

THE TANDEM OF THE STATE AND CITIZENS: INTERACTION AS A STRATEGY FOR OVERCOMING MODERN CHALLENGES IN STATE BUILDING

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ABSTRACT. The article is devoted to the interaction of the state and citizens as a strategy for overcoming modern challenges in state creation. The purpose of the study is to propose strategic directions for their solution based on the identification of problems of interaction between the state and citizens. In the course of scientific research, general scientific methods of cognition were used: analysis, synthesis, systematization, comparison and generalization. The results of the study show that building effective strategies for overcoming challenges in state formation is a key task for ensuring the stability and prosperity of the state. Major problem areas such as corruption, low trust in law enforcement and ineffective interaction between the authorities and civil society were carefully identified. The causes of corruption, which permeates all spheres of the country's life, undermining the authority of the state and democratic principles, were investigated. The high level of distrust of citizens towards state institutions, in particular law enforcement agencies, creates serious challenges for ensuring law and order. Survey data indicate a low level of trust in authorities and citizens' reluctance to interact with them in case of violation of their rights, which further complicates the situation. It was shown that the effective involvement of civil society in the process of public administration is a necessary condition for overcoming existing problems. An important aspect is the development of special criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the work of state bodies and the inclusion of proposals from public organizations in state policy. Perception of civil organizations as competitors by the authorities and limiting their access to the management process hinders productive cooperation. It was established that sustainable development and strengthening of democratic institutions can only be achieved through transparency, increasing the competences of authorities and strengthening control over their activities. The practical significance of the study lies in the development of strategic directions for the interaction of the state and citizens to overcome the challenges of state creation.

Keywords: state formation, corruption, civil society, trust, interaction.

INTRODUCTION

In modern conditions, in particular in conditions of war, the level of trust of citizens in state institutions undergoes significant changes, often for the worse. The trends observed in Ukrainian society indicate that the traditional tandem of the state and citizens is being transformed in the direction of growing mistrust and conflict. As a result, the interaction between the state and citizens becomes more and more complicated and tense, which leads to the emergence of intolerable socio-economic conditions.

Corruption at all levels of state administration remains one of the main problems that undermines the authority of the state and the effectiveness of its administrative functions. The penetration of corruption schemes into all areas of the country's life creates an atmosphere of impunity and hopelessness, which greatly complicates the interaction of citizens with the authorities. In this context, the study of strategies for overcoming modern challenges in state-building through constructive interaction between the state and civil society is being updated.

Citizens' distrust of state institutions, including law enforcement, the judiciary, and political structures, creates serious challenges to ensuring law and order. The high level of corruption and the lack of transparency in the activities of state bodies undermine citizens' faith in the state's ability to protect their rights and interests. In the conditions of war, these problems become even more acute, which requires an immediate search for effective solutions.

The need to develop effective strategies for interaction between the state and citizens becomes critical for overcoming modern challenges. It is important that these strategies do not remain only on paper, but are implemented in practice, taking into account the real needs and opportunities of civil society. Involvement of citizens in decision-making processes, increasing the transparency of public administration, and creating mechanisms for monitoring government activities are key elements for achieving sustainable development and strengthening democratic institutions.

Thus, the study of the interaction between the state and citizens in the conditions of modern challenges is extremely relevant. Determining effective approaches to cooperation, overcoming corruption barriers, and restoring citizens' trust in state institutions can be the key to successful state building. This study is aimed at identifying and implementing such approaches that will ensure stability and transparency in the interaction of the state and civil society.

The issue of interaction between the state and civil society as a strategy for overcoming modern challenges in state-building is sufficiently researched in domestic scientific literature. Various aspects of this issue are considered in the works of Ukrainian scientists who analyze the social, political and legal aspects of the formation of civil society in Ukraine. Authors such as M. Banchuk (2003), who examines the theoretical and practical aspects of civil society in Ukraine, have made a significant contribution to the development of the topic. V. Bohachuk (2017) analyzes the problems and prospects of the formation of civil society, emphasizing the importance of active participation of citizens in the processes of state administration. T. Voytenko (2003) investigates the social construction of civil society, emphasizing the role of

social institutions in this process. The interaction of the state and civil society in preventing corruption and ensuring national security is considered in the works of V. Gornyk and S. Kravchenko (2018). Their research emphasizes the importance of cooperation between state institutions and public organizations in the fight against corruption. A. Drashkovich (2013) analyzes the political participation of citizens in the process of making power decisions in the conditions of a transitional society, which is relevant for Ukraine. Expert literature was also used for the research, i.e. publications in modern online publications that highlight modern aspects of the topic, such as *Society* (Voitenko, 2002), *Public Space* (Voitiuk, 2021), as well as research by sociological centers, in particular Razumkov (*Citizens' assessment of the situation in the country...*, 2024). These sources provide up-to-date data and analysis of the situation with citizens' trust in state institutions and their interaction with authorities.

