

SOCIAL ASPECT OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY

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***Abstract.** The most important task of the socially-oriented economy of the state in the market economy, which is still being formed in Ukraine, is the activity on social protection of all strata of society and the elaboration of an effective social policy strategy. Also, an important and topical factor of social development of the country is, of course, its orientation to European social norms and values. One of today's problems in the social sphere of Ukraine is the lack of a long-term, unified and integrated strategy of social development that would be understood by the people who would receive its support and restore confidence and respect for the authorities. The main areas of social protection that are urgently needed to modernize today are the fight against poverty and equalization of incomes of the various strata of the population, pensions and medical care, since these areas cover the entire population and are the most costly and subsidized from the country's budget.. In our country, there are now a number of problems in the realm of social policy implementation on the ground, due to various factors. The low level of professionalism of officials who deal with social problems and reluctance to engage in them, as well as the residual financing principle, are the main obstacles to social growth. In the whole social development of Ukrainian society, and therefore in social policy directly, the human factor has always been and remains decisive. It is about value orientations, about the moral principles of people, their norms of behavior. That is, in essence, social policy must first focus on the activation of the very human factor. One of the negative factors in the development of social policy is the consequences of the Soviet model of traditional paternalism, when the majority of the population does not have the will to solve their problems and they translate them into the state. Thus, Ukraine's social policy should be pursued in two directions: first, targeting the support of the most vulnerable groups of the population, and secondly, the introduction of long-term programs for improving the effectiveness of the social protection system.*

Key words: social policy, Ukraine, social protection, local self-government, political transformation, society.

In Ukraine, in the conditions of a permanent financial and economic crisis, it is very important to determine the priorities of social and economic development to ensure the comprehensiveness of the national economy and increase its competitiveness. The most ambitious task of the socially-oriented economy of the state in the market economy, which is still being formed in Ukraine, is the activity of social protection of all layers of society and the development of an effective social policy strategy. The social policy of the state by its nature should be unified, but due to the peculiarities of the social and geographical space of Ukraine, it is heterogeneous. And this is not a deviation from the norm, but the result of contradictory conditions that form the unevenness of the social space of the state.

Also, an important and relevant factor in the country's social development is, of course, its

orientation towards European social norms and values. Such factors as a decrease in the standard of living of the population, constantly rising prices for the main groups of goods, hyperinflation, constant unemployment, a decrease in monetary income and expenses of all sections of the population, definitely contribute to increased interest in growing, or at least stable, economies of European countries. It is their social model that is the priority direction in building a stable, responsible, and maximally fair social policy of Ukraine today. Ensuring the needs and interests of wide circles of the country's population, which corresponds to the main social goals set before governments in all developed European countries, the development of a long-term social policy strategy within the framework of European integration - these are the main tasks and problems of today's social policy of Ukraine.

The investigated problem is not new and was previously raised by scientists in various aspects. Thus, social protection and social policy in Ukraine were studied in journal publications, there is also coverage of the European experience of implementing social protection, we used research on regional policy and Ukraine in general. All these and other scientific studies touch on some aspects of the problem being studied, but do not give a complete picture of social policy as an important factor in the political transformation of Ukraine, so the problem certainly needs further study.

One of today's problems in the social sector of Ukraine is the lack of a long-term, unified and integrated strategy for social development, one that would be understandable to the population, that would gain its support and restore trust and respect for the authorities. Moreover, the main indicator of a high-quality social strategy is its long-term nature, calculation for a long period, and not for the satisfaction of temporary, urgent or purely political needs. The experience of Western democratic states would be useful in successfully solving socio-economic problems.

Analysis of the experience of foreign countries shows that in order to achieve the well-being of the majority of the population, it is necessary to implement a responsible social policy. It is also important to apply the principle of solidarity and, especially, joint responsibility, which will make it possible to improve the quality and essential characteristics of reforms carried out in the social sphere. Today, we are observing a permanent reformation of social policy in European countries, which promptly responds to internal and external problems, tries to prevent them or solve them as soon as possible. Therefore, the term "general welfare state" is often used for EU countries, which should become a reference point for Ukraine as well [Dudova, 2014].

The main directions of social protection, which are urgently needed to be modernized today, are the fight against poverty and the equalization of incomes of different segments of the population, pension provision and medical care, because these areas cover the entire population and are the most costly and subsidized from the country's budget.

