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## CURRENT STATUS OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES PROVISION PROCESSES IN THE CONDITIONS OF POWER DECENTRALIZATION IN UKRAINE

## СУЧАСНИЙ СТАН ПРОЦЕСІВ НАДАННЯ АДМІНІСТРАТИВНИХ ПОСЛУГ В УМОВАХ ДЕЦЕНТРАЛІЗАЦІЇ ВЛАДИ В УКРАЇНІ

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У статті проаналізовано сучасний стан надання адміністративних послуг. Визначено головні завдання, які постають перед Україною під час реформи децентралізації влади. Результатом ефективної роботи органів місцевої влади стане створення більш дієвої організації роботи, виконання всіх обов'язків та функцій на високому рівні, зокрема в сфері надання адміністративних послуг. Проаналізувавши стан процесів надання адміністративних послуг, слід зосередити увагу на вирішенні ряду недоліків та проблем в цій сфері. Проблема якісного надання адміністративних послуг в умовах децентралізації є досить актуальною та привертає увагу науковців та практиків. Досить важливим є дослідження механізму надання послуг, вдосконалення цього процесу за умов збільшення ряду функцій та повноважень органів місцевого самоврядування.

*Ключові слова:* децентралізація, органи місцевого самоврядування, адміністративна послуга, розподіл функцій та повноважень, нормативно-правові акти

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The article analyzes the current status of administrative services provision. The main tasks that Ukraine faces during the reform of power decentralization are identified. The effective work of local authorities will result in the creation of a more efficient work organization, performance of all duties and functions at a high level, in particular in the field of public services. Having analyzed the processes status of providing administrative services, one should focus on solving a number of shortcomings and challenges in this area. The problem of administrative services provision quality in the context of decentralization is quite relevant and attracts the attention of scholars and practitioners. It is very important to study the services provision mechanism, to improve this process in terms of increasing a number of functions and powers of local self-government bodies.

*Keywords:* decentralization, local self-government bodies, an administrative service, functions and powers distribution, regulations

The objectives of the modern reform of power decentralization in Ukraine are to improve the population's existence in almost every area and that is why they are intertwined with the reform of the administrative services system, which has been taking place in our country for several years. The main goal of the reform is the simplification, accessibility and quality of administrative services. This goal can be achieved not only by improving the system, which is to simplify the procedure for obtaining administrative services, but also to increase the number of Administration Service Centers (ASC).

### Analysis of recent researches and publications

Specialists in public administration, politics, and civil servants have been actively discussing decentralization reform and its impact on the administrative services provision. Among the scientists who examined this matter one should highlight: I. Koluishko, N. Nyzhnyk, V. Tymoshchuk, V. Fedorenko, A. Chukhno, L. Vorotin and others.

## Unsolved aspects of the problem

Despite the positive trend of reforming the processes of administrative services provision in Ukraine, there are a number of important issues related to these processes development. Ukraine, having embarked on the path of European integration, began the decentralization reform in 2014. As of this date, it can also be interpreted as a local self-government reform, because it means the transfer of functions to the local level so that the bodies closest to the population have as much power as possible, which can be implemented successfully. Despite the significant contribution of the above-mentioned scholars in the analysis of theoretical and practical aspects of the administrative services reform, a number of problems remain unresolved, in particular, the services quality and the creation of Administration Service Centres system throughout the country.

*The aim of the article* is to analyze the processes state of administrative services provision in the context of decentralization, identify problems and ways to solve them, as well as reveal the prospects for administrative services provision by local self-government bodies during the decentralization reform.

## The main part

The scholars' surveys have shown that the majority of Ukraine's population is dissatisfied with the administrative services quality provided by public authorities due to the complexity of the service delivery process, long queues, territorial dispersion of administrative bodies, lack of information, inconvenient work schedules and many other reasons.

In order to change the situation, as early as 2012, the reform of the branch was started by the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On Administrative Services" [1]. This regulation defined the concept of "administrative service", established and introduced information and technological cards to regulate the procedure and timing of administrative services and provided for the establishment of Administration Service Centres, which were to work on the principle of "single window".

