MODERNIZED LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AS THE MAIN FACTOR OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. The article provides an assessment of the impact of the main directions of improving the local government system on the socio-economic development of local government territories. The author substantiates the general directions of the transformation of the existing system. The author notes that according to the initial version of the Organic Law of Georgia "On the introduction of a new system of local self-government", it was planned to be introduced throughout the country from March 1, 2014. The author notes that in practice, the implementation of the reform faced a number of serious problems. According to the author, due to the lack of legal support for the reform, the absence of a number of institutional mechanisms, and the parallel implementation of a number of reforms in the field of public administration, the reforms were stalled.

Annotation. In the article, the author provides an assessment of the impact of the main directions of improving the local government system on the socio-economic development of local government territories. The author substantiates the general directions of the transformation of the existing system. According to the author, due to the lack of legal support for the reform, the absence of a number of institutional mechanisms, and the parallel implementation of a number of reforms in the field of public administration, the reforms were stalled.

Key words: municipal formation, social and economic development, local government.

The positive consequences of the municipal reform include:

1) A clear delineation of the subjects of jurisdiction and powers between the levels of public authority;
2) The emergence of incentives for local governments to mobilize revenues to the local budget;
3) The possibility of implementing the priorities of municipal policy;
4) Involvement of the local community in resolving issues of local importance and the development of the municipality.

At the same time, the created certain institutional mechanisms contributed to the exacerbation of the problems that existed in the organization of local self-government.

In accordance with the initial version of the aforementioned Organic Law of Georgia, the introduction of a new system of local self-government throughout the country was scheduled for March 1, 2014. In practice, the implementation of the reform faced a number of serious problems related to the lack of legal support for the reform; unavailability of a number of institutional mechanisms; parallel implementation of a series of reforms in public administration; shortage of qualified personnel; etc.

Reforming the territorial organization of local self-government was widely discussed in the expert community. Serious questions were raised by the two-tier model of local self-government, despite the fact that it is quite widespread in international practice. In theory, the advantages of a two-tier model of local self-government over any other are that it provides the opportunity to simultaneously obtain economies of scale, ensure financial equalization, and take into account local needs and interests of local communities. At the same time, in practice, the shortcomings of this model were fully realized, manifested in the strengthening of centralization, the emergence of an
of the issues of organizing self-government bodies in settlements lost the opportunity to exert any significant influence on the organization of people's lives, which in a number of cases led to a decline in their prestige. These problems have become especially aggravated in relation to the territories where the district and settlement authorities are located, and the strongest overlaps of powers arise. Also, such a model creates uncertainty for taxpayers and investors as to which authority is responsible for solving which issues.

In recent years, international and domestic experts have recognized the two-tier model as the most conflicted system of local self-government, and in our country, among the expert and municipal community, discussions arose, typical of the early 2000s, about the model of municipal reform as a whole. [2] Most of them propose to support the transformation of the territorial organization of local self-government into a single-level one. There are two options for solving it:

1) Transformation of the municipal district into the level of state power and the preservation of local self-government at the level of cities and rural settlements with a ban on the transfer of state powers to the level of local self-government;

2) Preservation of the municipal status of the district, subject to a sharp limitation of the issues of local importance and financial resources assigned to it. [3]

Of course, the proposals require further discussion, and at present, the introduction of a one-tier model without a transition to the declarative principle of the formation of municipalities seems to be a rather difficult task.

It should be noted that in the course of the territorial transformations, the dynamic change in the existing settlement system was not taken into account, one of the main factors of which is the unevenness of economic development in the context of a shrinking population. At the center of the municipal reform were the issues of organizing self-government in rural areas. The problems of cities, the issues of their competitiveness, did not play a significant role in the ongoing reform. At the same time, the share of the urban population in the total number of the country's inhabitants is 73.1%, the growth in the population of suburban areas is observed almost everywhere, urban agglomerations are actively forming, which allows us to speak about the predominantly urban nature of self-government. As a result, human capital is concentrated in "growth points" where there are prospects for economic activity, employment, and high-quality and diverse services. At the same time, a decrease in the population is taking place in all small towns and urban-type settlements.

