on the public administration system, fragmentation of reform implementation mechanisms and a complication of the relationship between institutional transformations and practical results of reform. In this regard, European experts emphasize that the effectiveness of reforms directly depends on the level of stability and functional capacity of state institutions, since it is "the ability of state institutions to work together to ensure real changes in practice, maintain stability and strengthen public trust" that determines Ukraine's further progress on the path to EU membership [7]. At the same time, a significant number of internal systemic barriers remain in the process of implementing reforms, among which the outdated regulatory framework, the prevalence of corruption practices, institutional fragmentation, insufficient level of interdepartmental coordination and limited effectiveness of strategic management mechanisms are of particular relevance. Taken together, these factors restrain the pace of public sector reform and negatively affect the dynamics of European integration processes. In view of the above, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive study of structural and institutional barriers to the modernization of public administration, systematization of European reform experience, and substantiation of practical recommendations aimed at increasing the efficiency of public administration in the context of Ukraine's European integration.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, research on the transformation of the public administration system in the context of European integration and the identification of institutional barriers to the implementation of reforms has significantly intensified in the scientific discourse. A significant part of domestic scientific works is focused on the analysis of internal structural dysfunctions that hinder the modernization of the public sector of Ukraine and complicate adaptation to European management standards. Thus, in the study of A. O. Chechel, it is determined that the key obstacles to the implementation of innovative approaches in the field of public administration remain the "institutional inertia of management structures" and the insufficient level of digital competencies of civil servants, which significantly reduces the effectiveness of the implementation of reform initiatives [1]. Similar conclusions can be traced in studies devoted to the problems of implementing projects for the reconstruction of Ukraine. In particular, V. Yu. Kosytska singles out "institutional barriers caused by the lack of independent experience and coordination in the implementation of projects to restore the country in the war and post-war periods", emphasizing the lack of coherence of management mechanisms and the limited effectiveness of regulatory and legal support [5]. Within the framework of the above-mentioned issues, the researcher also emphasizes the critical importance of ensuring the transparency of management processes and minimizing corruption risks, which significantly complicate the adaptation of national legislation to European standards [5].

Foreign scientific sources focus on the legislative, organizational and personnel aspects of Ukraine's institutional adaptation to the requirements of the European Union. Thus, a study published in the World Customs Journal identified a set of key legal and institutional obstacles to Ukraine's integration into the European customs system, including the inconsistency of national standards, the presence of legislative discrepancies, and the insufficient level of coordination between functional job profiles and EU requirements [2]. In addition, the materials of the CustCompEu Case Study focus on the problem of insufficient professional training of personnel and the lack of unified professional development procedures, which negatively affects the level of public trust in the public administration

system. International monitoring reports also contain significant analytical potential for studying institutional barriers. In particular, the SIGMA (OECD) report states that Ukraine demonstrates an insufficient level of progress in the development and coordination of state policy, which indicates the persistence of systemic problems of a managerial nature [6]. A similar position is reflected in the European Commission's 2024 Report on Ukraine, which, despite acknowledging some progress in the field of digitalization and rule-making, emphasizes the need to further strengthen the capacity of the public administration system, improve personnel policy, introduce evidence-based policy, and develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms [3]. The document also emphasizes the relevance of previous recommendations related to the need to ensure transparent remuneration mechanisms and implement a competency-based approach in the civil service [3].

Thus, scientific research and international practice show that overcoming institutional barriers requires a comprehensive and systemic approach that involves simultaneous reform of personnel policy, the organizational structure of public administration, and digital governance mechanisms. Thus, the experience of Poland shows that the process of integration into the European Union was accompanied by a systemic transformation of public administration mechanisms, adaptation of administrative procedures to European standards, modernization of the system of professional training of civil servants and the introduction of modern approaches to professional training and development of the human resources potential of the civil service [4]. In addition, an analysis of Polish reforms shows that one of the most persistent barriers remained the politicization of the civil service and the insufficient level of development of meritocratic management mechanisms, which negatively affected the effectiveness of institutional transformations [8]. The examples given confirm that the effective implementation of European standards for the functioning of public institutions and the minimization of political influence on the public administration system are important prerequisites for overcoming institutional barriers in the process of European integration.

3. Problem Statement

The purpose of the article is to analyze institutional barriers to the development of the public administration system in the context of European integration.

4. Methods and Materials

The study is based on the analysis of Ukrainian legislation, official documents of the European Commission, SIGMA and OECD, as well as scientific publications on public administration reform and European integration. The research applies formal legal, comparative legal, and systematic methods to identify institutional barriers affecting the development of public administration in the context of Ukraine's European integration.

5. Results and Discussion

The development of the public administration system in the context of European integration directly depends on the level of the state's institutional capacity to ensure the effective functioning of management mechanisms in accordance with the principles of good governance and administrative standards of the European Union. At the same time, the process of modernization of public administration is accompanied by the presence of a complex of institutional barriers that complicate the implementation of reforms and reduce the effectiveness of transformation processes.

