Oleksandr Yevtushenko, Doctor of Political Sciences, Professor of Public Service Department at the Institute of Public Administration, Petro Mohyla Black Sea State University,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN POLITICAL SYSTEM OF UKRAINE: CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL BASES

We consider local government as an essential element of the constitutional system and one of the foundations for democratic management of society.

The process of revival of the local government in Ukraine started with the adoption of Law of the USSR "On the Local Councils of People's Deputies of the Ukrainian SSR and the Local Government in Ukraine" (07.12.1990). It was a period of deep systemic transformation of the political system.

Adopted in 1996, the Constitution of Ukraine recognized that the local government - is a specific form of public power, an element of the political system of society. The state guarantees the right to local communities and their bodies.

The key principles in this process: legislative delegation of certain powers of the state to com-munities, secure implementation of delegated responsibilities by financial and human resources, legal guarantees, new partnerships between the government and communities. Strengthening of local government's role in society lets the government focus on issues related to the development of a social strategy.

Today Ukraine needs strengthening the system of the people's power, strengthening the civil society and the establishment of effective local government.

Thus, the Constitution of Ukraine and other legal acts, created a political and legal conditions for the establishment of local government in Ukraine based on the needs of society and the country. The local government is an effective mechanism for reconciling the interests of local communities and the state; an important factor in the democratization of public life, decentralized management and a prereq-uisite for the formation of civil society in Ukraine.

Keywords: local government, local community, democratization, decentralization, autonomy, civil society, democratic political system.

Свтушенко О. Н. Місцеве самоврядування в політичній системі України: конституційні та правові засади

Розглядається місцеве самоврядування як найважливіший елемент конституційного ладу і одна з основ демократичного управління суспільством, як інститут народовладдя, що поєднує спільні інтереси держави й громадянського суспільства.

Ключові слова: місцеве самоврядування, територіальна громада, демократизація, децентралізація, автономія, громадянське суспільство, демократична політична система.

Евтушенко А. Н. Местное самоуправление в политической системе Украины: конституционные и правовые основы

Рассматривается местное самоуправление как важнейший элемент конституционного строя и одна из основ демократического управления обществом, как институт народовластия, объединяет общие интересы государства и гражданского общества.

Ключевые слова: местное самоуправление, территориальная община, демократизация, децентрализация, автономия, гражданское общество, демократическая политическая система.

Introduction

The relevance of the article's topic is determined by the fact that local government:

firstly – a system of relations that are developing due to the division of local power between political actors at the local level;

secondly, local government is the most important element of the constitutional system of

democratic countries and one of the foundations of democratic management of society;

thirdly, at present local government is a factor of democratization of public life, a prerequisite for the establishment of civil society;

fourthly, local government is an institution of the political system of society, one of the forms through which political rights and freedoms are implemented. That power can be considered democratic if it relies on the initiative and actions (самодіяльність) of citizens;

fifthly, local government – is a form of public authority, the institute of the power of people that combines common interests of state and civil society.

Analysis of recent research

Problems of local government are always in the focus of many Ukrainian and foreign scholars. Among them V. Andriyash [1], A. Batanov [2], S. Boldyrev [3], V. Bordeniuk [4], A. Boryslavska [5], A. Vlasenkova [6], S. Vovk [7], K. Pyvovarov [23], M. Kharytonchuk [24], V. Shapoval [25] etc.

Statement of research objectives

The aim of the article is to analyze the constitutional and legal principles of the development of local government as an institute in the political system of Ukraine.

In order to understand the problem, the article contains legislative acts, including Constitution of Ukraine, the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine (16.07.1990), the Act of USSR dated 12.07.1990 "On the Local Councils of People's Deputies of the USSR and the Local Government in Ukraine", Law of Ukraine "On Ratification of the European Charter of Local Government, the Law of Ukraine adopted on May 21, 1997 № 280 "On Local Government in Ukraine".

Results

Local government in a democratic state – is an institution that is both an institution of civil as well as public administration [1, c. 152]. The process of its revival in Ukraine began with the adoption of Law of the USSR dated 07.12.1990 "On the Local Councils of People's Deputies of the Ukrainian SSR and Local Government in Ukraine" [17]. In fact it was a protest against the government alization of society, against excessive expansion of the role and influence of the state in the political system. Development of local government accelerated the adoption of the Declara-tion of State Sovereignty of Ukraine (07.16.1990) [8] and receiving independence in 1991.