As evidenced by European practice, social protection in the modern country is closely related to the free development of the market economy, the government that functions in accordance with the law and democratic principles, and public institutions, especially voluntary and non-governmental ones. These three components of any democratic modern society work effectively and efficiently only together, in direct cooperation, and therefore need constant development [Kolosovska, 2015]. It should not be forgotten that social protection is a multi-level system that includes social security, social insurance and social security of citizens of the country, and also consists of social, economic and political-legal institutions, each of which has its own goals and tasks in the development and implementation socially oriented norms and principles.

Today, in the most developed countries of Western Europe, there is a fairly effective system of social protection, largely thanks to the long-term struggle of public organizations and movements, primarily trade unions, as the most massive and socially active associations. During the entire post-

war period, thanks to the dialogue between the government and society in these countries, a large gap between the incomes of the richest and poorest citizens was prevented. The social justice formed today in European countries is undoubtedly the result of the conquests of mass organizations and civil society as a whole, as well as a reasonable compromise on the part of entrepreneurs and the state [Yarova, 2016].

The importance of carrying out a full-fledged social policy for the effective political transformation of Ukrainian society, the wider use of the production potential of the regions and the creation of conditions for solving local social problems is increasing. If social policy is considered at the national level, it is a function of the market welfare state.

The majority of researchers believe that the state should develop strategic guidelines that would consolidate all regions, and this is a course for interregional integration and at the same time for raising the role of regions, a course for providing local self-government with real content and new functional content, and at the same time for the introduction of a strong centralized regional policy, which would be based on national priorities [Dolishniy, 2006].

Our country is currently experiencing a number of problems in the area of social policy implementation on the ground, caused by various factors. The low level of professionalism of officials dealing with social problems and their reluctance to deal with them, as well as the residual principle of financing are the main obstacles to social growth. In addition, there are also objective problems. This is, first of all, a negative legacy of the 1990s, when the schemes and methods of social assistance to the population were destroyed and there was a sharp stratification of society into classes with different incomes. The problems of the social sphere can also include the growth of immigration of the most active citizens abroad and the social degradation of those who remained, despair in the state and its ability to protect its citizens.

In the entire social development of Ukrainian society, and therefore in social policy directly, the human factor was and remains decisive. It is about value orientations, about the relevant moral principles of people, their norms of behavior, life plans, the level of knowledge and general intellectual development, the nature and peculiarities of work skills, etc. That is, in fact, social policy should first of all be aimed at activating the human factor. This can be under the conditions of democratization of society, human relations; expansion and development of people's self-government; creation of the appropriate economic apparatus; creation of new management mechanisms, encouragement and stimulation of citizens. As for purely social policy, social work as such, they should first of all be carried out precisely with the active participation of the citizens themselves, that is, civil society [Luk'yanova, 2009].

Legality, political pluralism, social justice, democracy and humanism can be called the main principles in the interaction between a person and the state in the field of social policy. The humanistic approach in the interpretation of the content of social policy acquires special significance, since the implementation of relevant measures in practice requires the formation of attitudes and values of an individual as a competent, active, conscious participant in the political process. The relationship between the development of civil society and the individual is a necessary prerequisite for democratic reconstruction in all spheres of social life. Therefore, the interaction of civil society, man and the state is necessary to create and ensure the necessary conditions and guarantees for the development of all subjects, especially man - the main subject of civil society and the social legal state [Kornilov, 1998].

Ukraine cannot get rid of its socialist past, from which it inherited a modern system of social protection with many shortcomings and miscalculations. It is very difficult to get rid of them, therefore, year after year, the state continues to provide assistance to numerous recipients of

various types of social benefits and payments, which is definitely a much greater financial burden than the country's economy can afford. This situation leads to a low level of such benefits, which does not solve the problems of their recipients and causes dissatisfaction, on the one hand, of taxpayers, at whose expense they are actually carried out, and on the other hand, of the beneficiaries themselves, due to the scarcity of the funds received. Although recently, some types of benefits have increased significantly and have given rise to social and financial consumerism, when recipients of benefits do not want to work, because they receive more from the state in social benefits than in production with a meager salary. Such a situation does not encourage these categories of people to be economically active and creates social dependence. Social policy in modern Ukraine is definitely passive and aimed at helping the poor. And absolutely nothing is being done to overcome this poverty and provide the needy sections of the population with new opportunities to improve their standard of living. Currently, we have an already formed culture of consumption and social dependence of a certain layer of citizens who rely only on material assistance from the state and do nothing to change this situation.

