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FORMATION OF STRUCTURAL UNITS OF LOCAL BODIES OF STATE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY ON ISSUES OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

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The article examines the process of forming structural units of regional state administrations, which are tasked with ensuring communication with the public. Based on the results of the study of regulatory legal acts of the government and local regulatory legal acts of a number of regional state administrations, it was stated that this was a long process. It is noted that its result was the formation of a complex structural unit, the work of which includes interaction with the press, analytics on domestic policy in the region and interaction with the public. It is noted that only over time, public authorities in their work refused to separate public organizations of national minorities and religious communities, which allowed the creation of a single communication space with the public. It is emphasized that in the process of developing structural units of regional state administrations, they underwent a significant transformation, which was also reflected in the change of name. It is suggested that the previous formulation of "public relations" in the name of the relevant structural units reflects the influence on public opinion and its management. Instead, the concept of "communication" significantly expands the boundaries and horizons of interaction and cooperation between public authorities and civil society. According to the results of the analysis of information on the official websites of a number of regional state administrations regarding the structure of the Department of Information Activities and Public Communications, it was found that at the level of the names of departments and divisions, the option "public relations" remains. The opinion was expressed that this does not reflect all the tasks that objectively face public administration bodies in establishing communication with the public for the construction of a modern democratic state based on the rule of law.

Key words: communication of public authorities with the public, structural unit of a public authority, regional state (military) administrations, department, management, regulations, public relations.

Гавкалова Наталія, Щетініна Тетяна. ФОРМУВАННЯ СТРУКТУРНИХ ПІДРОЗДІЛІВ МІСЦЕВИХ ОРГАНІВ ДЕРЖАВНОЇ ВИКОНАВЧОЇ ВЛАДИ З ПИТАНЬ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ З ГРОМАДСЬКІСТЮ

У статті досліджено процес формування структурних підрозділів обласних державних адміністрацій, на які покладено завдання щодо забезпечення комунікації з громадськістю. За результатами опрацювання нормативно-правових актів уряду та локальних нормативно-правових актів низки обласних державних адміністрацій з 'ясовано, що це був тривалий процес. Зазначено, що його наслідком стало утворення комплексного структурного підрозділу, робота якого охоплює взаємодію з пресою, аналітику щодо внутрішньої політики в регіоні та взаємодію з громадськістю. Зазначено, що лише з часом органи публічної влади у своїй роботі відмовились від виокремлення громадських організацій національних меншин і релігійних спільнот, що дало змогу утворити єдиний комунікаційний простір із громадськістю. Наголошується, що в процесі розвитку структурних підрозділів обласних державних адміністрацій відбулася їх вагома трансформація, що позначилося і на зміні назви. Висловлено припущення, що попереднє формулювання «зв'язки з громадськістю» у назві відповідних структурних підрозділів відображає вплив на громадську думку, управління нею. Натомість поняття «комунікація» суттєво розширює межі та горизонти взаємодії, співпраці публічної влади з громадянським суспільством. За результатами проаналізованої інформації на офіційних сайтах

низки обласних державних адміністрацій щодо структури Департаменту інформаційної діяльності та комунікацій з громадськістю з'ясовано, що на рівні назв управлінь та відділів залишається варіант «зв'язки з громадськістю». Висловлена думка, що це не відображає всіх тих завдань, які об'єктивно постають перед органами публічного управління в налагодженні комунікації з громадськістю для побудови сучасної правової демократичної держави.

Ключові слова: комунікація органів публічної влади з громадськістю, структурний підрозділ органу публічної влади, обласні державні (військові) адміністрації, департамент, управління, положення, зв'язки з громадськістю.

Introduction. Communications of public authorities with the public have long been at the forefront of research by foreign and Ukrainian scientists and are the subject of constant discussion by the community of managers and the general public. To a large extent, this is facilitated by the constant improvement of information communication technologies, which allows influencing the quality and speed of certain communication processes. But the main attention remains focused on the essence of communications, their impact on the formation of civil society in Ukraine, and the impact on the development of a legal, democratic state. In a broad interpretation, communication is understood as the movement of information. In the field of public administration, it is important to understand communication as a direct tool for dialogue between participants in the management process, a basic element of the process of interaction between government and civil society.

In view of the above, it is interesting to ask how the concept of "public relations" was introduced into the legal space of public administration and how this affected the formation of structural units of government bodies. As of today, the communication process with the public continues and is developing strongly at all levels of state power and at the level of local self-government. From the point of view of historical retrospection of the formation of structural units of public authorities on issues of public relations, we consider it appropriate to consider the example of the creation of relevant structures at the level of regional state administrations (in accordance with the Law of Ukraine "On the Legal Regime of Martial Law" from 2022 – these are regional military administrations).