One of the characteristic features of this pro-cess was the fact that since 1990 and until the adoption of the Constitution in 1996 "the insti-tute of local government has been subject to al-most annual transformation that included differ-ent degrees of decentralization: from centralized system, so-called "matrioshka" (Russian nested dolls) (when the Councils of various levels were suboardinate) to decentralized, for example, the Anglo-American model of local authorities" [5]. It was a period of deep systemic transformation of the political system in which local government was recognized as an independent form of public authority by which the political system "adapts to new social demands" [1, c. 155].

Adopted in 1996, the Constitution of Ukraine (Article 5) recognized the only source of power in Ukraine – people, which exercise power directly and through the bodies of state power and local government. Constitution of Ukraine secured the principle according to which local governments are independent elements of public affairs management system at the territorial level and do not belong to the system of state administration [19]. They are a separate form that exercises people's will.

In Article 7 of the Constitution it was declared that local government is recognized and guaran-teed in Ukraine. The main features of local gov-ernment are:

- the right of a territorial local community to solve the issues of local importance within the framework of Constitution and laws of Ukraine (Section XI, Article 140 of the Constitution of Ukraine);

- the possibility of direct implementation of this right through elections, referendums and other forms of direct democracy (Article 69);

- existence of public authorities in the form of local government [19].

Thus, the Constitution of Ukraine recognized that local government – is a specific form of public power, an element of the political system of society, part of the constitutional order and the object of le-gal regulation. Therefore, the development of local government is "the key to establishing the state of democratic governance standards" [18, c. 21].

Recognition and guarantee of local government in Ukraine has become an integral part of the pro-cess of democratization because local authorities:

firstly, are accessible for most people; secondly,

adapted to their full capacity to use

resources to meet the basic needs of the population; thirdly, with the help of the institute of local

government citizens can exercise their civil rights to a greater extent, influencing the decision-mak-

ing process; fourthly, local government allows citizens to solve common problems by creating various voluntary associations, participate in various

commu-nity initiatives;

fifthly, local government in a democratic political system is the most active agent of local poli-tics, the function of which is the right to control the resources the territorial community has.

The state guarantees the right for local communities and their elected organs under their responsibility to address issues of local importance, acting within the Constitution and laws of Ukraine [4, c. 118]. As local government in a democratic state "is not so much an opponent but a companion of state; developed local government relieves the authorities of the "flow" (of problems) and allows it to concentrate on solving national problems, it also helps to optimize central government. Thus, the development of effective local government al-lows state authorities to focus on quality of ad-dressing issues nationwide" [1, c. 155].

By its nature, content and meaning local government "differs from state authorities by the fol-lowing characteristics: a special subject-object structure, its own structural organization, the for-mation order of its organs by the territorial bod-ies, focus on solving local issues, local interest in the base of its operations, systemic and subordi-nate nature, lack of "power appendages" and so on" [3, c. 5-6]. Local government is an institution of civil society, a separate form for expressing people's will, the right of a community to solve local community issues independently. Simultane-ously, local government is an institution of public administration because for solving local problems it receives support from the government to ensure implementation of the decisions adopted within its competence, the use of state coercion mechanism, including through the judiciary.

Local authorities are not included in the struc-tural system of executive power. They, like the government authorities, are equal before the law. They are the representatives of the people within their attributed competences. With this in mind, we can state that: human rights, freedoms and their guarantees determine the essence and orientation of local governments as well as of the whole state.

According to V. Shapoval local government can be defined as a decentralized form of govern-ment [25]. "Decentralization – is a gradual del-egation of the growing powers to regional, urban and rural government institutions" [24, c. 14]. The need for decentralization is explained by the cri-teria for improving governance by strengthening legal and practical confirmation of the indepen-dence of local authorities from the state in terms of decision-making within their competence, re-

source and property management necessary for their implementation [23, c. 25].

