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The Development of e-Participation in the Official Public Communications in Ukraine

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Displaying the status of implementation of the principles of e-participation in Ukraine in the context of current trends and approaches in european open democracy, associated with the expansion of opportunities for information access and realizing the potential of information and communication technologies in politics.

Key words: e-participation, Internet, information and communication technologies, the European Union, Ukraine.

Федонюк С. В. Розвиток е-участі в офіційній публічній комунікації в Україні. Відображено стан реалізації принципів електронної участі в Україні в контексті поточних тенденцій та підходів у європейській відкритій демократії, які пов'язані з розширенням можливостей доступу до інформації та реалізації потенціалу інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій у політиці.

Ключові слова: електронна участь, Інтернет, інформаційні та комунікаційні технології, Європейський Союз, Україна.

Федонюк С. В. Развитие э-участия в официальной публичной коммуникации в Украине. Отражено состояние реализации принципов электронного участия в Украине в контексте текущих тенденций и подходов в европейской открытой демократии, связанные с расширением возможностей доступа к информации и реализации потенциала информационно-коммуникационных технологий в политике.

Ключевые слова: электронное участие, Интернет, информационные и коммуникационные технологии, Европейский Союз, Украина.

Formulation of research problem and its significance. Topics of e-partizipation in the European context are studied mostly in the context of national systems of relations and public administration, and in the vast majority − partially and indirectly. Practically there are no researches concerning interaction of citizens in matters of a political nature from the plane of the EU institutions.

As a result of targeted searches in scientometric databases ISI-Web, Scopus and ACM Portal using keywords: «tiered EU decision-making», «participatory democracy in the EU», «participation of citizens in

the EU institutions work» «public participation and European governance», were singled out 25 articles devoted to the theoretical development of concepts of European governance and democracy in the EU as well as the application of information technology for the development of democracy in Europe − mainly at the level of the EU countries. Some works are devoted to the analysis of the legal framework of direct democracy in the EU.

Due to the widespread implementation of effective ICT-based interconnection communication (Internet), new level of citizen participation in the system of open democracy becomes possible. The concept of e-participation, understood as «the participation of natural and legal persons (and their groups) in political and administrative decision-making through information and communication technologies (ICT)» [10]. The other meaning of electronic participation (e-Participation) refers to «the use of information and communication technologies to expanse and deepen political participation by providing citizens with opportunities to communicate with each other and with representatives, elected by them» [23]. In this formulation of the concept of e-participation includes all stakeholders in the democratic decision-making processes, not just citizens in the context of the government's initiatives. Thus e-Participation can be seen as part of e-democracy − the use of ICT by governments, elected officials, the media, political parties and interest groups, civil society organizations, international non-governmental organizations or citizens (voters) as part of any political process countries / regions, both at local and global levels [11].

The E-participation as a form of participatory democracy (eg, «partizipation» − a classic interpretation (S. Arnsteyn [6], J. Creighton [12], N. Beger [9], A. Macintosh [23] and etc.)) is, in fact, a tool for direct electronic democracy. It does not undermine the foundations of representative democracy and is not focused on its restructuring. E-participation can be and should be seen rather as a complement to representative democracy. At the same time, as in traditional models of public participation, there are electronics of civil disobedience and protest, such as «hacktivism» [20] and «direct online protest» [30]. However, e-participation is a promising direction in the development of democracy during the dynamic development of information communication instruments [27].

The authors of this research are: S. Smith, E. Dalakiuridu, E. Panopulu, K. Tarabanis, E. Tamburis [13; 28; 29], S. Albrecht, H. Kohlrausch, G. Kubitsek, B. Lippe, O. Morker, M. Trenel, V. Forverk, K. Vidvald [5], T. Auberher, K. Ishkovski [7], A. Beasley [8], D. Dankerli, S. Fiuggi [14], M. Forcella [17], E. Grande [18], J. Greenwood [19], S. Kurpas, M. Bruhhermann [22], E. Kalampokis [21], J. Millard, M. Nielsen, A. McIntosh [25].

The same subjects in the Ukrainian context are not represented in the sources at all. The concept of democracy of participation in new forms of interaction between the public and authorities, which is actualizing in the practice of European governance over the past years, now requires a systematic understanding. The latest model of interaction with the public on the basis of electronic communication technologies still need scientific development, especially in terms of open models of e-participation. Today the issue of finding ways to enhance cooperation and rapprochement with the EU in all aspects of political life is very actual in Ukraine. The purpose of this article is to analyze the e-participation in the current models of e-democracy of some foreign countries and the European Union as an example for the Europeanization of Ukraine.

The main reason of increasing interest in public participation in the management of the EU is reducing of public support for the policy of the European Union, especially in the aspect of the last enlargement and skepticism about the public's role in forming the policy of the Union, which is embodied in disappointment in EU policy as a whole [15], which is associated with the phenomenon of «democratic deficit of EU» [16].

