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PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

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SUMMARY

The analysis of public relations as a communicative component of state management in the context of modern processes of systemic transformation of Ukrainian society was carried out. The expediency of introducing into practice of government authorities forms and methods of public relations as an integral element of the political process in modern Ukraine, which makes it possible to realize the principle of openness of public administration and to increase the level of support of actions of state power on behalf of the population was proved. It was determined that the development of the PR system in government authorities will provide an opportunity to create an effective mechanism for solving many problems arising in the process of public administration, mainly to overcome the estrangement between the public and the state. Only in the presence of advanced and effective feedback mechanisms between the subjects and objects of management, one can talk about the formation of a civil society in Ukraine.

Key words: public relations, government authorities, public administration, communication, PR-technologies.

СВЯЗИ С ОБЩЕСТВЕННОСТЬЮ В СИСТЕМЕ ОРГАНОВ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ ВЛАСТИ

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Осуществлен анализ публичных отношений как коммуникативной составляющей государственно-управленческой деятельности в контексте современных процессов системной трансформации украинского общества. Доказана целесообразность внедрения в практику органов государственного управления форм и методов публичных отношений как неотъемлемого элемента политического процесса в современной Украине, который позволяет реализовать принцип открытости государственного управления, увеличить уровень поддержки действий государственной власти со стороны населения. Определено, что развитие системы PR в органах государственной власти даст возможность создать действенный механизм решения многих проблем, возникающих в процессе государственного управления, главным образом преодолеть отчуждение между общественностью и государством. Только при наличии развитых и эффективных механизмов обратной связи между субъектами и объектами управления можно говорить о становлении гражданского общества в Украине.

Ключевые слова: публичные отношения, органы государственной власти, государственно-управленческий процесс, коммуникация, PR-технологии.

Statement of the problem. World experience testifies that the stability and development of a state based on principles of democracy is impossible without the organization of an effective dialogue between government authorities, civil society organizations and individual citizens. Namely the participation of citizens in management projects at all levels (from local to national) and at all stages (from preparation of decisions to their implementation) allows to increase the efficiency of implementation of power functions in general. European integration, as a democratic response to the challenge of a globalized era, intensifies the dialogue between society and government, parliaments and civil society structures. The platform for such a dialogue in Europe is the organizational and legal capacity of civil society

institutions to articulate social interests, promote and protect them.

The relevance of the research topic. At the same time, the success of the dialogue in some countries depends directly on the joint actions of government authorities and associations of citizens and their readiness for cooperation. Moreover, public associations have a real impact on state policy as well as bring pluralistic and democratic ideas, embodying the whole spectrum of ideas generated in civil society. Thus, in conditions of modern democracy, constructive cooperation between society and government allows mobilizing social resources to solve socially significant problems at a national scale.

Status of research. Nowadays PR is defined as an important tool for the formation of civil society, which is intended to ensure the establishment of various

forms of interaction between the state and the public, based on the harmonization of common needs, interests, positions and cooperation. Accordingly, the scientific substantiation of organizational-and-functional, social, economic and other measures aimed at creating the credibility of government authorities through public relations forms and methods should be based on the achievements of domestic and world science.

Scientific works of such researchers in the sphere of public relations, as V. Bebyk, G. Pocheptsov, S. Kunitsyn, who consider public relations as an auxiliary function in the public administration sphere as well as identify issues that are related to the formation of political image and technologies of political campaigns by methods and means of PR-activity, analyzed in the process of research [1; 4; 5].



The main methods used by the author during the research are dialectical method, method of system analysis, method of historical and logical unity, method of ascending from abstract to concrete, comparative method, hermeneutic method, etc.

The object and purpose of the article is a theoretical and scientific analysis of PR as a management function designed to facilitate the establishment, maintenance of mutually beneficial relations between a separate public-management structure and the public.

Presentation of the main material. The scientific term “public relations” appeared in the practice of Ukrainian social science and public opinion during the years of independence.

Public relations is a special management function that promotes the establishment and maintenance of communication, mutual understanding, mutual commitment and cooperation between government authorities and citizens. According to well-known American researcher *R. Harlow*, this function involves solving various problems: providing guidance of the organization of the government authority with information concerning public opinion and providing it with assistance in developing response measures; provision of management activities in the public interest; maintaining leadership in a state of readiness for various changes by anticipating trends; use of research and open communication as the main means of action, based on ethical norms of communication [7].

American scientist *R. Harlow*, summarizing various definitions, proposed a synthesized approach, understanding PR as a special management function called:

- to establish and maintain interrelations, mutual understanding and cooperation between the organization and the public;
- to resolve controversial issues between the power and individual groups of the public;
- to study public opinion and elaborate appropriate forms of reaction to it;
- to define and emphasize the responsibility of the management before the public;
- to assist the management is effectively changed according to the needs of the time;
- to anticipate tendencies of social development in order to prevent those that are negative [7, p. 345].