Despite the sufficient amount of literature on this topic, there is a lack of systematic material on the development of strategies to improve interaction between the state and citizens. Therefore, using various methods of scientific knowledge, the information was analyzed, grouped and systematized and presented in the light of the research topic. This allows for a deeper understanding of the peculiarities of the interaction between the state and civil society and to identify opportunities for improving this cooperation.

The purpose of the article- on the basis of identifying the problems of interaction between the state and citizens, propose strategic directions for their solution.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The evolution of interaction between civil society and the government in Ukraine reflects a gradual transition from the primary ideological phase to active participation in state-building processes and institutional consolidation of its role. For more than 30 years, civil society has become an important factor in democratic development and stability, ensuring the participation of citizens in the formation and implementation of state policy.

Primary ideological phase (1990s): after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine gained independence in 1991. The transition to a democratic system and a market economy was accompanied by profound social and economic changes. During this period, the basic ideas and values of civil society were formed. Public organizations, informal associations and initiative groups began to emerge, focusing their activities on the protection of human rights, the development of democracy and the market economy (Ivanets, 2018).

Institutionalization and development (early 2000s): stabilization of the political situation, activation of international relations and increase in the amount of international financial aid (Rudych, 2006). During this period, active development of public organizations took place, in particular due to international support. Charitable foundations and educational projects received significant funding, which contributed to the spread of new ethical standards in politics and business. Non-profit organizations have become the basis of civil society, preserving moral values and influencing social processes (Voitenko, 2002).

Active participation in state-building processes (2004-2013): The Orange Revolution of 2004 became an important stage in the development of civil society, raising the issue of transparency and accountability of the authorities. Civil society actively promoted democratic values, contributed to the resolution of social conflicts and the implementation

of ideological measures. During this period, the participation of citizens in the formation of state policy increased significantly, in particular through public councils under authorities and participation in law-making activities (Banchuk, 2003).

Institutional consolidation and strengthening of the role of civil society (since 2013): adoption of the State Policy Strategy for the Promotion of Civil Society Development and the Law „On Civil Society”. The Revolution of Dignity of 2013-2014 and the beginning of the war in eastern Ukraine. This period is characterized by the institutional consolidation of the role of civil society in state processes. Volunteer organizations and other community initiatives played a key role during the Revolution of Dignity and in supporting the army and the civilian population during the war. Civil society has become an important partner of the state in implementing reforms and solving socio-political problems.

Improvement of the legislative framework of interaction between the state and citizens in the direction of state formation. On December 15, 2023, Law of Ukraine No. 2073-IX „On Administrative Procedure” entered into force, which is the main legislative act establishing uniform, clear and understandable rules for the interaction of authorities with citizens. From now on, citizens can apply to the authorities according to a single procedure, regardless of the service they need. Authorities, in turn, have a single, unified algorithm of actions when providing such services (Skrypnyk, 2003). The Law of Ukraine „On Administrative Procedure” (About the administrative procedure, 2022) also provides:

- legality, certainty and predictability of the actions of authorities: these actions affecting the rights and freedoms of citizens and businesses will be carried out in accordance with clearly defined rules, which will improve the legal protection of citizens and enterprises;
- procedures for appealing decisions, actions or inaction of authorities: the law clearly and consistently describes the procedures that allow citizens to appeal decisions or actions of authorities, as well as their inaction;
- the right of a citizen to express his position: citizens have the right to express their opinion and be heard by authorities in the decision-making process;
- expanded opportunities for citizens and businesses to interact with the state: the law expands opportunities for citizens and businesses to protect their rights, in particular in pre-trial proceedings.

Implementation of the general administrative procedure brings Ukraine closer to the standards of the European Union. Similar laws are in force in all EU member states as an integral part of the „right to proper administration” (Skrypnyk, 2003). This means that administrative procedures in Ukraine are becoming more transparent and predictable, which contributes to increasing the level of trust of citizens in state institutions and improving the general legal environment in the country.