The main institutional barriers include imperfect regulatory and legal support, fragmentation of legislative regulation, insufficient level of coordination between public authorities, problems with staffing of the civil service, low competitiveness of the remuneration system, corruption risks in the field of personnel appointments, as well as insufficient level of development of digital infrastructure and digital competencies of civil servants. An additional factor that hinders institutional modernization is the inconsistency of internal administrative procedures with European standards of management activity.

The presence of imperfect and unsystematic regulatory and legal regulation limits the possibilities of implementing state programs, complicates the implementation of reforms and negatively affects the investment attractiveness of the state. At the same time, the insufficient level of autonomy of state

institutions, due to political dependence and limited management experience, leads to a slowdown in the processes of making management decisions and creates obstacles to the proper implementation of Ukraine's international obligations [2, p. 79].

Monitoring reports of SIGMA and the European Commission confirm the presence of systemic problems in the field of coordination of state policy and implementation of reforms. In particular, the OECD report states that "Ukraine has not done enough in the development and coordination of policies" [6], which indicates the insufficient effectiveness of the mechanisms of strategic planning, interdepartmental interaction and monitoring of the effectiveness of reform processes.

Corruption practices and politicization of the civil service have a significant negative impact on the development of the public administration system. Corruption risks in the process of adapting legislation to European Union standards, as well as political interference in personnel and management processes, reduce the level of professional motivation of civil servants, worsen the quality of public services and limit the institutional capacity of state authorities [5; 8].

Based on the systematization of the research results, the main institutional barriers to the development of public administration are summarized and the nature of their impact on the functioning of state institutions and the effectiveness of European integration reforms is determined. The structural and logical relationship between key institutional barriers, mechanisms of the functioning of the public administration system and the consequences of their impact is presented in Fig. 1.

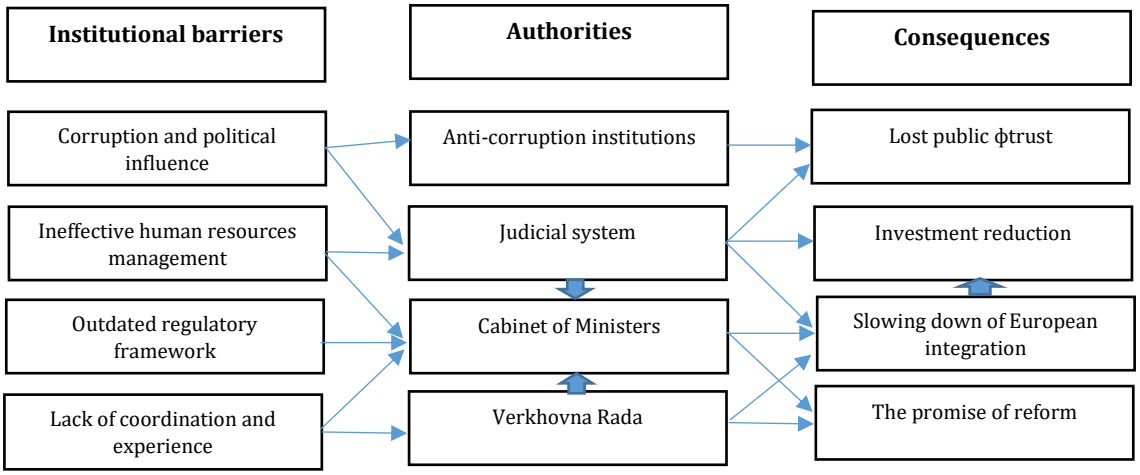


Figure 1. Model of the relationship between institutional barriers, authorities and the consequences of slowing down reform

Source: Compiled by the author.

Based on a qualitative comparative analysis of the experience of the European Union and Ukraine, it was found that the process of modernization of the public administration system is accompanied by the presence of common institutional problems related to the imperfection of the organizational structure of public administration, limited effectiveness of personnel policy and the complexity of adapting management mechanisms to European standards. Analysis of the reform of public authorities in Poland and Ukraine, as well as the practices of developing e-government in Estonia and other EU countries, showed that the effectiveness of institutional transformations largely depends on the consistency of regulatory and legal regulation, the professional level of the civil service and the ability of the state to ensure the digitalization of management processes. It was found that the most common institutional barriers include the inconsistency of national legislation with European Union standards, politicization of personnel processes, shortage of highly qualified personnel, insufficient effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions and fragmentation of the public administration system [8]. The presence of these barriers negatively affects the pace of reform implementation, complicates the coordination of management processes and limits the institutional capacity of the state to ensure the effective implementation of European integration policy.

In view of this, the results of international analytical assessments show that the modernization of the public administration system requires a comprehensive reform of the regulatory and legal framework, improvement of personnel policy and the introduction of modern digital management mechanisms. In particular, the European Commission Report on Ukraine for 2024 emphasizes the need

to implement a transparent remuneration system and develop a merit-based approach in the field of civil service personnel management [3].