“Public relations” is a constantly evolving multidimensional phenomenon. In our common English translation, it means “communication with the public” but to be more precise, the “public”, literally, is still approaching the term “public”, which should be discussed in more detail. “Public” means that this is a special form of relations between citizens, government authorities and local self-government authorities, political parties and self-organization structures of the population that take place at the institutional and corporate levels.

In 1975, the US “Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education” attempted to synthesize and analyze all approaches to the definition of “public relations”. There were about five hundred definitions. If we consider the intensity of development of this scientific direction in recent decades, it will be easy to imagine how much the number of these interpretations expanded and increased.

One of the founders of this science, *Edward Bernays*, defined the PR as follows: “These are efforts to persuade society to change its approaches or actions as well as to ensure the harmonization of the organization’s activities in accordance with the interests of society and vice versa” [8].

Famous British “public relations” specialist *Sam Black* believes that PR is “art and science of achieving harmony by means of mutual understanding, based on the truth and complete information awareness” [2, p. 20].

In our opinion, the main objectives of PR-activities are:

- analysis of the state of public opinion and its tendencies, analysis of the primary image of the government authority and ways of its improvement/affirmation;
- solving operative tasks of authorities, dissemination of information concerning the activity of the subject of PR, establishing contacts with target audiences as well as establishing and maintaining contacts with mass media and other communication channels;
- improvement of human and social publicity of the government authority, establishing and maintaining contacts with the mass media and other communication channels through interpersonal relations;
- development of social participation and formation of a culture of engage-

ment, communication support, introduction of innovations, prevention of crises of relations between government authorities and stakeholders;

- confidence building, build-up of reputational capital of government authorities as well as establishment and maintenance of links with all groups of stakeholders.

At the same time, the formation of effective PR-technologies is connected with the search for optimal models of communication between the government and society. One such model might be the model proposed by the American researcher and theorist of the PR sphere *James E. Grunig*, who substantiated the peculiarities of the models of public relations and considered the practical use of bilateral communication between the subject and the object of PR [10].

Summarizing the above, one can conclude that “public relations” is first of all, informing the public about the activities of a government authority or organization/ institution. This involves providing the information that a government authority or institution/organization wants to provide about themselves and their activities for more favorable conditions of cooperation and interaction, but this is not yet an interaction as a result.

Interaction of interest groups and political elites in modern Ukraine is one of the key elements of the political development of our country. The communicative unity of these segments of political interactions is ensured, in particular, by the technologies of public relations, the development of which in recent years is one of the important characteristics of the Ukrainian society. It is primarily the establishing a positive dialogue between the institutions of power, the political elite and the population. This is even more important considering the transitional nature of Ukrainian society, the instability as well as the rapid dynamics of value orientations of major social groups. The problem of using of public relations technologies in the political process of modern Ukraine is one of the priority topics of applied political science. Its development in relation to the needs of domestic political practice has both its own methodological value and applied value, since it makes it possible to adjust the approaches to



te use of methods of conducting political PR campaigns, to make them more organic for political processes of different types and levels as well as to ensure the legitimate use of political technologies in modern Ukrainian society.

As G. *Pocheptsov* notes in his research, in the period of the formation of Ukraine as a democratic state, the formation of a positive image of government authorities is very important. Public service personnel can help here because “a PR specialist acts as an advisor to a manager and as an intermediary, who help to transfer personal goals and objectives into a reasonable, community-friendly policy” [4, p. 215].

A key element of the whole system of political communication is communicative technology. The leading place in the system of modern political communications is occupied by public relations (PR). The main elements of establishing a communication link in public administration are the government (government authorities), the public and the PR as an instrument for ensuring interaction between them. The government always seeks to influence the public, which always has the ability to “reverse effect”. The purpose of the government is to form the most loyal attitude of the public that is possible only on the basis of trust, which can be achieved through the establishment of effective communicative relations. So, PR is a communicative way of establishing relations between the government and the public.

Political PR-communication is an important element of the modern political process and the main tool of competition for power resources. Political PR-communication is a way of power legitimation and political decision-making. As scientists have repeatedly emphasized, communication can be interpreted as an epicenter of politics as well as one of the leading elements of the political system. Introducing into the political sphere, new information and social-and-communicative technologies lead to a mutation of many forms of political behavior, modifying the patterns of relations between political actors, as well as fundamentally altering the whole sphere of the symbolic representation of the political space.