In order to fulfill its implementation a number of organizational and regulatory measures were taken to reform the administrative services system. Among the measures that facilitated the citizens' access to administrative services, increased convenience, improved the administrative services quality, it should be noted the adoption of a number of delegated legislations, including the resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the Single State Portal of Administrative Services" dated 3 January 2013 № 13, "On Approval of the Procedure for Maintaining the Register of Administrative Services" dated 30 January 2013 № 57, "On Approval of the Model Regulations on the Administration Services Centre" dated 20 February 2013 № 118, "On Approval of Training Requirements Technological Card of an Administrative Service" dated 30.01.2013 № 44, "On Approval of the Model Regulations of an Administration Service Centre" dated 1 August 2013 № 588. In addition, in May 2014, the Instruction of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine №523-r "Some Issues of Providing Administrative Services of Executive Bodies through Administration service Centres" was issued, which regulated the list of the most common services to be provided through Administration Service Centres. This decision was another step towards the real decentralization of public authorities and strengthening the functions of local self-government bodies, but neither these institutions nor the newly created Administration Service Centres were ready for such changes [1].

During the official transfer of services to the Administration Service Centres, there was a lack of cooperation of some public authorities in the these legal requirements implementation. At that time, the centers faced many shortcomings on the way to effective services delivery, in particular, lack of highly qualified personnel, knowledge and skills, under-equipment and small size of premises, lack of document forms for new services provision. As a result, Administration Service Centres, which were supposed to minimize corruption and create transparency and convenience in providing services to citizens, do not always contribute in order to achieve these goals. The level of their development in Ukraine is very uneven, there are several well-organized centres, but there are many other, less efficient centres, especially at the district level, where technical and resource provision is much worse than in cities. In this regard, to this date there are currently international technical assistance projects that support the establishment and upgrading of Administration Service Centres in the regions (recently, Administration Service Centres in the amalgamated territorial communities) to ensure the reform development and compliance with the legal requirements of the Centres.

The decentralization processes currently taking place in Ukraine are designed to make Ukrainians' existence better in almost every area, and therefore they are closely intertwined with the reform of the administrative services system, which has been going on in our country for several years. The main purpose of this system reform is very simple and clear – to make services affordable, fast and of high quality. Such an ambitious goal can be achieved not only with the help of the system improvement by simplifying the procedures for obtaining an administrative service, but also by building a network of Administration Service Centers (ASC). To organize the effective operation of Administration Service Centres, the Law of Ukraine "On Administrative Services" regulates the basic requirements for the establishment and operation of such centres [1]. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has developed a number of regulations approving:

- approximate provision on the Administration Service Centre (resolution dated 20 February 2013 №118);
- approximate reglament of the Administration Service Centre (resolution dated 1 August 2013 № 588);

- the list of executive bodies administrative services provided through the Administration Service Centre (the instruction dated 16 May 2014 №523-r - as amended by the instruction of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 11 October 2017 № 782-r));
- this instruction also regulates a number of issues related to the centers activities and the direct provision of services through the Administration Service Centres).