RESULTS

Civil society, according to the definition of foreign scientists D.A. Rastow, is a system of institutions independent of the state, which ensure the self-realization of individuals and collectives (Rastow, 2005). This society also protects individual and social spheres of life from excessive government regulation. Ukrainian scientists emphasize that civil society is the integrity of social life, which includes economic, social, cultural, spiritual, family relations

and institutions (Citizens' assessment of the situation in the country and the actions of the authorities, 2024). Thus, civil society has internal laws of functioning and a certain autonomy from the state, which is especially noticeable in post-industrial and information societies. Civil society consists of various associations, structures and organizations that function on the principles of collective assistance and responsibility for the state of affairs in society (Briton, 2007). In countries with a developed civil society, such as the USA, England, Switzerland, it preceded the emergence of the state, while in other countries, such as Spain or France, the development of civil society takes place in a different way. Democracy remains a core value of civil society. According to Ukrainian political scientists N. Sergienko and M. Tverdokhlebov (2003), none of the ideological doctrines in modern Ukraine have responded to the new challenges of the time, which requires a deep rooting of democratic principles in political life. Democracy is connected with the rationalistic traditions of the social contract, which assumes that the will of the people reflects its interests (Political science encyclopedic dictionary, 2004). At the same time, the formation of civil society in Ukraine takes time and depends on the level of moral development of society and its legal culture. The main directions for the further development of interaction between the state and civil society are the expansion of dialogue based on democratic principles, the strengthening of control of civil society over the activities of the state, the stimulation of civil activity and the support of initiatives.

In general, in the process of the formation of civil society in Ukraine, certain institutions stood out, which are key elements that ensure the participation of citizens in social and political life and contribute to the development of democratic processes. Let's consider them:

- NGOs. These are formal and informal associations of citizens created to achieve common goals. They can focus on different areas such as the environment, human rights, social services, education and others. Public organizations play an important role in shaping public opinion, protecting the rights and interests of citizens, as well as influencing state policy (Bohaichuk, 2017).
- Trade unions. These are organizations that represent the interests of employees and protect their rights in relations with employers. Trade unions deal with issues of labor relations, working conditions, wages and social protection of workers.
- Charitable foundations and organizations. These institutes are engaged in collecting and distributing resources to help vulnerable categories of the population, support social projects and community development. They contribute to solving social problems by providing financial and material support to those who need it.
- Mass media (media). Independent mass media play the role of the fourth power, controlling the activities of state bodies, informing citizens about important events and contributing to the formation of public opinion. They are an important element of civil society, ensuring transparency and accountability of the authorities.
- Academic and research institutes. These institutions are engaged in scientific research, analysis and evaluation of social processes. They provide expert knowledge and recommendations that contribute to the development of effective public policies and decisions.

- Civic initiatives and movements. These are informal associations of citizens that arise to solve specific problems or achieve certain goals. They can be temporary or permanent, organize actions, campaigns and other activities to draw attention to certain issues and influence decision-making.

- Religious organizations. Religious communities and their associations play an important role in shaping moral and ethical norms, providing spiritual support and social assistance to their members and other citizens.

- Local communities and bodies of self-organization of the population. These institutes deal with issues of local importance, ensuring the participation of citizens in local self-government and development of their communities (Rastow, 2005).

All these institutions interact with each other and with state bodies, forming a developed civil society that promotes democracy, social stability and the development of society as a whole. Their main function in state-building is their participation in social practices that are not limited to elections. Institutes of civil society actively participate in the development of state policy, involving scientific experts, holding public hearings and studying public opinion (Sergiyenko, & Tverdokhle, 2003).

Relations between civil society and the state are complex and contradictory due to the special distribution of organizational and managerial work. Public administration, as a multidimensional and purposeful activity of the state, is an integral part of state policy. According to Ukrainian researcher V.P. Horbatenko (2004), there is a close relationship and mutual influence between state policy and state administration (State and civil society: Interaction algorithm, 2020). American scientist D. Rastow (2005) emphasizes that management practice determines policy. As T. Wright points out, in the process of researching the interaction between state policy and citizens, it is important to take into account several key aspects: the global democratization of social life, new foundations of civil governance, in particular local self-government, as well as the development and strengthening of civil society. These processes cause flexible changes in public administration models, which reflect the institutional construction of social and political processes (State and civil society, 2020). Modern public administration is characterized by a multi-level system that covers the family, market relations, state regulation, ideological and informational relations. It is also important to consider the place and role of civil society in public administration, predicting its impact on future governance models.

