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**Decentralization of power as the basis of European integration of  
Ukraine**

European advancement of Ukraine foresees first of all deep transformation of social and political system, forming of democratic model of organization of the society. In 1993 European Council at its meeting in Copenhagen admitted the right of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to enter the European Union after implementation of a line of requirements in three criteria by them: political: stability of establishments which guarantees democracy, supremacy of right, observance of human rights and protection of rights for minorities; economic: effective market economy; membership: obligations which arise out of the fact of entering the EU, recognition of its political, economic and monetary goals in particular.<sup>1</sup>

Different aspects of decentralization in Ukraine were studied by political scientists, lawyers, specialists in the problems of state administration as A. Bereza, M. Yizh, I. Kresina, O. Kukartsev, V. Lytvyn, V. Matviyenko, T. Panchenko, M. Pukhtynskiy, S. Rymarenko, O. Stoyko, I. Tkachuk and others. In modern scientific discourse providing of corresponding conditions is examined mainly through reformation of existent political, social and economic institutions, limitation of administrative pressure, decentralization of power, introduction of the European standards concerning regulation of public relations. Granting of wide power to local authorities and creation of optimal terms for development of territories is one of the determinant conditions of democratic transformation of the political system in Ukraine and so its European integration. Complex solution of problems of the system of local self-government and related to it system of territorial organization of power by means of reformation is foreseen in the corresponding Governmental Conception.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary-reference book of terms of European integration / Under general editorship: M. Boytsun, Ya.M.Mudryi, O.M. Rudik. - K.: Millenium, 2009. - P.170*

<sup>2</sup> *"On the approval of the Conception of reforming of local self-government and territorial organization of power in Ukraine". Order of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 04.01.2014 №333-p. // access mode: <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/333-2014-%D1%80>*

It determines directions, mechanisms and terms of formation of effective system of local self-government and territorial organization of power. Reformation of the stated institutions is aimed at provision of creation and support of valuable vital environment for citizens, granting of high-quality and accessible public services, formation of institutions of direct sovereignty of people, satisfaction of interests of citizens in all spheres of vital activity in the corresponding territory, and also concordance of interests of the state and territorial communities. Decentralization of power is one of the base mechanisms in relation to prevention of authoritarian tendencies in a society. The present model of organization of local self-government in Ukraine is based on rigid centralization. The elected bodies carry out representative functions and all completeness of executive power is concentrated in the hands of local state administrations. Thus their leaders bear responsibility not before the population of territorial communities but before the central bodies of power. Such system provides neither efficiency of work of local-authority nor protection of interests of citizens who live in these territories.

Reformation of the system of organization of local self-government in Ukraine is not only the basis of European integration but is also a condition of overcoming of economic and social, and political crisis. To our opinion administrative and territorial reform must be based on two constituents: the use of experience of conducting of such reforms in the European countries and taking into account of the Ukrainian historical, cultural and mental features of organization of vital activity of local communities.

In Ukraine the idea about borrowing of the Polish model of local self-government is widespread. Actually that is not quite so. Poland carried out its main reform in 1989-1990 through adoption of legislation which foresaw transfer of powers and resources from the bodies of executive power to the bodies of gmina's self-government. The territorial basis for such transfer has already existed at that – those were gminas which were formed as early as in 1973 in the days of the communist regime. Thus the Polish reform of local self-government of 1990 did not foresee the change of territorial basis. Ukraine as well as Poland in 1990 passed

the law on local and regional self-government. However, unlike Poland there was no necessary territorial basis for competent local self-government at the base level, first and foremost – village councils in Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> Too small village councils were not able to realize all plenary powers which were laid on them by the law. Exactly this incapability resulted in the fact that through the years more and more plenary powers were transferred to higher levels of managements, and real local self-government was developing only on the level of cities of regional significance.