The problem of the content, place and role of the political PR in the social

communications system, despite the large number of scientific researches, remains very relevant for each of the “historical epochs” associated with a particular stage in the society’s life. The point is not only that a specifically personalized expression of power imposes its imprint on some typological features, methods and content of political PR in the implementation of social communications. It cannot be forgotten that the presence of numerous subjects in the political process with inconsistent political and social demands and interests, as well as a very mobile social landscape, whose “communication” characteristics should be considered by the subjects of the political PR, provide its unique color and innovative features to the above-mentioned typological properties. As a constitutive element and tool of social communications in a relatively developed social community, the political PR is intended to provide informational saturation and full legitimacy of power, as well as reflect the content and logic of political processes in terms of emerging social expectations and interests of various social groups of society. However, the realization of this objective context and the purpose of political PR depends on many factors, such as the economic nature and nature of mass media, monopolization or democratic access to the media of various political forces, reflecting the diversity of social demands that emerged in society as well as the ways and forms of articulation of positions subjects of social communications, etc.

Existing government authorities often use “public relations” to strengthen their political influence on the masses in order to hold power and carry out planned activities. However, the functioning of the mentioned socio-political phenomenon can simultaneously fulfill the role and certain social control. After all, no political-power structure in modern society cannot function successfully if it does not receive in the public the necessary level of legitimacy and positive image.

In general, PR is a management function designed to facilitate the establishment, maintenance of mutually beneficial relations between a separate public-management structure and the public. Accordingly, the PR is intended to assess

the public attitudes to certain structures of the government authorities in order to achieve mutual understanding between them. Thus, “public relations” is an important instrument for the formation of a civil society, which is intended to ensure the establishment of various forms of interaction between the government and the public, based on the harmonization of common needs, interests, positions and cooperation.

In government authorities, public relations perform a twofold task: on the one hand, they promote the expression of the interests of society, stimulate the involvement of citizens in the process of governance, prevent and resolve social conflicts, coordinate and harmonize the relations of power and society, on the other – contribute to the change of political power itself, making its more open.

PR is an important communicative function of the public administration process, implementation of which includes:

- dissemination of information concerning the activities of government authorities through the media;
- organization and holding of seminars, press conferences, presentations and other actions of government authorities concerning socially significant issues and their wide coverage in national and regional mass media;
- development and implementation of advertising and information campaigns (smoking cessation, treatment for cancer patients, protecting the poor, paying taxes, etc.);
- information support for the formation of a positive image of the government.

Implementation of the communicative function of public administration depends on the peculiarities of its implementation as a whole. PR is one of the important functions of public administration, which ensures informing the public on the content of the creation and implementation of government policy, through the application of appropriate communication strategies. These include the formation of a sense of pride and patriotism for their state among citizens, the formation of respect for law enforcement authorities, and so on.

Public-management activities in the PR sphere include the following main areas:

- monitoring the needs and interests of the public as a condition for the suc-



successful implementation of the government policy;

- work with non-governmental organizations and political parties;
- creation of a positive image of an official or a separate state-management structure;
- construction of an effective system of relations between government authorities and the media;
- establishment of a friendly relationship between the senior management with the personnel;
- conducting a public examination of certain normative legal documents, decisions, etc.;
- organization and holding of appropriate public events;
- development of an appropriate model of positioning and repositioning (if necessary) of government;
- management of crisis situations;
- forming a positive image of government authorities.

PR technology has an appropriate structure, which is depicted in the Pic. 1.

Any PR technology is aimed at creating an effective system of communicative interaction between the government and the public.

Today the organization of realization of socio-political tasks of PR in the aspect can be represented in such a sequence: stage of gathering information and problems setting – scientific and methodological stage – organizational and managerial stage – stage of practical implementation – stage of evaluation of the effectiveness. At the first stage, the main task of politi-

cal PR is to collect information and monitor socially significant problems. This stage involves the use of research methods for managing social processes. The second stage is a scientific and methodological one. At this stage, a general strategy of socio-political activity is being developed, based on a certain conceptual model of social policy, adequate methods and means of implementing practical marketing actions and measures, and justifies a system of criteria for social effectiveness of public relations. The organizational and managerial stage is connected with the definition of subjects of political marketing, the coordination of their activities, the formation of a management system for the implementation of social and political tasks at the state and non-state level as well as the coordination of material-and-technical and financial provision of practical actions for their implementation. At the stage of practical implementation, the main goal is to coordinate and adjust the actions of the subjects of political PR, communication support of marketing measures using PR-technologies.