In rural areas, however, territories remain without people, and this process is combined with a tendency towards polarization in the settlement system: the share of large cities and the smallest villages is growing. At the same time, the share of villages with a population of fewer than 50 people is 84% of rural settlements. As a result, settlements in depressed areas were formed either with a small population, which increased economic losses from lack of scale or based on the unification of geographically scattered settlements, which increased transport costs and complicated the management process.

The last economic crisis has hardly changed the existing spatial picture of our country, the contraction of the inhabited and economic space continues due to stable depopulation. The change in the settlement system has a decisive impact on the socio-economic development of territories and requires adequate consideration in the implementation of state and municipal policy. In the current conditions, the most important task is to stimulate the use of objective competitive advantages of territories [4].

One of the keys declared goals of the local self-government reform was to ensure the financial and economic independence of local self-government, to harmonize the economic and financial base of municipalities and the scope of powers. Over the past years, the list of powers of municipalities has been adjusted 9 times and has been continuously expanded without a corresponding change in the financial and economic foundations of local self-government. The number of fixed sources of replenishment of local budgets during the reform period was significantly reduced. As a result of changes in tax and budget legislation since 2005, there are two local taxes left: land tax and tax on property of individuals. According to the Organic Law of Georgia "On Local Self-Government" (article 22, paragraph 1, subparagraph "M") and the Tax Code of Georgia (articles 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276), local property taxes have been introduced. [1]

As a result, there is no radical improvement in the situation in the system of local budgets. In general, in Georgia in 2019 and 2020, local budgets were executed with a deficit. In 2020, in the total number of municipalities, 46.1% were executed with a surplus, 50.9% - with a deficit, and 3% were balanced in terms of income and expenses. At the same time, the dependence of municipalities on the decisions and financial resources of higher levels of the budget system has increased. The share of inter-budgetary transfers in local budget revenues was about 60%. It should be noted that the inclusion of gratuitous receipts from higher budgets in their own budget revenues creates the illusion that the budgets will be balanced after the implementation of the municipal reform. At the same time, we can only talk about the balance "by numbers".

The lack of own financial resources of local governments, their dependence on higher levels of the budgetary system is an objective obstacle to the modernization of the economy. Most of the discussions taking place at different levels about the prospects for the implementation of municipal reform are devoted to the problem of increasing the financial self-sufficiency
of municipalities. For its solution, both the actual financial instruments and the mechanisms provided for by the reform are proposed, in particular, in the field of changing the territorial structure.

One of the main conditions necessary for the development of municipal territories is the restructuring of the principles of inter-budgetary relations. From an ineffective tool for leveling budgetary provision, inter-budgetary transfers should become a tool for the socio-economic development of territories and increase in the future the income potential of municipalities. In the short term, it is necessary to resolve the issue of transferring to municipalities additional sources of their own revenues, primarily tax ones: assigning to local authorities the real estate tax, taxes on small and medium-sized businesses; the abolition of federal-level local tax incentives; transfer of a part of deductions from income tax to municipalities.

Currently, in many regions, the processes of optimizing the number of municipalities of the settlement type are continuing. As of the beginning of 2021, their number is just over 23.3 thousand. In the current year 2021, elections to local self-government bodies are coming and the main reasons for the ongoing territorial changes include:

- the need to reduce the number of subsidized rural settlements;
- optimization of local budgets;
- striving to build the structure of local self-government bodies in accordance with changes in the location of production, labor resources, transport network.

However, the process of consolidation of municipalities is ambiguous. Positive changes can be made where there are prerequisites for creating a governing body in a territory where there is an established or emerging economic center. If the consolidation is carried out with the aim of increasing the controllability of the territories only before the election campaign, then the municipal community assesses this negatively.

The municipal reform has raised expectations related to the intensification of the role of the local community in ensuring the development of the territory. An important place was given to the development of various forms of civic participation - territorial public self-government, rural cooperation, etc. However, according to experts, the attitude of citizens to the idea of taking part in the activities of local self-government bodies is consistently indifferent. More than half of the population does not trust the local authorities or are indifferent to this issue [6].

A number of factors hinder the activity of the local community, for example:

a) Municipal interests do not prevail in the scale of values of many categories of citizens;

b) Equalizing scarce resources undermines economic incentives for self-government;

c) Distrust of the population in the ability to influence the decisions made;

d) The lack of powers of local self-government bodies makes them unattractive for the population to participate in their activities;

e) Distrust of citizens to local government bodies and officials, etc.