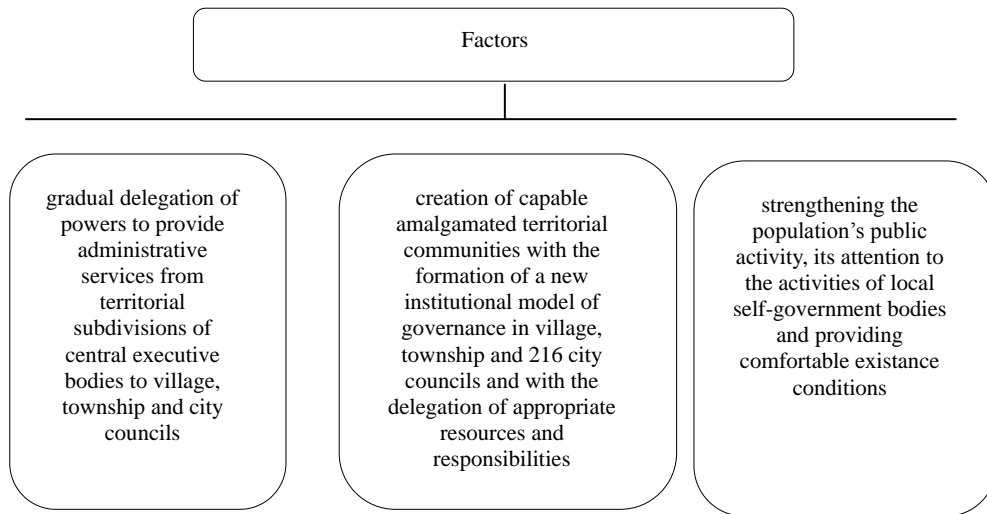


Figure 1. The Characteristics of the Main Factors of Power Decentralization in Ukraine that Affect the Administrative Services Provision Process  
 Source: authors' own development

The main task of decentralization reform is to ensure access and quality of services, which is what is formed in the Concept of reforming local self-government and territorial organization of power in Ukraine, approved by the Instruction of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 1.04.2014. №333-p [6].

The regulation also defines the legal basis for the realization of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of both individuals and legal entities in administrative services provision. As of this day the central point of decentralization reform is the creation of Administration Service Centres. The list of services provided by the Administration Service Centre depends on the institutional capacity of the community. For example, if it is a city-based community, then the Administration Service Centres in such communities are required to provide the fullest range of services. The law states that the list of administrative services provided through the Administration Service Centres will be determined by the body that decided to establish such a centre.

According to the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, as of 01.10.2020 in Ukraine there are 796 Administration Service Centres, the Figure 2 shows the distribution of the number of operating Administration Service Centres in the regions of Ukraine.

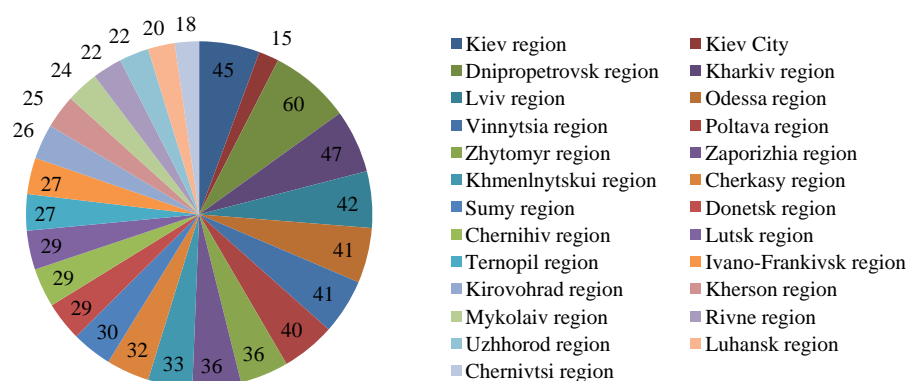


Figure 2. Distribution of the Number of Operating Administration Service Centres in the Regions of Ukraine in 2020  
 Source: authors' own development

As it can be seen from the Figure 2, the largest number of the Administration Service Centres have been formed in Dnipropetrovsk region, as 60 Administration Service Centres are concentrated here. The smallest

number of such centres have been formed in the Chernivtsi region – 18. In large cities, the Administration Service Centers employees provide more than 100 administrative services. About 240 services are provided in Ivano-Frankivsk that can be ordered «online». In addition, related services can be provided: copying, scanning, printing, stamps production), the cash department is functioning, there are self-service payment terminals and an ATM. The Administration Service Centre in Kozyatyn, the Vinnytsia region, has integrated more than 330 services in one Administration Service Centre with the district state administration. Now more than 60,000 residents of the city and district have access to basic services, including registration of civil status, place of residence, legal and natural entrepreneurs, social protection services, as well as the issuance of foreign passports and ID-cards etc. The more services are integrated by the local Administration Service Center, the more convenient it will be for community residents [7;8;10]. Having the Administration Service Centre in their community, people do not have to go to the district centre to apply for a subsidy or obtain a foreign passport. All services required in different life situations (birth, change of residence, marriage, real estate registration, business, etc.) can be provided in the of Administration Services Centre, which is nearby [2;9;11].