If there is still a prospect of successful transformation in Ukraine, it is primarily related to overcoming institutional duality on the way to reproducing the main foundations of the European institutional system. It would seem that recent socio-political processes provide grounds for such institutional changes, because the vast majority of the population prefers the European vector of state development, and political forces and leaders who are focused on accelerated European integration have come to power. But there are still significant obstacles on this path. And this is not only external pressure, but also internal problems that must be solved in accordance with the elitist, social class and resource aspects of the development of the social potential of society in the conditions of forced transformation.

The need for transformation is especially noticeable in the field of protection of the disabled and persons with disabilities. Instead of the established approach of our authorities of constantly expanding "vulnerable" groups and providing them with benefits that often do not correspond to real needs (such as the right to non-scheduled installation of residential telephones on preferential terms or the right to service outside the queue at communal and other enterprises), today it is worth focusing on the creation of such social services that will really help people in need of support to realize their social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. For example, it could be the right to take certain educational courses free of charge, to learn a foreign language for a full-fledged return to civilian life. The state can also simplify the provision of electronic services for people with disabilities and veterans through the implementation of an electronic cabinet, which would facilitate the interaction of various state bodies and data exchange.

Where to start within the reform process that the social sphere needs in 2023:

- harmonization of national legislation in accordance with EU requirements;
- launching the process of reforming the sphere of social services and creating a system of real individualized social support and services for people with disabilities and veterans;
- finally abandon the "medical" understanding of disability and move to a human rights model in which a person, his full life and dignity occupy a prominent place (as required by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by Ukraine);
- involvement of the ultimate recipients of benefits and services in the formation of state policy, i.e. mandatory consideration of the votes of those to whom the policy is directed;
- creation of a system of rehabilitation and reintegration of veterans and people with disabilities - instead of the entrenched perception that they need to be treated and "hidden" from society in boarding schools, sanatoriums and hospitals;

- ensure that the obligation to restore accessible and inclusive infrastructure is included in the plans for the reconstruction of Ukraine, as well as take into account other issues related to ensuring the opportunity to freely and equally enjoy their rights in Ukrainian society for all people, with or without disabilities [2023].

Such social institutions as traditions, habits, religious beliefs, morality and culture can be called factors of effective social policy. Therefore, it is possible to speak with confidence about the different degree of readiness of individual regions of the country for the implementation of a certain model of social policy that is the same for everyone. In this case, it is appropriate to talk about the development of its own regional model, taking into account all local factors and features. The main goal of modern social policy in this case will be the creation of a comfortable environment for the population to live in and the compliance of social norms with the needs of the majority of citizens.

Thus, we can confidently say that the social policy of Ukraine in general definitely needs serious improvement and modernization, in accordance with global trends in this field and global experience. In its activities, the Ukrainian authorities should use European standards and tools for the implementation of social norms, especially in the field of spending budget funds to finance social programs. The main task of the authorities is to overcome the essential shortcomings of the modern social system, in particular, such as unfairness in the distribution of state aid, imperfection of the social insurance system, low targeting of aid, insufficient coverage of disadvantaged sections of the population with social guarantees.

Therefore, social reforms are primarily about preserving the value of absolutely every person. Politics should be built on this. And it should not be just charity or compassion. Social policy is not about pity, but about a comprehensive approach where people and their rights are in the center of attention. The development of the social sphere should not become the prerogative of the state, but the business of the entire society. This increases the role of each individual and public organizations and associations in the management of social development. The new role of the social sphere in society requires adequate changes in state policy, a deep, fundamental reform of the existing management and financing systems. Ways and mechanisms of solving these important problems should be constantly in the center of attention of the state, civil society and experts of various fields.

Therefore, the social policy of Ukraine within the framework of political transformation should be carried out in two directions: firstly, focus on supporting the most vulnerable population groups, and secondly, on the implementation of long-term programs to increase the effectiveness of the social protection system.

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