By geographically bringing the authorities closer to the population, the municipal reform failed to provide the potential of the local community, namely, did not create incentives for local residents to participate in solving problems of organizing their own life. As long as funding for the activities of local self-government bodies is carried out at the expense of sources that are not directly related to the local community, the alienation of local authorities and the population is inevitable.

Thus, the impact of the main measures of the municipal reform on the socio-economic development of the territories is ambiguous. The reorganization of the administrative-territorial and budgetary structure of local self-government, the legislative consolidation of the uniform principles of functioning of these levels of public authority had a great positive significance from the point of view of:

a) Ensuring the unity of the budgetary system of Georgia,

b) Organizing interaction between different levels of government on the basis of uniform principles and procedures.

At the same time, the introduction of unjustified uniformity of the organization of local self-government throughout the country did not allow to fully reveal the potential for development and self-organization of the population in those territories where there are prerequisites for this, and imposed an unreasonably large amount of powers on depressed, degrading communities. In this regard, a qualitatively different approach is required in relation to various types of municipalities. Municipalities, which are points of growth, should receive effective incentives for development, and those lagging behind in the development of the territory - guarantees of state support. Modern problems in the socio-economic development of municipal territories are systemic and their solution is impossible without further modernization of local self-government.

References:


ФЕНОМЕН ВНЕШНЕПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ: ПОЛИТИКО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается феномен внешнеполитической коммуникации государств в современной системе международных отношений. Внешнеполитическая коммуникация как политико-психологический феномен является не достаточно изученным в русскоязычной научной литературе проблемой. Автор приводит теоретико-методологические основания исследования данного явления, а также рассматривает основные технологии внешнеполитической коммуникации. Изучение стратегий внешнеполитической коммуникации представляет собой вопрос национальной безопасности, вопрос отстаивания собственных политических интересов, а также стабильности в сфере международных отношений.

Abstract. The article deals with the phenomenon of foreign policy communication of states in the modern system of international relations. Foreign policy communication as a political and psychological phenomenon has not been sufficiently studied in the Russian-language scientific literature. The author provides theoretical and methodological grounds for the study of this phenomenon as well as describes the main technologies used in foreign policy communication. The studying foreign policy communication strategies is a matter of national security, of defending one's political interests and the basis of stability in the sphere of international relations.

Ключевые слова: внешнеполитическая коммуникация, политические технологии, международные отношения. Key words: foreign policy communication, political technologies, international relations.

Внешнеполитическая коммуникация – частный случай политических коммуникаций в пространстве международных отношений. Исследование данного феномена в рамках политико-психологического направления на сегодняшний день обусловлено необходимостью анализа коммуникативных технологий, применяемых современными государствами в целях влияния на ход мирового политического процесса для реализации своих внешнеполитических амбиций. Важно принимать во внимание тот факт, что от уровня эффективности осуществления этого вида деятельности зависит и ход международного процесса, что, в свою очередь, определяющим образом влияет на ход развития системы международных отношений в целом.

Внешнеполитическая коммуникация в современных международных отношениях является выражением внешнеполитической деятельности государства, направленной на объекты его внешнеполитических интересов в рамках избранной тактики [5]. Внешнеполитическая коммуникация представляет собой совокупность форм реализации связей государства с системой международных отношений и ее элементами, которая отражает передачу государством по одному из каналов связей различных объектов другим субъектам взаимодействия данной системы, принимающим эти объекты.

Актеры системы международных отношений (отдельные лица, государства, а также негосударственные участники международных отношений (межправительственные организации, неправительственные организации, транснациональные корпорации и другие общественные силы и движения, действующие на мировой арене в качестве полноправных акторов международных политических отношений)) выступают в качестве субъектов внешнеполитической коммуникации. Объектами являются материальные и нематериальные ресурсы (информация, технологии, духовные ценности и т.д.) [1]. Каналы внешнеполитической коммуникации можно подразделить на нормативно-правовые, информационные, транспортные, энергетические и гуманитарные.

Внешнеполитическая коммуникация может рассматриваться в различных аспектах, включая лингвистический и прагматический аспект. Как