Materials and Methods. To achieve the goal of the study, which is to establish the process of forming structural units of regional state administrations on issues of communication with the public, the following were used: regulatory legal acts of central executive bodies (resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine); local regulatory legal acts of a number of regional state administrations (regulations on management, departments, etc.); documents, materials and information messages from the official websites of individual regional state administrations.

The basis of this study was the dialectical method of cognition, which is based on the principles of objectivity, comprehensiveness and historical approach, which allowed to reveal the essence of the change in the paradigm of interaction between public authorities and the public.

Such general scientific methods as analysis and synthesis, description, explanation were used. A retrospective method was also used, which allows studying the past on the basis of later stages of historical development, which made it possible to analyze the sequence of introducing the concept of "communication with the public" into the range of areas of activity and to reflect it in the name of structural units of regional state administrations.

At the initial stages of the formation of structural units of local state executive bodies, which were to implement communication with the public, had a somewhat dispersed nature: separately activities related to the mass media, separately political parties and public organizations, and not all of them, because in essence, work with public organizations of national minorities and religious associations of citizens was still separated. This approach is reflected in the Sample List of Structural Units of Regional and Other Local State Administrations, which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 1998 [1]. The sample list established the formation of a press and information department, and also determined the creation of a department for interaction with political parties and public organizations and an information and analytical department in the secretariat of regional state administrations.

It should be emphasized that the structure of regional state administrations also provided for the formation of a department for nationalities, migration and religion, which actually took over the elements of interaction with that part of public organizations that represented the interests of national minorities and religious communities. The extent to which such work was relevant and significant in volume can be understood from the data provided by K.I. Levchuk in his study on the development of public organizations of national minorities: at the beginning of 1995, 16 all-Ukrainian national-cultural societies were operating in Ukraine, representing the interests of Assyrians, Turks, Georgians, Hungarians, Czechs; two Polish and three Jewish societies operated at the national level; 221 associations of national minorities operated at the regional level [2, p. 263].

Regarding the state of development of religious communities, according to the statistical data of the State Committee for Religious Affairs, as of 1998, there were 19,005 communities in Ukraine that had registered their charters and 775 communities that had not registered, which at that time did not contradict the norms of the current legislation [3]. S.S. Yaremchuk indicates that during

1992–1999, the religious network of Ukraine increased by 9,581 religious organizations, which is 1.8 times more than it was immediately after the declaration of independence [4, p. 54].

Thus, the entire complex of work of the public authority in matters of communication with the public, according to the Sample List, was assigned to the indicated structural units. The same regulatory legal act determined that at the level of district state administrations, communication would be implemented through the department for interaction with political parties and public organizations of the secretariat of the district state administration.

Results. According to the Sample List in the Kyiv City State Administration at the level of its secretariat, public communication was to be implemented by the Department for Interaction with Political Parties and Public Organizations, as well as the Information and Analytical Department. Additionally, communication activities were strengthened by creating a department for working with citizens' appeals and a press service. This is explained by the exceptional status of the capital and the increased attention from society to the activities of its executive bodies, which to some extent was to be a model for imitation in the regions.

In the structure of the departments of the Kyiv City State Administration, by analogy with the regional state administrations, a department for nationalities, migration and religion was defined. In the structure of the district state administration in the city of Kyiv, according to the Sample List, communication relations with the public were to be implemented only by the department of the secretariat for interaction with political parties and public organizations.

As of 1998, in addition to Kyiv (the Law of Ukraine, which determined the status of the capital, would appear only a year later), Sevastopol was also a city with a special status of republican subordination, the executive power in which was also exercised by the local state administration. According to the Sample List, in the Sevastopol City State Administration, communication work was assigned in the structure of the secretariat - to the information and analytical department and the department for interaction with political parties and public organizations, and in the structure of the state administration - to the department for nationalities, migration and religion. Similarly to the capital, in the district state administrations in the city of Sevastopol, a department of the secretariat for interaction with political parties and public organizations was provided.

The need to improve the provision of proper communication between local executive bodies and the public led to further changes in the structure of state administrations. In the same 1998, the new edition of the Sample List excluded the information and analytical department and the department for interaction with political parties and public organizations from the structure of the secretariat of regional state administrations. Instead, a new department for internal policy issues appeared [5].