Civil society, being a dynamic system, is always influenced by state power, and, conversely, state power is formed under the influence of civil society. The degree of independence of civil society is determined by the state's tolerance for this independence. The independence of civil society as a legal structure lies in the ability to resist the arbitrariness of the authorities. The weakness of civil society leads to the usurpation of its rights by the state, which causes a redistribution of functions between them. In this case, the state appropriates the functions of civil society and forces it to implement only state decisions.

In turn, the state cannot effectively develop without a free civil society that exercises control over political power. In general, the interaction and mutual influence of the state and society are continuous and contradictory, their nature and direction depend on the level of development of civil society and its institutions. The conflict of interests between the state

and civil society indicates the inefficiency of public administration. The optimal condition for a compromise between them is a harmonious combination of private and public interests to ensure human rights.

The main task of interaction between the state and citizens- satisfying the needs and interests of a person, which corresponds to the European tradition of finding a fair balance of the interests of the individual and society. The European Court of Human Rights considers this balance to be a guarantee of the legality of „person-state” relations. One of the main goals of democratic transformations in Ukraine is to stimulate the development of civil society through an established mechanism of legal regulation.

Civil society interacts with the state in the following aspects:

1. serves as the social basis of the state, does not exist outside of it;
2. develops in interaction with the state through parties, elections, representative authorities, as well as interest groups and associations (lobbying);
3. influences the creation and functioning of state bodies in their own interests (parties act through parliamentary factions, lobbyists interact with executive bodies through advisory committees under the government);
4. requires the state to protect and protect the life, health and safety of citizens, but does not allow interference in their private interests;
5. uses the norms of law established and established by the state in normative legal acts, contracts, legal precedents, etc.

The role of the state in the development of civil society:

- organizes civil society and creates conditions for its development;
- is relatively independent in relation to civil society and pursues the public interests of all members of society;
- establishes „rules of the game” for citizens and their associations, creates favorable conditions for their existence and development;
- does not interfere in the private sphere of family, life, culture, except when it is necessary to ensure personal or public safety;
- does not interfere in private legal relations: in case of entering into such relations, the state loses the opportunity to exercise public power;
- provides the necessary protection to civil society within its territory regarding the social security of its subjects;
- acts as an instrument of social compromise, mitigating social contradictions between different groups;
- legally ensures the citizen’s ability to be an owner, to create public associations, commercial corporations, to participate in the political life of society;
- has limitations in the regulation of relations in society, which are determined by the state constitution and international standards of human rights;

Building effective strategies for overcoming challenges in state building requires careful identification of these challenges. This includes identifying the main problem areas, analyzing their causes and potential consequences for the state. Only after a thorough understanding of the challenges, it is possible to develop adaptive and effective strategies

that will contribute to the strengthening of state institutions, ensuring the stability of public administration and increasing the level of well-being of citizens. This approach allows not only to respond to current problems, but also to predict and prevent possible threats in the future.

Problems related to the implementation of state policy.

Corruption to date, it is the biggest obstacle to effective interaction between citizens and authorities. According to M. Ivanets, corruption penetrated into all spheres of life and activity of the country (Sungurovskyi, 2018). A significant part of corruption is observed in the system of law enforcement agencies, which undermines the authority of the state and prevents the implementation of democratic principles. Citizens who have faced corruption lose faith in the state's ability to protect them from dangers. 90% of Ukrainians note that corruption is one of the reasons for their low interest in participating in establishing and maintaining law and order. According to data from 2020, only 3% of cases of abuse of power were brought to court, while 52% of cases involved acquisition of property through abuse of official position, 23% of cases involved obtaining benefits by illegal means, 9% involved direct abuse of official position, 7.5 % — abuses under the influence (Oktysiuk, 2021).