Having problem of «democratic deficit» caused by the inaccessibility of the EU institutions for ordinary citizens reflects the difficulties associated with trying to promote democracy at the supranational level outside the traditional nation-state. As a result, gap between political elites EU consensus on the expedience of integration development and population's skepticism about European institutions, begins, which is a serious obstacle to the further evolution of the European Union [26].

Loss of interest in elections to the European Parliament, together with the results of several opinion polls conducted in the past decade have demonstrated that the EU may lose touch with their citizens.

The way out is to expand the scope of participatory democracy, in particular on the basis of interactive information and communication technologies.

Information and communication technologies have increased citizen's expectations from their governments. Now they can count on a direct taking part in the designing of government programs and services. At

various stages of the political process, from elections to planning and implementation of policies, citizens are becoming more actively involved through different tools such as focus groups, practical testing and electronic instruments participation. E-participation is an instrument that allows governments to engage them in dialogue with its citizens. By increasing the ability of the state to request, receive and use feedback from voters, political activities may be better adapted to the needs and priorities of citizens [3].

Notably, that successful examples of practical e-democracy are inherent in countries that, as the UN estimates, allocated the highest values of indicators that shows population's participation in political life. According to the index of political participation (e-Participation), associated with the provision of electronic information (e-information), consultations conduction through government websites (e-consultation) and the inclusion of citizens in decision-making (e-decision-making), the leading position occupied: U.S. index 1.0000, Republic of Korea (0.9773), Denmark (0.9318), France (0.9318), Australia (0.8864). Notably, Estonia occupied the highest position in the former Soviet (0.7273), 8th place and Ukraine (0.5682), which improved its position by 14 points (places) [31, 58].

As a result of estimation of the quality and relevance of e-participation in some countries, the same country are allocated. Ukraine ranks 12 overall position on indicators of electronic information – 53,33 % (Australia – 100 %); consultation through government sites – 61,11 % (USA – 100 %), citizens' participation in political decision-making – 37,5 % and general level – 51,02 % (the highest – the U.S., 89,8 %).

The electronic part must be considered as the highest form of inclusion of citizens in e-government system. Stages of development of e-government reflects the role of e-participation strengthening (based on [4]):

In the first stage sites of various ministries and agencies that provide information about their mission and activities are created. Websites of government bodies are usually not supported centrally and are not combined into a single portal. E-participation at this stage is not practiced.

In the second stage the first elements of interactivity appear (eg, sending questions by citizens and receiving answers via e-mail); it is possible to obtain samples of some information and forms. Regularly are publishing the news about the activities of public authorities, namely, some elements of e-information are forming.

The third stage is characterized by the appearance of full interactivity − the possibility to make transactions (services) online, for example, pay a fine, order the passport, to renew some licenses and patents. Such specification of the electronic board work that occupies rather maintaininf than informing, requires the creation of special sites to maintain these services for the government. In fact, interactive technologies allow to realize the principles of e-consultation, the foundation for the development of decision support systems lays.

Fourth stage − the creation of integrated portals of various departments and services through which you can make any kinds of transactions for which previously was required to apply directly to the state agency. A regional portals make possible enterprise registration, registration of financial documents, legalization of foreign documents, etc. There are regional portals that combine both the full range of government services and private sector services − e-commerce systems and Internet banking are connecting.

The fifth stage is the creation of e-government systems based on common standards, as well as government portal as a single point of access to all services - for citizens and businesses. Most experts believe that the highest degree of e-democracy development is the introduction of electronic voting systems (electronic voting). This stage is characterized by the development of a full-blown e-Participation.

Constitution of Ukraine guarantees for each «right to freely collect, store, use and disseminate information orally, in writing or in any other way» (p. 34). According to Art. 10 of the Law of Ukraine «On Information» right to information is provided by «duty of public authorities, as well as local and regional authorities to inform about their activities and decisions», and according to the article. 21 of the Act, the information from state agencies and local and regional authorities comes to the interested parties by direct communication (orally, in writing way or otherwise).

According to the Decree of President of Ukraine from July 31, 2000 № 928 (928/2000) «On measures for the national component of the global information network Internet and providing wide access to the Internet in Ukraine» and from May 17, 2001 № 325 (325/2001) «About the preparation of proposals to ensure transparency and openness of public authorities» and in compliance with the requirements of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated January 4, 2002 № 3 «On the Procedure of promulgation of the information about the activities of the executive power on the Internet» which, in particular introduced 26 kinds of

mandatory information which has to be posted on the website of the regional state administration and 20 − on the sites of central executive bodies. Ministries, other central executive bodies, of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Kyiv, Sevastopol and other city state administrations beginning from January 2002, and shall provide accommodation and constant updating of information on their own websites on the Internet with the aim of «improving conditions for democracy development, the citizens' realization of constitutional right to participate in public affairs and to have free access to information about the activities of the executive power, and also to ensure transparency and openness in their activities». Consequently, institutional authoritie's websites have purely informational function, mostly one-sided communication in showcase with the advertisement format. Moreover, the level of information efficiency is limited. Thus, according to the results of analysis conducted by civic network «OPORA», the average level of information sites openness ISO (ОДА) in 2006 was 58,7 % [1].