Ukraine is still undergoing a complex process of transformation. Even now, the population can receive almost any service in one place at once: from residence registration to documents submission to register a business. It is planned to further expand the range of functions and powers of public authorities. The ongoing reform processes in Ukraine are setting the country on a path of similarity with the leading world systems of administrative services provision. Nowadays a lot depends on the local government, because only its decisions determine how rationally its powers and resources will be transferred and used. But, along with the positive processes, there are also problems in the work of Administration Service Centres, in particular: insufficient level of accommodation, lack of highly qualified staff in some areas, the main problem is the lack of adequate financing. The reform of administrative services provision under the conditions of power decentralization can contribute to most of the reforms implemented by the state [3].

The creation of the Administration Service Centres in Ukraine is the embodiment of the citizen service technology application, as mentioned above, on the principle of "single window". They are one of the most important components of the administrative services system and its subsystems and are designed to streamline and strengthen the interaction between their elements. The activities analysis of the established Administration Service Centres has shown that there are a number of shortcomings in their activities and pointed to better approaches to their work organization by local self-government bodies compared to the executive authorities. This is what justifies the decentralization processes in this area and really brings them closer to their consumers. Delegating responsibility to establish and organize the work of the Administration Service Centre to the municipal level should be accompanied by the current legislation improvement on administrative services in order to eliminate the identified shortcomings, as well as skills improvement of local self-government bodies [4].

The main direction of improving the administrative services quality is to determine the criteria for assessing their quality and provision standards. Criteria for assessing the service delivery quality are indicators that determine the level of satisfaction of needs and interests of the administrative services consumers, their activities professionalism.

The criteria are the basis for setting quality standards for the administrative services provision. The quality standards for the administrative services provision need to be regularly reviewed and improved. The assessment of administrative services quality should be based on criteria: effectiveness, timeliness, accessibility, convenience, openness, respect for consumers, professionalism. It is necessary to decentralize the of administrative services provision and to organize effective public services that focus exclusively on the administrative services provision, which will ensure the efficient functioning of the new model of administrative services in the Ukrainian conditions. The approval of a new Concept of Administration Reform (Concept of Public Administration Reform in Ukraine), should be an important step in solving the problems in the administrative services provision by executive authorities and local self-government bodies which should define the main directions in the reform of the public authorities activities in the field of administrative services [5].

## Conclusions

Thus, it can be concluded that the network development of Administration Service Centres in all regions of Ukraine is only now under way. On the one hand, in the context of power decentralization, much attention is focused on the creation and organization of the Administration Service Centres in the amalgamated territorial communities, but, on the other hand, there are a number of problems and shortcomings that hinder these centres development. Such problems are: insufficient financing of the Administration Service Centres, lack of quality control of services provided, the queues problem is still unresolved during digitalization, the time limit for considering applications from applicants. That is why the executive authorities and local self-government bodies should analyze all the shortcomings and take the necessary measures to optimize the work of the Administration Service Centres.

## Abstract

Despite the positive trend of reforming the processes of providing administrative services in Ukraine, there are a number of important challenges that relate to the development of these processes. Ukraine, having

embarked on the path of European integration, began the reform of decentralization in 2014. To date, it can also be interpreted as a reform of local self-government, because it means transferring functions to the local level so that the bodies that are closest to the population have as many powers as possible that can be implemented successfully. Despite the significant contribution of the above-mentioned scholars in the analysis of theoretical and practical aspects of the administrative services reform, a number of problems remain unresolved, in particular, the services quality and the creation of Administration Service Centres system throughout the country. We can conclude that the network development of the Administration Service Centres in all regions of Ukraine is only now under way. On the one hand, in the context of power decentralization, much attention is focused on the creation and organization of the Administration Service Centres in the amalgamated territorial communities, but, on the other hand, there are a number of problems and shortcomings that hinder these centres development. Such problems are: insufficient financing of the Administration Service Centres, lack of quality control of services provided, the queues problem is still unresolved during digitalization, the time limit for considering applications from applicants. That is why the executive authorities and local self-government bodies should analyze all the shortcomings and take the necessary measures to optimize the work of the Administration Service Centres.

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