High level of mistrust of law enforcement agencies. In 2021, on the eve of the war, the level of distrust of Ukrainians in state authorities was quite high. The level of distrust in the Ministry of Internal Affairs is 43%, in the State Bureau of Investigation - 43%, in the Prosecutor's Office - 52%, in the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office - 52%, in the National Anti-Corruption Bureau - 49% (Voitiuk, 2021). According to the results of Razumkov's survey in 2024, 75% of the population does not trust officials, 72% does not trust political parties, 70% does not trust the VRU, 68% does not trust the judicial system, and 64% does not trust the government of Ukraine (Citizens' assessment of the situation in the country..., 2024). The lack of intentions of citizens to contact law enforcement agencies in case of violation of their rights and freedoms is a dangerous trend, as it indicates the emergence of a paradoxical situation in the country. On the one hand, authorities must ensure legality and the principles of statehood; on the other hand, their closedness, corruption and lack of direct contact with the public lead to the discrediting of these bodies and a decrease in their authority. In addition, such a situation demoralizes the society, as it creates the basis for the prosperity of threats to law and order in the country.

Perception of CSOs as competitors. The majority of the population believes that authorities, officials and deputies see civil society organizations (CSOs) as their competitors. This creates an atmosphere of mistrust and opposition, which significantly complicates opportunities for productive cooperation and exchange of experience between the authorities and the public.

On the one hand, the state emphasizes the importance of cooperation with the public, on the other hand, it does not demonstrate readiness to support social initiatives in practice. According to research, 51% of Ukrainians are dissatisfied with the level of government readiness to cooperate with civil associations (Sungurovskyi, 2018).

Misunderstanding of the role of civil society by authorities. The identification of the main problems in the implementation of state policy showed that the vast majority of respondents consider the main problem to be the authorities' lack of understanding of the role and benefit of civil society in state creation. This aspect becomes a fundamental

barrier for effective interaction between the authorities and civil organizations, preventing the creation of favorable conditions for the development of the latter. Moreover, 44% of citizens believe that the society itself inhibits the process of establishing effective interaction between the public and the authorities. For example, only 30% of Ukrainians are ready to participate in the discussion of local self-government issues. This testifies to the apolitical nature of the society and its reluctance to interfere in matters related to important aspects of public administration. Even understanding the need for cooperation between the state and the public, only 4%-11% of citizens are ready to participate in voluntary formations to maintain law and order in their communities (Sungurovskyi, 2018). The given data indicate that the lack of a general culture of public administration in Ukraine is an obstacle to effective interaction between the public and the government. As D. V. Kalayanov notes, positive experience of interaction between the government and civil society, accumulated during the years of independence, has been lost in Ukraine (Kalayanov, 2020). Some see the cause of these problems in the fact that civil society in Ukraine is unconsolidated, weak and unable to stand up for itself. The lack of unity among CSOs makes them vulnerable to pressure from the authorities and limits their influence on public administration processes.

Blocking public access to management. A large number of experts believe that public access to participation in the management of state and local affairs is deliberately blocked by authorities. This includes limiting access to social orders as sources of budgetary resources, which prevents effective public involvement in the management process.

Lack of competences of authorities. Authorities often do not know what and how to do to promote the development of civil society. Even understanding its benefits, they do not have sufficient competence for sustainable and effective cooperation with CSOs. This leads to ineffective initiatives and measures that do not take into account the real needs and capabilities of public organizations.

Lack of desire to exercise public control. Today, state authorities are not controlled by the public and are not oriented to the needs of society in order and management. Distancing between the public and power structures leads to the leveling of communication, which is essential for the involvement of society in solving issues of public administration.

Information deficit. One of the main obstacles to effective cooperation between society and the authorities is the information deficit. Public authorities and other institutions provide information on the state of affairs selectively and on their own initiative. Mass media are not independent of the state, which leads to censorship of information that is communicated to society. This especially applies to television, which is one of the main sources of news for citizens of Ukraine (Gornyk & Kravchenko, 2018).

So, summing up the above, the modern public administration sector needs reform. The public and authorities in this sector are distanced from each other, which hinders effective communication. The lack of public trust in law enforcement agencies, judges, officials, etc. leads to a decrease in the activity of citizens in maintaining law and order. However, the creation of a strong public administration system is impossible without proper conditions for communication with public associations and the transparency of this system.

DISCUSSION

The formation of a strategy for overcoming problems in state formation always depends on the will of citizens. Society must realize the challenges and come to the main goal - to change something. When citizens understand that corruption, mistrust of law enforcement agencies and other problems hinder their development and well-being, they are ready to unite to fight these challenges.