The “Conception of reform of local self-government and territorial organization of power” was adopted by the Government of Ukraine, Order # 333-p. on April 1, 2014 that actually gave the start to the reform of decentralization of power. In accordance with this Conception not only the transfer of powers and resources of bodies of local self-government to the same City and Village councils, but the creation of competent territorial communities which will be able to realize plenary powers is foreseen in Ukraine. Actually the question is about the necessity of realization of the real reform of administrative and territorial social order in Ukraine. The way of creation of competent communities through the mechanism of voluntarily integration of present municipal, rural, settlement, territorial communities round the centers of economic activity was chosen. Just the same approach was realized in different times by the Scandinavian countries.

Democratic reforms aimed at decentralization of power in different countries of the world have both positive and negative consequences. The successfully worked out programs of reforms in Poland and other states resulted in positive consequences: democratization of society by means of attraction of citizens to making decisions, activation of political process, improvement of quality of granting of state services, rational use of budgetary funds, assistance to local and regional development, increase of trust of the population to the bodies of power.

Administrative decentralization in Poland assisted in the development of

<sup>3</sup>A. Tkachuk. Scandinavian way. Experience of reforms of administrative and territorial social order and local self-government in Denmark and Sweden / Anatoliy Tkachuk. - K.: Logos, 2015.

local self-government, improvement of quality of life of its citizens and after the entry of the state into the European Union gave the possibility to the newly-formed administrative and territorial units to become equal in rights partners of international cooperation. Through the law “On principles of support of regional development” of 2000 the institutional registration of the contract system of mutual relations between regions and central government was carried out after ten year of approbation of the new territorial social order. The Polish imperious structures managed to reach the main thing – to stand the chosen direction and not to get off its course. Thus, a basic stake in a political aspect was done on mass patriotism, which is inherent to the Polish national political culture. In spite of difficulties and complications of transitional period they succeeded to follow the selected course. On the other hand the very important element of the Polish reforms in the political and ideological choice on the initial stage we consider the absence of diffuseness in political and ideological choice. At all public peripeteias market relations and liberal democracy remained the primary objective of leadership of the country.

For the process of decentralization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe gradual creation of the system of state support and financing of granting of social services, irrespective of what sector renders these services; introduction of market principles on the level of consumption of communities is a characteristic feature. Formation of effective self-sufficient local authorities gave the possibility to operate relatively regardless of directives of central government to the local elite. Small businessmen, local public servants and directors of local state enterprises got a chance for independent activity. Conditions for appearance of local political leaders were created, and compared freedom in forming of bases of vital activity of corresponding communities was given to their initiatives. The right to distribute budgetary funds in accordance with preferences and necessities became the essence of system change on the local level. Thus the list of tasks for implementation of which the local bodies of administration bear responsibility underwent substantial widening. Straight or indirectly, it made possible to reach success on the local level in three directions: state investments; increase of small

business; development of civil society on the local level. It, in its turn, stipulated significant improvement of living conditions for the members of territorial institutions.

Creation of the balanced effective and active system of bodies of power, able to draw together the government and citizens, assist the best satisfaction of their needs is one of the top priority problems that stands in the agenda for decentralization of power in Ukraine. Introduction of the alternative systems of granting of high-quality services to the population must become its result. Complication of reformation transformations unavoidably stipulated appearance of certain errors and miscalculations. Errors during working out of the program of decentralization and realization of the corresponding reforms had consequences in weakening of co-ordination and conflict of central and local bodies of power, displays of destabilization, disproportions in social and economic development of territories, complication in realization of the government programs etc. That is why in modern period there is a rotation of tendencies of decentralization and centralization in many countries. Rational combination and effective correlation of such processes require the observance of such principles:

- complementarity is the continuity in the structure of power, even distribution of its functions;
- departmentalizations are combinations of functional (branch) and territorial functions, consolidation of which provides a single policy of servicing the population;
- democratism is a wide participation of population in making decisions; working out of programs which are based on the mechanisms of attraction of population to current matters of the state, selection of spheres of plenary powers of public associations;
- subsidiarity is a redistribution of plenary powers: at high-level they are carried out under condition of impossibility of their implementation at a lower level.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Public regional policy of Ukraine : features and strategic priorities/ manuscript, under editorship of Z. S. Varnaliya - K., 2007. - P. 124.