These same changes affected the structures of the Kyiv and Sevastopol city state administrations. While in district state administrations and in district state administrations in the cities of Kyiv and Sevastopol, the department for interaction with political parties and public organizations remained in the structure of the secretariat of these administrations.

The Government Resolution of October 30, 1998 approved the Standard Provisions on the Department for Internal Policy of Regional, Kyiv and Sevastopol City State Administrations [6]. The document explicitly stated that the main tasks of the newly established department include "assisting executive bodies in developing their relations with political parties, public organizations and the media" (p. 3 of the Standard Provisions); preparing specific proposals for measures aimed at strengthening the interaction of heads of state administrations with the general public (p. 4.8); direct organization and implementation of interaction between local executive bodies and the public (p. 4.14).

In general, the department was given a wide range of tasks to analyze, generalize and forecast socio-political processes in the regions, districts, and the cities of Kyiv and Sevastopol. It is impossible to form a real picture of socio-political life in the regions and to build development forecasts based on the conducted analytics, and to propose measures for regional strategic programs without establishing a high level of communication with the public in a broad sense: public organizations, political parties and movements, religious communities, the media, individual opinion leaders, etc. The implementation of the tasks was to be facilitated by the structure of the department, namely the following departments: political analysis, forecasting and marketing; relations with political parties and public organizations; information and analytical department (p. 6).

It should be noted that there is no doubt about the importance of organizational, analytical and information work carried out in the administration in order to implement the tasks of developing domestic policy. Nevertheless, the importance of communication between public authorities and the public has been constantly growing. With the development of a democratic state based on the rule of law, the role of communication has been perceived in a new way by both parties to the communication dialogue: both the authorities and civil society.

We emphasize that changes, reformatting of government institutions are not formalization of their work in a certain structural form. For public authorities, this is, on the one hand, an opportunity to increase the efficiency of management activities, and on the other hand, it is a kind of way to inform the public about which issues will be of priority for society and on which the authorities will work with the help of specific structural units. In turn, for civil society, changes in the structures of government bodies are certain signals by which the public can determine for itself clear guidelines regarding the trends of social development.

In matters of establishing communication with the public, the authorities needed ten years (which is, in fact, a third of the modern period of existence of Ukrainian statehood) to adjust the name and content of the activities of the structural units of local state administrations. In August 2007, a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine introduced a recommended list of departments, divisions and other structural units of regional state administrations, which provided for the presence of a department for internal policy and public relations and a department for press and information [7]. We consider the inclusion of a part on "public relations" in the name of a structural unit to be an important emphasis in the authorities' understanding of the role of communication with society for the further development of the country.

Local executive authorities could comprehensively implement the tasks of public authority communication with the public provided that both of the above-mentioned structural units - both in matters of the press and information and in matters of internal policy and public relations – were established. Certain confirmation of this is the fact of using documents and materials on the work of the relevant departments in thematic trainings. In particular, on October 14–17, 2008, in Poltava, within the framework of the project "Training of press secretaries of state bodies of the Poltava region", a training "Communications with the media and the public" was held, which was implemented by the joint efforts of the Poltava regional state administration and the public organization "European Choice" with the support of the Ukrainian Media Development Fund and the US Embassy in Ukraine [8]. The proposed educational materials present the regulatory and legal acts of the Poltava Regional State Administration (Regulations on the Department of Internal Policy, Regulations on the Department of Press and Information), individual materials of the aforementioned departments (information on the work of the department, a plan for consultations with the public, an overview of the socio-political situation in the region, materials for the single day of informing the population of the Poltava region, etc.).

The update of the name of the structural unit – the Department of Internal Policy and Public Relations – undoubtedly focused on interaction with civil society institutions, but the essence of the changes is revealed in the Standard Regulation on this structural unit, approved by the government in 2008 [9].

The 2008 Model Regulation saw a qualitative rethinking of the main tasks of governance and the role of the public in their implementation. In particular, instead of purely informational and analytical support for the implementation of exclusively domestic state policy and only within a certain region, they moved to "conducting consultations with the public on issues of forming and implementing state policy" in general.

In addition, the Model Provisions specified the tools for communication between local executive bodies and civil society in the form of "public consultations" (p. 4.5) and the activities of the public council under the regional state administration and the Sevastopol city state administration (p. 4.6). At the same time, the specified administration is now responsible for providing organizational, legal, and material and technical support for the activities of the public council. In fact, public councils under regional state administrations had already been created and were actively working by that time. It is important that the Model Provisions took the next step – they identified a structural unit that would systematically support such cooperation organizationally and technically.