According to the results of monitoring of the government of Ukraine information sites openness, it can be said that the authorities have mastered new information technology and demonstrated the ability to use their websites to inform citizens of administrative services and consultation. However, they do not perform properly claim for placement of full and timely information about its activities and not tailored to the needs of citizens [2].

So, ukrainian official websites, in essence, are the tool for one-way communication, a kind of «advertisement boards» or, at best, provide the simplest form of information service.

In order to strengthen the guarantees of citizens' constitutional right to participate in public affairs, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted a decree on November 5, 2008 № 976 «About approval of the promotion of the public examination of executive power activity» and on November 3, 2010 № 996 «On public participation in the formulation and implementation of public policy». The mentioned acts include mandatory public consultation on the formulation and implementation of public policy contains a provision on community advisory bodies (local councils), identified the need to promote public examination of executive power.

It is envisaged that public consultations are held on a regular basis on issues relating to socio-economic development, promote and protect the rights and freedoms of citizens, meet their political, economic, social, cultural and other interests. The results of public consultation must be reckoned by executive authority in the final decision or in his further work.

Since 2008, the government site «Civil Society and Government», operates, which is intended to be a communication platform for interaction between authorities and representatives of civil society. At the specified site introduced conducting electronic public consultation about draft decisions of the central authorities.

These government initiatives designed to ensure openness and transparency of government policy and simplify the conditions for participation of citizens in public affairs.

It is worth noting the adoption on January 9, 2007 the Law of Ukraine № 537-V «Basic Information about Society Development in Ukraine 2007−2015», which determines the need for wide use of modern information and communication technologies for development of information and knowledge, goods and services manufacturing, of man's potential realization, improviing the quality of life and sustainable development providing on the purposes and principles embodied in the United Nations Declaration of Principles and Action Plan, elaborated at the World Summits on the Information Society (Geneva, December 2003, Tunisia, November 2005).

On January 13, 2011, the Law of Ukraine № 2939-VI «On access to public information», which laid the foundation for the effective e-government and new standards of open government creation in Ukraine, as it defines the procedure of implementation and ensure that everyone has access to information owned by government agencies and other administrators of public information. This law establishes European standards of openness and is another real step in the European integration process of the state.

Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated April 5, 2012 № 220 approved and by decree dated July 18, 2012 № 514-p approved plan of implementation of Initiative «Partnership» Open Government (SSP) − a multilateral initiative, formally introduced on September, 20 year 2011, whose purposes are to: ensure the compliance by governments specific commitments to promote transparency in public administration, citizen participation in the governance process, the fight against corruption, the use of new technologies to improve governance. The plan states that «to ensure open government, it is neccessary to implement new information and communication technologies, including dialogue between the authorities and the public with help of

interactive methods of interaction and opportunities of social networks, modernize management system in the country, to increase government transparency, improve access to information».

In fact, the plan adopted several measures, including the development of participatory democracy.

Under SSP Ukraine has to:

− enhance the role of civil society in the formulation and implementation of public policy process;
− improve the legal and methodical physical access, legal persons and associations without legal personality status, to information about the activities of state and local governments and their officials and employees;
− improve of the legal participation of citizens and their associations in the formulation and implementation of public policy issues of local importance;
− develop jointly with civil society common principles and approaches to establish effective interaction;
− increase the quantity and improve the efficiency of public consultations with the public (public hearings, roundtables, expert discussions) on important public policy issues;
− improve the efficiency of government bodies with public councils during the formation and implementation of public policy;
− expansion of Internet use, especially improving the government website «Civil Society and Government» and the use of social networks for communications between executive bodies and the public.

More than a third of the citizens of Ukraine are the users of the network Internet, citizens of Ukraine increasingly acquire new forms of communication − «social network», massive Internet audience is rapidly forming.

During 2011, Ukrainian officials and other leaders joined the large community of users of social networks, and above all, Facebook, and on July 4, 2012 the Law № 10 705 about Amendments to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to ensure the dissemination of information on the Web site of the Supreme Council Ukraine, its own Web pages and in social networks about the activity of deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and structural units of its staff.

The need for changes to the regulations are argued that today more than 30 % of citizens of Ukraine use the access to the Internet and more than 2 million people use social networks Facebook, Twitter, «Classmates», «Offline», etc.

The bill proposes to create «the official page of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in social networks used by at least 1 million citizens of Ukraine».

Thus it can be argued that in Ukraine, the process of implementation of the regulatory framework and tools for e-participation of civil society in political life that fully meets the latest European trends in the formation of participatory democracy.

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