In its essence the process of decentralization is difficult enough and multifaceted and foresees successive passing of separate forms and stages. D. Rondinelli distinguishes the line of forms of decentralization in the order of priority: political, spatial, market and administrative.<sup>5</sup> Political decentralization is a transmission of development and decision making to the governmental structures of lower level, to communities or to their selected representatives with granting of control functions to them. Spatial decentralization belongs to regional and local planning taking into account geographical characteristics and it is used in determination of goal programs of de-concentration of industrial and housing complexes. Administrative decentralization includes decrease of the level of power concentration, distribution of functions between central, regional and local bodies of power on the clear political and legal basis. In the European legal doctrine it is considered “as delegation of different administrative authorities by state power to the local level in interests of public representatives selected by the corresponding associations at places”. The thing is about delegation of authorities of one state body to the authoritative structures responsible for different spheres of vital activity of local community.<sup>6</sup>

Effective use of the European experience of reformation of local self-government is summoned to form the European model of organization of the vertical line of state power. However realization of such difficult, many-sided and system work becomes complicated by not only insolvency to reformation of bodies of local self-government but also unavailability to changes of communities. Development of the most of territorial communities in the modern stage is characterized by such problems:

insolvency of members of communities for solidary actions directed at protection of rights, interests and achievement of general aims of development of the society; underdevelopment of forms of direct democracy;

<sup>5</sup> Rondinelli D. Decentralizing Urban Development Programs: A Framework for Analyzing Policy. – Washington D.C.: USAID, 1990. – p.56.

<sup>6</sup> Decentralization: Experiments and Reforms / Edited by Tamas M. Horvath. – Budapest: OSI/LGI, 2000. – p. 78

increase of social tension because of corporatization of bodies of executive power, closeness and opacity of their activity, high level of corruption and paternalism in relationships with population;

non-coordination of local territorial bodies of local self-government, their establishments, bodies of local self-government with real interests of territorial communities and absence of mechanisms of exposure of the noted interests;

underdevelopment of practice of social initiative and social economy in production of social, cultural, domestic, medical, information and other services for their members inside local territorial bodies of executive power;

lack of development of social initiatives practice and social economy in production of social, cultural, domestic, medical, informative and other services for their members inside territorial communities; disusing of resource potential of this sector in local development.

Thus, certain social and psychological factors which lie in the basis of insolvency of territorial communities and predetermine other social and economic, demographic and spiritual and cultural problems of local development have been determined, and in particular:

economic insolvency of prevailing amount of territorial communities which lies in the shortage of funds in their budgets of development for investments into infrastructure, decline of efficiency of the use of local resources and assets, worsening of investment attractiveness;

critical deterioration of heating, sewage, water supply networks and communal housing fund and risk of rise of catastrophes caused by technological activities of people;

unsatisfactory demographic situation (ageing of population, depopulation of rural territories and mono functional cities);

reduction of network of educational and medical establishments, objects of infrastructure of culture: clubs, libraries, houses of culture, local museums in territorial communities, etc.

Very serious problem enough is unevenness in social and economic, and cultural development of separate territories. Closeness to cities, infrastructural objects, location in a frontier area come forward as important factors of improvement of development of settlements. In another case the absence of such characteristics speeds up the processes of decline and depressiveness of local communities which can result in complete disappearance of the whole settlements in the end. It is important to create preconditions for smoothing of possibilities and perspectives of separate territories first of all through construction of infrastructural objects – roads, water supply systems, sewage networks, gas-supply systems. Preservation of the Ukrainian village largely depends on creation of comfort conditions of residence. Comfort in a city and at the same time the best ecological and spatial terms – that is the thing which can attract population for development of rural locality. However the laws of urban planning win in the modern world – cities become the centers of growth, round which territories develop the most. At the same time people gravitate to live in a country-side and to go to work in a city. That is why the best perspectives today have territories round the developed cities.