PR-technologies in public administration do not have the proper practical as well as theoretical elaboration in Ukraine. Paradoxical is the situation when the political forces participate in the electoral process, involve the best both domestic and foreign PR professionals, but when they win and come to power, immediately begin to “scrimp” on the elaboration and implementation of effective PR-technologies. This tendency is characteristic not only for

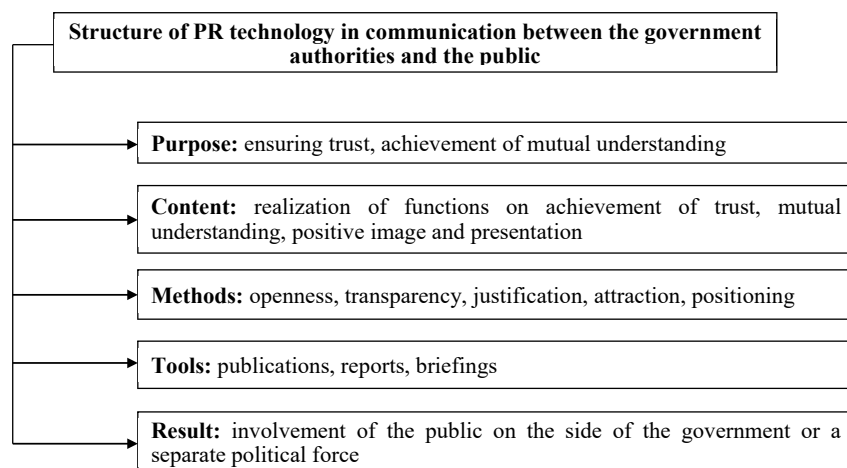
Ukraine but also for developed countries, except for those where the elite realizes that in order for the government to be perceived by citizens as “effective, open and transparent”, it must constantly work with the help of appropriate PR-activities, actualization of individual events, etc. The basic guarantee of effective permanent interaction with the public should be the continuous monitoring of needs and interests, so that the government will know what the public wants from them and how best to “serve” people’s interests.

At the same time, one should consider the opinion of *O. Mytiai* that ideally the communicative activity of public administration authorities should promote the development of democratic social governance. But, in practice, depending on the phase of the political process, communication between legislative and executive authorities and society tends to focus on specific events and programmes in the context of which information technologies, public opinion and involvement in advisory and expert activities are used. In such conditions, the openness of authorities of state power and accessibility to various information becomes the main prerequisite for the successful development of the democratization of society [3].

PR in public administration is intended to provide assistance to the state in resolving objective contradictions in the functioning of the political and state-management system. Proceeding from this, state-management structures are called upon to ensure the establishment of direct and public feedback. Based on that, one can determine the main functions of PR in the public administration, which are reduced to the democratization of public administration and the promotion of the formation of civil society.

The activity of government authorities and local self-government authorities in the PR sphere is reduced to interaction with the press, the implementation of analytical and forecasting functions, ensuring coordination of corporate and social interests. This should ensure the openness and transparency of public administration as well as bring it closer to the needs and interests of the public.

Summarizing the above mentioned, one should agree with *S. Pushniak’s*



Pic. 1. Structure of PR technology in communication between the government authorities and the public



opinion that “public relations” is, first of all, informing the public about the activities of a government authority or organization/institution. This involves providing exactly the information that a government authority or institution/organization wants to provide about themselves and their activities for more favorable conditions for cooperation and interaction, but this is not yet an interaction as a result [6].

Insufficient development of PR in public administration, which characterizes the secrecy of power from a citizen, gives rise to distrust of power. One of the main reasons for such a situation is the absence of special structures or at least a specialist in the PR sphere to the relevant authorities and local self-governance. It is on the activity of such structures that the explanation of the citizens of the goals and strategies of the government, the formation of an adequate understanding of the nature of activities. Based on that one can define the main functions of PR implementation in the public administration, which are reduced to:

- establishing, maintaining and expanding contacts with citizens and organizations;
- informing the public about decisions taken by the government;
- considering public opinion;
- analysis of the public reaction to the actions of officials and government authorities;
- forecasting social and political processes;
- provision of analytical developments for the organization regarding the current state of society’s life;
- formation of a favorable image of the government authority.

Conclusions. Thus, political PR acts as a management technology in the political sphere. PR in public administration is an important factor in the formation and development of civil society institutions. PR allows the government to achieve the appropriate level of public support as well as the success in implementing appropriate state-management decisions. Due to this, PR is an important means of democratizing the public administration system by developing effective communicative forms of har-

monization of the state’s functions with interests, rights and responsibilities of the public. In modern conditions, the emergence of Ukraine as a social state, the choice of an effective model of political development and social policy becomes of special significance and acts as a priority for the formation of an optimal system of interaction between the state, political institutions, market economy and civil society.

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