A comprehensive definition of structural units of local state executive bodies for public communication was only a matter of time. It would be fair to say that not the least role in the unification of several structural units into one will always be played by the optimization approach, which is quite positively perceived by the public, as it leads to a reduction in the bureaucratic apparatus, budget expenses for its maintenance, etc. But, in our opinion, in the case of the formation of structural units for public communication at the level of local state administrations, the factors of the unifying approach are:

- a) development of scientific concepts regarding the content and role of public communication in the field of public administration;
 - b) a formed regulatory and legal framework;
- c) development of civil society and its constantly growing role and importance for state-building processes;
- d) gained experience of practical work in relevant structural units of local state administrations.

Regarding the legal basis of this issue, we note that the government approved the streamlining of the structure of the apparatus of central executive bodies, their territorial divisions and local state administrations [10]. The 2012 version of this government resolution includes a list of types of structural units of local state administrations (department, management, division, sector) and defines the content of the tasks that they are called upon to perform (p. 31). In particular, it provides for the possibility of creating departments at the level of local state administrations (previously, this type of structural unit was provided for only for central executive bodies). The purpose of establishing a department is to perform the main tasks of a high degree of complexity, associated with the multi-sectoral and multifunctional nature of the tasks set, the need to coordinate the work associated with their implementation. Given the complexity of the tasks and the multi-vector nature of the department's work, it is determined that at least two departments must function within its structure.

In parallel with this revision of the resolution (March 2012) on streamlining the structure of state executive bodies at different levels, the government also approved a new recommended list of structural units of local state administrations (April 2012) [11]. From now on, the recommended direction of activity of the structural unit, in particular information activities and communications with the public, is the direction, and not its type. The decision on

whether it will be a department or a management is made by the head of the local state administration, and he also determines the status of the structural unit as a legal entity under public law.

The specified format best suited the possibility of comprehensively solving the tasks in the field of communication of public authorities with the public. The process of transforming the existing structural units of the regional state administration began quite quickly on the ground. For example, in November 2012, the Temporary Regulation on the Department of Information Activities and Public Communications of the Poltava Regional State Administration was approved [12]. The document states that the Main Department of Information and Internal Policy of the Poltava Regional State Administration was "renamed" to the Department of Information Activities and Public Communications. But in fact, this was a reorganization. After all, as follows from the order of the head of the Poltava Regional State Administration, which approved the Temporary Regulation, the document was developed based on regulatory legal acts on the status of the Department of Press and Information, the Department of Internal Policy and Public Relations, and the Department of Nationalities and Religions. So, it was a reorganization of three structural units into one newly created one, which will act as a successor to their activities in the future. The multifaceted nature of the Department's work is reflected in 53 task points formulated in accordance with the defined powers. In addition, the text of the Temporary Regulations constantly emphasizes three objects for the directions of work of the newly created Department: 1) associations of citizens, 2) religious organizations and 3) mass media.

The importance of the formed unit in the structure of local state administrations of Ukraine and the need for further support in matters of normalizing its activities is evidenced by the preparation of Methodological Recommendations for the Development of the Regulations on the Structural Unit for Information Activities and Public Communications, which were approved by the Order of the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine in 2013 [13]. It should be emphasized that the preparation of the Methodological Recommendations was dictated by the authorities' awareness of the importance of public communications and was carried out within the framework of the implementation of the action plan for the implementation of the Strategy of State Policy to Promote the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine [14].

The following versions of the regulation on the specified structural unit are developed by local state administrations taking into account the specified methodological recommendations, such as the Regulation on the structural unit for information activities and communications with the public of the Poltava Regional State Administration of 2016 [15]. Here it is appropriate to recall the expediency and logic of uniting into one structural unit, which in the broad sense of interaction with all types of citizens' associations, and the unit for the affairs of national

minorities and religious communities. Public organizations of national minorities and religious communities are also an organic part of civil society, their activities influence, sometimes significantly and significantly, the formation of socio-political life in the regions, and are reflected in domestic policy. And if the Temporary Regulation of the Poltava Regional State Administration of 2012 still focused on religious organizations, as mentioned above, then the Regulation of the Poltava Regional State Administration of 2016 mentions such organizations separately only once in the list of objects with which the Department interacts when performing its tasks (clause 8). In this way, the creation of a single object of communication is recorded – the public, which the public authorities, represented by the regional state administration, understand in the broadest sense.