Thus, local government is the object of decentralization, not the government at a regional level. Decentralization of state power in Ukraine should be in the delegation of authority to local governments. The goal of decentralization should be a balanced division of powers, resources and responsibilities between central government and local government [14, c. 45]. In this case, local government can be regarded as a decentralized form of government, because it was public authority and is responsible to the government agencies for their implementation.

The key principles of decentralization are: legislative delegation of certain powers of the state to communities, ensuring the implementa-tion of delegated financial and human resources and legal guarantees, new partnerships between government and communities [9, c. 45].

Thus, the process of decentralization provides local governments with the resources and the abil-ity to choose the direction and strategy for their use. For example, in Switzerland 70% of the coun-try revenue is consumed by local communities of the confederations, which equals to about \$73 bil-lion for 7 million of people – or \$10,428.57 per capita [6, c. 24-25].

Significant achievement of Ukrainian society on the way towards decentralization and democrati-zation of state power, local governance and cogna-tion of law to European standards was ratified by

Ukraine the European Charter of Local Govern-ment on 15 July 1997, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 1985 [15]. In the Preamble of the European Charter of Local gov-ernment determined nature of local government: lo-cal government is one of the main foundations of any democratic regime [12]. The main principles of the European Charter describe legal, organizational and financial autonomy of local governments.

The essence of the legal autonomy of local governments is that they have their own powers prescribed by law and the Constitution, and have the right to judicial protection of their powers and constitutional principles of local government. Powers should be full and exclusive, meaning that they do not belong simultaneously to other bodies

(Articles 3 and 4).

The essence of organizational autonomy lays in the fact that local governments should be able to determine their own internal structure that would meet local needs and ensure effective management (Article 6). Local authorities are entitled, in exercis-ing their powers to cooperate and within the law, to form consortia with other local authorities to carry out tasks of common interest (Section 1, Art. 10). They have the right to be a member of an as-sociation for the protection and promotion of their common interests and to belong to an international association of local governments (paragraph 2 of Art. 10.) Local authorities are entitled to cooper-ate with local governments of other countries under conditions that may be prescribed by law (Section 3. art.10). Any administrative supervision of local governments (Article 8) may only be exercised in accordance with the procedures and in cases pro-vided for by the Constitution or by law.

The financial autonomy of local govern-ment – it is the right of local governments to pos-sess their own adequate financial resources which they may dispose freely within their powers (Arti-cle 9). However, the availability of legal powers to perform certain functions does not make sense if the local government lacks financial resources to implement them. The principle in question is that there should be an adequate balance between the tasks that local government performs and avail-able financial resources [11].

Analysis of constitutional and legal model of local government in Ukraine shows: local government – is an independent legal institution, local government – is a collective right of the local com-munity, local government – is the mechanism of civil society formation in Ukraine, it integral part.

The Constitution secures basic principles of legal regulation of local government organization and functioning in Ukraine. But its development should occur in the direction of expanding the rights of local communities to address their own issues, increasing their economic independence and ways of influencing the formation and func-tioning of government.

The Law of Ukraine "On Local Government in Ukraine" (Article 2) (dated May 21, 1997) clearly states that local government – is a state-guaranteed right and the ability of local commu-nity – residents of a village or a voluntary associa-tion of rural community residents of several villag-es, towns and cities – independently or under the responsibility of authorities and local government officials to address the issues of local importance within Constitution and laws of Ukraine [16].

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Local Government in Ukraine" the term "territorial community" refers to residents who reside within a village, a city, which are independent administra-tiveterritorial units, or a voluntary association of residents of several villages that have an adminis-trative center. Under this definition, the legislator understands, firstly, residents which are united by a permanent place of residence, and, secondly, by the territorial basis of local government – village, town and city. This means that not only citizens of

Ukraine but also foreigners and stateless persons permanently residing within the village, town or city belong to the territorial (local) community. These citizens are also in accordance with Art. 26 of the Constitution of Ukraine, bare the same rights and freedoms as well as perform the same duties as citizens of Ukraine.

Territorial community is a force that is able, firstly, to organize, develop and regulate itself; secondly, is designed to carry out qualitative transformation of itself and the whole social organism as a whole [7, c. 127]. It is a leading central agent of local government (Article 1).