Organizing society into initiative groups and organizations is an important first step. Such organizations not only unite people, but also teach them self-management and self-regulation. They help citizens understand how they can effectively influence state processes and exercise control over government activities. This forms the basis for the development of civil society, where everyone has the opportunity to participate in making important decisions. The next stage is the strengthening of control over the authorities. Civil society organizations should be able to influence state structures, control their activities and demand transparency. This can be done through the creation of independent commissions that monitor the work of state institutions, hold public hearings, and involve the public in discussing important issues.

The development of special criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the government's work is important at the stage of control over the government's activities. The discussion regarding the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the state policy of promoting the development of civil society has been going on for a long time in Ukraine. However, neither the government nor civil society institutions have developed adequate criteria and indicators for evaluating this effectiveness. The Coordinating Council for the Promotion of Civil Society Development, established under the President of Ukraine in 2016, did not fulfill this task due to unsatisfactory work and lack of due attention from the government and the APU.

Taking into account the proposals of civil society institutions. As the main criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of state policy in the field of civil society development, it is worth considering the share of proposals of civil society institutions taken into account by public authorities in their activities. This shows the degree of public influence on the decision-making process and the integration of their ideas into public policy.

Compliance of national legislation with European standards. Experts (State and civil society..., 2020) suggest evaluating the effectiveness of state policy implementation by the criterion of compliance of national legislation on the activities of civil society institutions with European standards. This makes it possible to assess the level of adaptation of national norms to international requirements and standards, which is an important indicator of progress.

Volumes of budgetary support and infrastructure development. It is also necessary to use the amount of budgetary support for CSOs on a competitive and non-competitive basis, as well as the development of civil society infrastructure, which includes the number of CSOs and active mechanisms of public participation, as criteria for the effectiveness of state policy. These indicators reflect financial support and organizational capabilities for the development of civil society. Participation of CSOs in socio-economic development. The effectiveness of state policy in the field of socio-economic development should be evaluated by the degree of participation of CSOs in the socio-economic development of territories.

This allows us to assess the influence of public organizations on the development of local communities and their active participation in solving social and economic problems.

Use of Eurobarometer criteria and other indicators. Some experts suggested supplementing the list of criteria with criteria such as Eurobarometer criteria (regular public opinion polls conducted in EU countries under the auspices of the European Commission), as well as criteria used by the Creative Center of the TCC and the National Institute for Strategic Studies. This will make it possible to obtain a more objective and versatile assessment of the effectiveness of state policy in the field of civil society development (State and civil society..., 2020). After that, society should focus on the development and implementation of anti-corruption programs. It is important to create independent bodies that will control corruption, ensure their funding and support. It is also necessary to increase the transparency of state procedures through the introduction of electronic systems for public procurement and tenders. Strengthening responsibility for corrupt acts through changes in legislation is also a necessary step.

Reforming the law enforcement and judicial systems is the next step. It is necessary to improve the recruitment process, improve their professional training and ensure proper control over their activities. It is important to create a system of public control over the work of law enforcement agencies, which will contribute to increasing trust in them.

The final stage is the creation of cooperatives based on public-private partnership. This will allow combining the resources of the state and the private sector for the implementation of joint projects, which will contribute to the development of the economy and increase the welfare of citizens. Such partnerships allow effective use of financial and other resources, ensuring sustainable development of the country.

CONCLUSION

Building effective strategies for overcoming challenges in state formation is a key task for ensuring the stability and prosperity of the state. This process begins with a careful identification of the main problem areas, including an analysis of the causes of corruption, low levels of trust in law enforcement agencies, and ineffective interaction between the authorities and civil society. A deep understanding of these challenges allows for the development of adaptive and effective strategies aimed at strengthening state institutions and improving the well-being of citizens.

Corruption remains one of the biggest obstacles to effective governance. It penetrates into all spheres of the country's life, undermining the authority of the state and democratic principles. The high level of distrust of citizens towards state institutions, in particular law enforcement agencies, creates serious challenges for ensuring law and order. Survey data indicate a low level of trust in authorities and citizens' reluctance to interact with them in case of violation of their rights, which further complicates the situation.

Effective involvement of civil society in the process of public administration is a necessary condition for overcoming existing problems. Perception of civil organizations as competitors by the authorities and limiting their access to the management process hinders productive cooperation. An important aspect is the development of special criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the work of state bodies and the inclusion of the proposals of public

organizations in state policy. Sustainable development and strengthening of democratic institutions can only be achieved through transparency, increasing the competences of authorities and strengthening control over their activities

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