It is an obvious fact that responsible and able community is not simply a certain society of habitants who live in a settlement – a village, a settlement or a city. A feeling of trust, unity, solidarity, respect, mutual understanding among its members, and also its identity in this case, first of all, local assists its appearance. Comprehending the nature of territorial and spatial identities – from global to local in different systems of co-ordinates is necessary to state that in the works of a row of researchers the accent immutably falls on recognition of joint values which are not only acknowledged by “insiders” but also able to set durable basis for consolidation by this or that territorial community. In its turn consolidation comes out as ponderable pre-condition for organization of political life on democratic principles, political participation of citizens and their influence on making publicly significant decisions. Accordingly the hierarchy of territorial identities, where



lower levels coexist with higher ones comes forward as the framework on which culture of appendant democracy is built.<sup>7</sup>

Why can a local identity be selected as a social resource which will be used in grouping of a united community?

The answer lies both in the peculiarities of this phenomenon of public and individual consciousness and in practices directed at their support and development. Feeling of identity gives its bearer – a man or a community (in our case it is a society) confidence in uniqueness, firmness, extent that in our time of permanent changes and instability is an important support. On the stated constituents respect and self-respect which is the most important personal resource in general, and the sign of European mentality arise among people. An identity in its structure contains constituents which correspondingly determine the behavior of a personality or a society, and also mechanisms which are movers of human action, its activity. That is why the positively formed identity is original medication from social apathy, despair and laziness which are still inherent for a considerable part of the Ukrainian society especially with Soviet mentality. Very interesting, useful and all-sufficient are practices of forming and constructing of local identity, especially in those communities in which its level is not considerable by many reasons or is absent at all. Realization of the policy of identity by its basic bodies, first of all by the bodies of local self-government, teachers and workers of social sphere, local cultural figures and churchmen, patrons of art and philanthropists allows to attain a line of effects – social, cultural, public and even economic. Important value acquires forming of identity on the basis of ethnographic descriptions of communities. Thus on the territory of Galychina region happens the revival of traditional culture on the basis of renewal of originality of ethnographic groups which inhabit the region.

<sup>7</sup> *T.V. Panchenko. Regional and local identities as component of cultures of subsidiary democracy. Series 22. Political sciences and methodology of teaching of social and political disciplines, Kyiv. 2010.- Issue. 4. - P. 74.*

If under conditions of the Soviet system to be a *guzul*, a *lemk* or a *boyk* was somewhat uncomfortable and even ashamed and then, under modern times, such authentication becomes determinant.

Local identity on the basis of belonging to a certain ethnographic group plays an important significance in the system of social relations. A plenty of cultural and educational associations arise even outside a region. Individual identity in relation to a certain ethnographic group becomes an important factor at voting at elections or determination of limits of the incorporated territorial society. Exactly a local identity forms that social capital which can become a basis of successful development of newly-formed territorial communities. However, it is necessary to approach precisely and carefully to formation of limits of the united communities not to reanimate the past disagreements or conflicts. The system and procedure of uniting has not to cause analogies with creation of collective farms in the Soviet period. Therefore one of the basic problems of decentralization of power in Ukraine is a wide informative campaign, widening of European experience, creation of competent territorial communities with the aim of forming of positive public opinion, taking into account mental, cultural peculiarities and historical traditions of development of territories.

Thus decentralization of power in Ukraine comes forward as one of the basic conditions and ways of the European integration. It is summoned to consolidate democratic principles of functioning of bodies of power and provide irreversibility of public changes. The reform of local self-government is a difficult and protracted process. Efficiency of its realization foresees adaptation to the corresponding European experience to social and economic, cultural and mental, and historical peculiarities of the Ukrainian territories. The problems of unevenness of development, low social and political activity, psychological unpreparedness and infrastructural crisis complicates, in much extent, the dynamics and perspectives of decentralization of power in Ukraine. Very important significance in acceleration of these processes can play consolidation of local identity on the level of territorial communities as the basic foot of the European self-identification. The European

experience and ethnical and cultural originality united by political will are the basic component elements of advancement of Ukraine on the way to decentralization of power and irreversibility of democratic development.