The system of local government in the struc-tural and organizational plan is a set of local gov-ernments, community organizations and organi-zational forms through which the respective local community or its components perform tasks and functions of local government, solve local issues.

The system of local government, according to the Law of Ukraine "On Local Government in Ukraine" (Article 5), includes the following ele-ments of local government: territorial communi-ty, village, town and city councils, village, town and city mayors, executive bodies of village, city councils, district (within the city) council; coun-cils created in urban areas of the district by the de-cision of the local community of the city; regional councils which represent the interests of territorial communities of villages, towns, cities; institutions of self-organization [16].

Local governance in Ukraine is exercised on the following principles: will of the people, the rule of law, transparency, collegiality, combina-tion of local and state election interests, legal, organizational, material and financial autonomy within the powers defined by law, accountabil-ity and responsibility to the local communities of their bodies and government officials, government support and guarantees of local government and its protection in a court. These principles are the criteria for evaluating current system of local gov-ernment in Ukraine.

Most significant achievement of the Law is the distribution of all powers on proper (self-

governing) and delegated meaning state powers. This distribution confirms that the state not only guarantees (commits itself), but also gives its own powers to the local government authorities within state territories [1, c. 151].

According to Article 143 of the Constitution of Ukraine, delegated powers are granted to local governments, which include village, town and city councils and their executive bodies, district and regional councils (Art. 140). So, delegated powers are provided to councils and their executive com-mittees. However, when analyzing Chapter 2 of the Section II of the Law of Ukraine on local gov-ernment, one could observe that delegated powers are given only to the executive bodies of village, town and city councils. It is clear that the discrep-ancy between the two basic laws in practice leads to some conflict.

Delegation of authority to local authorities reflects their growing role in solving problems that are of national and regional importance because the efficiency of not only municipal and regional, but also state policy depends on how national and regional problems are resolved [20, c. 139-140]. So, successfully functioning local government allows state authorities to focus on solving prob-lems of national importance, and enhances the ef-ficiency of public administration.

New forms of direct implementation of lo-cal communities authority is the right to initiate examination of any issues within the competence of local government, and to hold public hearings, meet with members of the council and officials of local governments.

The Constitution of Ukraine provides for a two-tier system of local government. According to the Constitution and current legislation to the first level belong: village, town and city municipali-ties. Second level: district and regional councils, which, by fulfilling the functions of local govern-ment, represent common interests of local govern-ment. However, the presence of these two levels does not give right to subordinate bodies of the first level to the second. Thus, in accordance with Article 10 of the Law of Ukraine "On Local Government in Ukraine" local councils are the only representative bodies of local communities [16].

The Constitution of Ukraine provides for the material basis of local government: movable and immovable property, revenues of local budgets, other funds, land, natural resources are owned by territorial communities of villages, towns and cit-ies, as well as objects of their common property being in management of district and regional coun-cils. Its main achievement is definition of the main agent of local government – the local community, through which citizens have a real opportunity to make decisions on issues of local importance.

In determining the status of regional, district and city district councils and their place in the system of local governance, it should be noted that regional and district councils represent common interests of territorial communities of villages, towns and cities located within the respective administrative-territorial unit if such territorial communities are absent.

According to Article 71 of the Constitution of Ukraine district and regional councils are formed by direct elections. Powers of district and region-al councils are defined in Chapter 4 of the Law and fall into: 1) proper powers (Art. 43), 2) pow-ers which are delegated (Art. 44) to them by their territorial communities of villages, towns and cit-ies, 3) and those which they have delegated to the appropriate local authorities. Main feature of the regional and district councils is lack of their own executive bodies. Their functions, in accordance with the Constitution and the Law, are performed by local state administrations. They are account-able to and controlled by the Councils to the extent of powers delegated to them by the district and regional councils.

The existing model of territorial organization of power in Ukraine (public administration des-ignated from the center and local government is elected by local population) creates "a situation of socially harmful competition when both struc-tures are competing for already limited financial resources and control of the property" [10, c. 3].