In addition, European experience confirms that important prerequisites for the effectiveness of reforms are the independence of the judicial system, the proper functioning of anti-corruption bodies and ensuring the rule of law. The implementation of relevant European initiatives aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of the state, in particular the Pravo-Justice and 3E4U* projects, contributes to increasing the level of public trust in reform processes and ensuring the efficiency of the functioning of the public administration system [7].

The experience of countries that have passed the stage of adapting the public administration system to the standards of the European Union indicates the effectiveness of the comprehensive application of institutional, personnel and technological reform mechanisms. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that joined the EU over the past decades, several systemic measures aimed at increasing the efficiency of the functioning of public administration have been implemented. In particular, in Romania and Bulgaria, centralized reforms of the civil service remuneration system were carried out, in Poland, mechanisms for professional certification of personnel based on a merit-based approach were introduced, and the Baltic countries and Finland ensured the active development of e-government and the digitalization of administrative procedures.

A comparative analysis of these practices in the context of Ukrainian realities shows that the effectiveness of the modernization of the public administration system directly depends on the complexity of reform measures, which should include the simultaneous improvement of regulatory and legal support, the development of human capital and the introduction of digital management technologies. Important in this process are tools for monitoring the effectiveness of reforms, twinning projects and international technical assistance programs that contribute to the adaptation of the national public administration system to European administrative standards. In the context of overcoming institutional barriers to the development of public administration, it is advisable to implement a set of interrelated measures. First of all, the need to improve regulatory and legal support is being actualized by accelerating the adaptation of national legislation to European Union standards, ensuring the consistency of legal norms at different levels and forming transparent mechanisms for regulating public procurement, public-private partnership and decentralization processes in accordance with European recommendations.

At the same time, an important direction of reform is the modernization of personnel policy in the civil service, which involves the implementation of transparent procedures for competitive selection and career advancement based on a competency-based approach, improving the social security system for civil servants, as well as the development of a single digital HR system for personnel management. The active involvement of professional training programs, internships in European Union structures, and mechanisms for international exchange of experience is of additional importance.

The further development of electronic infrastructure and the digitalization of administrative procedures have a significant impact on increasing the efficiency of public administration. The implementation of deregulation measures, the implementation of the provisions of the Law of Ukraine "On Administrative Procedure" and the development of state digital strategies will contribute to increasing the transparency of administrative activities, reducing corruption risks, and improving the quality of public services.

An important direction of modernization of the public administration system is ensuring the independence and accountability of state institutions through the development of internal and external audit mechanisms, improving control procedures and adapting the activities of supervisory bodies to European standards of institutional control, which will minimize manifestations of institutional fragmentation and increase the efficiency of the public administration system.

Also, an important factor of institutional modernization remains the deepening of international cooperation with European partners. Using the potential of European Union programs, in particular Rule of Law Mission, Pravo-Justice and GIZ 3E4U*, creates additional opportunities for professional training, expert support for reforms and attracting investments in the development of state institutions. At the same time, involving civil society institutions in monitoring reform processes will contribute to increasing the level of public trust in state policy.

In addition, an important direction of modernization of the public administration system is the support of innovative approaches and the development of open governance. The practice of the European Union states shows that the implementation of public-private partnership models and open

governance mechanisms creates the prerequisites for increasing the efficiency of the public sector and ensuring greater transparency of management processes.

Thus, overcoming institutional barriers to the development of public administration requires systematic and consistent reform, which should cover the regulatory, personnel, organizational and technological components. The comprehensive implementation of these measures will contribute to strengthening the institutional capacity of the state, increasing the effectiveness of the implementation of European integration policy and adapting the public administration system of Ukraine to European governance standards.

6. Conclusions

The study found that the development of the public administration system of Ukraine in the context of European integration is constrained by a complex of institutional barriers, among which the most important are the imperfection of regulatory and legal support, the politicization of management processes, the insufficient level of human resources, the weakness of interdepartmental coordination mechanisms and the limited institutional capacity of state authorities. It was found that these factors negatively affect the effectiveness of the implementation of reforms, slow down the adaptation of the public administration system to the standards of the European Union and reduce the effectiveness of the state's European integration policy.

It was found that the experience of the European Union states confirms the need for a comprehensive approach to the modernization of the public administration system, which should include the simultaneous improvement of the legislative framework, the development of a professional civil service, the digitalization of management processes and the strengthening of anti-corruption institutions. It is proven that an important prerequisite for the effectiveness of reforms is ensuring transparency, independence and accountability of state institutions, as well as the development of mechanisms for strategic management and interdepartmental interaction.

The feasibility of actively using international technical support instruments, institutional partnership programs and European reform monitoring mechanisms in the process of transforming the public administration system of Ukraine is substantiated. It is determined that the consistent implementation of the principles of good governance will contribute to increasing the institutional capacity of the state, more effective implementation of European integration reforms and ensuring sustainable development of Ukraine.

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