It should be noted separately that in 2012, as evidenced by the above-mentioned regulatory and legal acts, a paradigm shift occurred in the authorities' understanding of the content of interaction with civil society. The wording of "public relations" was changed to "communication with the public". We believe that the scale of interaction between the authorities and the public while maintaining a high level of freedom for civil society subjects successfully reflects the definition of communication given by K.M. Maistrenko: "Communication in the public administration system is an official, legally purposeful, regulated movement of individual subjects of management towards social community while preserving a certain autonomy, independence, initiative, and individuality for these subjects" [16, p. 95].

It should be noted that the corresponding changes and awareness of the essence of communications and communication processes in the interaction of the authorities with the public should be consistently continued and reflected in the change of names in the structure of the departments themselves. The already mentioned Poltava Regional State (currently military) Administration in the structure of the Department of Information Activities and Communications with the Public has a Department for Internal Policy, which includes a Department of Communications with Public Associations. Thus, the smallest structural unit of the Department, which is directly called upon to implement communication interaction, has the corresponding name.

The Vinnytsia Regional State Administration is also consistent in the formulation of the names of structural units. The relevant Department has a public communications department in its structure, and it includes a public communications department [17]. In contrast, in the Chernihiv Regional State Administration, the Department includes a department of internal policy and public relations, the name of which has remained unchanged for more than ten years, since the period of the unification of departments. The department includes a department whose name much more reflects the essence of the expected changes – "department of interaction with public associations" [18]. In the Sumy Regional State

Administration, the Department includes a department for the development of civil society. There is a department for communication policy, the activities of which seem to be more focused on solving information policy issues (interaction with the media, local publishers, libraries, etc.) [19]. The structural unit of the Khmelnytskyi Regional State Administration is the Department of Information Activities, Culture, Nationalities and Religions, which includes the Department of Information Activities and Analytics with the Department of Analytics and Communications. As for the latter, from such a name, without familiarizing yourself with the documents, one does not form an idea of the content that was put into the concept of "communication" in such a context, it can be both interaction with the public and interaction with the media [20]. The structure of the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State Administration includes the Department of Information Activities and Communications with the Public, and its structural element – the department – uses the form "public relations" in its name [21].

It should be noted that it is impossible to monitor the compliance of the names of structural units for public relations in all local state administrations of Ukraine for an objective reason – the absence of fully or partially appropriate information on official websites (for example, only the name of the department without specifying its structure), probably due to security issues in the conditions of martial law.

We emphasize that the above examples of names of structural units of regional military (state) administrations are considered solely as an impetus for further work. Undoubtedly, we are not talking about bureaucratic unification or a rigid centralized influence on the organizational structure of local state executive bodies, without taking into account the specifics of the region, local traditions, accumulated experience, etc. For example, in the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration, the regulation on the Department of Communications implies that its tasks also include issues of international cross-border cooperation. This fundamentally distinguishes the range of tasks of the Department compared to the corresponding structural units in other regions, but is fully explained by

the border location of the region and the need for public authorities to respond appropriately to this [22]. A kind of modern mix of digital technologies and communications, which have become increasingly closely interconnected in recent years, is presented in the Rivne Regional State Administration. The Department of Digital Transformation and Public Communications was established there, which includes the Public Communications Department [23]. In addition to the Rivne Regional State Administration, public communications were also transferred to the name of the relevant department in the Kyiv City State Administration.

Conclusion. We consider it necessary to draw the attention of officials of public authorities at the level of regional state (military) administrations to the correspondence of the names of structural units to the tasks that have arisen before them. "Public relations" is not a relevant term for the name of a structural unit today. After all, public relations or PR is an activity aimed at achieving mutual understanding between certain groups, based on the purposeful formation of public opinion and its management. G.G. Pocheptsov, who remains the most famous Ukrainian researcher on PR issues, indicates that this is the science of managing public opinion, but "until the citizen takes a worthy place in our world, there will be not only PR, but also true democracy" [24, pp. 45–46].

It is appropriate to assume that in the early years of the formation of Ukrainian statehood, the understanding of public relations was a natural reaction of post-Soviet society in general and public authorities in particular to the need to significantly update the image of government in the eyes of citizens. The trend towards communication as interaction was only gaining momentum, and the process of forming civil society institutions was just beginning in the country.

To build a democratic state based on the rule of law, today we need communication between public authorities and the public, which is a two-way movement and is aimed not only at mutual understanding, as in public relations, but also involves the next important step — interaction. The introduction of relevant changes in the name of the structural unit of regional state administrations was dictated by this understanding.

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