According to researchers the parallel func-tioning of district and regional councils as well as public administration creates an illusion of local governance on this "level" and hinders the devel-opment of viable local communities and, conse-quently, the development of local government in Ukraine, the efficiency is influenced by national as well as regional municipal policy [2, c. 99]. All questions related to public service provision, socio-economic, political, humanitarian and cultural issues are resolved at the local level and "imple-mentation of government objectives depends on the degree of their resolution: strengthening of the foundations of the power of people, creation of conditions for fulfillment of population's vital interests, implementation of measures to organize social protection, stabilize political, economic and

social systems, etc" [22, c. 536-537].

Local government expresses interests of local residents of each village, town or city. However, the problem of direct public participation in ad-dressing local issues faces the problem of the pro-tection of individual rights and rights of a citizen. According to Constitution, Art. 38, the citizens have the right to elect and be elected to bodies of state authorities and local government. They have the right to file individual or collective appeal to the local authorities, to challenge the judge's deci-sions and actions (or inaction) of bodies of local government, to solve local issues (like through lo-cal governments as well as by direct vote) and oth-ers. As for local governments, they should create conditions for the citizens to exercise their rights, like state authorities are obliged to.

Addressing local issues, creating conditions for the everyday satisfaction of needs of each indi-vidual and the population as a whole unit – this is the realization of one of the key human rights and citizen rights in a democratic society – the right to a decent life. The level of security of this right can be seen as one of the indicators of the level of the power of people in the country [1, c. 153].

The most important local issues are: management of municipal property; formation, approval and implementation of local budgets; establishment of local taxes and fees; pursuance of public order, and other issues that are directly connected with sustaining needed activities in local communities.

The right to judicial protection, the right to compensation for additional costs incurred as a result of decisions made by state authorities as well as the prohibition of imposing restrictions on the rights of local government established by the Constitution and laws of Ukraine serves as a guarantee of local governments. Moreover, public authori-ties should not only create legal and economic framework for municipal (local) authorities, but also explain to the population the state policy in the sphere of local government, help to ensure that citizens were able to participate in solving local problems.

As for the interaction of state and local governments, their relationship should be as of partners and shall be carried out to achieve a common goal – improving the quality of life of the pop-ulation of each municipality and the region as a whole [21, c. 77-78].

Support of local governments by the state and creation of necessary conditions for sustainable development of local communities should be focused on the efficient and sustainable functioning of municipal, state and public institutions to ensure the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens of Ukraine, raise of living standards and welfare of the Ukrainian people.

However, a number of unresolved problems caused by economic difficulties in the country, the imperfection of legislative regulation (primarily, lack of clear division of competences between the state and local authorities) still remains. Moreover, it leads to disagreements and conflicts between state authorities and organs of local governments.

Necessary efforts should be undertaken combin-ing legislative, executive and judicial powers to resolve such disputes and conflicts. The problem is often intensified by a subjective factor – the in-ability and sometimes unwillingness of appropri-ate state and local government agencies, their of-ficials to make coordinated decisions directed on interaction of state and municipal bodies for the sake of interests of the population [22, c. 541-542].

Moreover, it is often not taken into consideration that the "processes at the local level are political processes in which local government is the most active subject of local politics and through which citizens have compelled the government to hear their demands" [13, c. 326].

Creation of a democratic state is possible only with the development of local government. The key principles in this process should be: legisla-tive delegation of certain powers of state to com-munities, secured implementation of delegated responsibilities by financial and human resources as well as by legal guarantees, new partnerships between government and communities [9, c. 122].

Thus, strengthening of local government's role in society does not weaken the central gov-ernment, but vice versa – it takes away non-core functions and lets it focus on issues related to the development of social strategy, calibrated policy, finding the place in the geopolitical space, etc. As international experience shows, delegation of state powers to local governments can balance different interests of individuals, social groups, nations and nationalities, religions and so on.

Today Ukraine needs its own national program of "State power decentralization and local govern-ment development" that would ensure strengthen-ing of the system of the power of people, strength-ening of civil society and the establishment of ef-fective local government. As European experience shows, local governments strengthen state power, making it more flexible and effective because they are the most accessible for people and most suited to use resources to meet the needs of the population.

Conclusions

Thus, summing up, it should be noted that the Constitution of Ukraine and other normative legal acts:

firstly, by securing the conceptual foundations of local government, created a political and legal

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