JEL Classification: K 19
SECTION: "LAW".

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PRECONDITIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL AND JUDICIAL REFORM

Annotation. *The article outlines the European integration preconditions of Ukraine in the implementation of legal and judicial reform. It is emphasized on the existence of clear requirements to the countries - members of the European Union on the quality of legal and judicial organizational support. The current stage of judicial reform is also described. The theoretical content of the judicial reform, its success criteria and the obstacles to its progress are revealed.*

Key words: *judicial authority, legal and judicial reform, European integration, Copenhagen criteria, the right to a fair trial, European integration aspirations.*

Introduction. European integration aspirations, which led to a new paradigmatic approach in understanding the problems of the judicial system, remain relevant today. There are various assessments of the political and legal processes that accompany the integration of Ukraine into the European Union, but most of them agree that the process of European integration would be extremely long and will require considerable efforts in terms of legal reform.

The social and political processes that have taken place in Ukraine since independence have led to the need to find new optimal ways of protecting the rights and legitimate interests of citizens at a qualitatively different level than it was offered at the time when Ukraine belonged to the Soviet Union.

Thus, O.Yu. Tatarov and A.V.Shevchishin emphasize: "Since Ukraine has gained its independence, there are transformations in its power institutions. The main task of such transformations is to create conditions for the formation of an independent democratic legal state and all its branches of power - legislative, executive and judicial. However, the implementation of the above is impossible without strengthening the legal status of the justice system. State that seeks to become legal, the public court must be authoritative, independent, it should not be reflected in the bureaucratic institution, but a real protector of the rights of citizens. After the disintegration of the USSR the functions of the court in Ukraine partially changed, but the system of judicial system remained "Soviet". In order to build a truly democratic state, first of all, we need well-

balanced laws and accessible justice. But the reform of only single branch of government will not yield the expected results; it must be carried out together with the reform of the legislative and executive systems. In addition, the process of judicial reform "is slowed down" by complicated socio-economic situation in the country.[1,p.175]. Pepelyayev S.G., on the democratic transformations in the post-Soviet period, claims: "The political and social developments that have taken place since the formation of an independent Ukrainian state have led to the necessity of solving at least three main problems, one way or another, connected with the humanistic essence of law: according to - first, on the basis of the inheritance obtained after the collapse of the USSR, to create a new, integral, national legal system; secondly, to make rational adaptation of the right to new socio-economic and political relations; thirdly, to achieve the optimal integration of Ukraine's rights into the European and world humanitarian and legal space. That is why, in recent years, the reform of the legal sphere has been firmly implemented and a number of radical changes have been made in the organization and functioning of the current system of judicial and law enforcement agencies, which is oriented towards the safeguarding of rights, freedoms and legitimate human rights " [2, p. 3].

Some of the problematic issues of judicial reform are highlighted in the writings of such scholars as Kravchik M. B., Obrusna S. Yu., Pepelyaev S.G., Ryazantseva N. A., Savenko M. D., Tatarov O. Yu., Khotynska-Nor O. Z., Chornobrovka V.O., Shevchyshen A.V., Shimon I. P., and others. At the same time, in-depth research is required by the influence of Eurointegration aspirations in Ukraine, which has gained a decisive internal political importance in recent years, to proceed judicial and legal reform.

The overall **purpose** of the article is to summarize the European integration preconditions for judicial reform in Ukraine.

Research results

In the historical and legal discourse, the push for European integration of Ukraine took place with winning of independence in 1991. V. O. Chornobrytova convinces that the course on European integration is a natural consequence of gaining independence. This course bases on the ethno-cultural features of the Ukrainian people, the desire to exercise the right to life in a legal socially oriented state, and its ultimate goal should be the creation on the basis of integrity of reforms the grounds joining of Ukraine the European Union. The European Union is now considered the most powerful and perfect integration association of the world. [3, p. 1, 2].

The formation of the European integration aspirations of Ukraine at the legislative level took place according to Decree of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of December 25, 1990 “On the Implementation of the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine in External Relations”, which noted the Government’s obligation to direct efforts to ensure the participation of the Ukrainian SSR in the European process and the European frame. Part X of the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine stated that "the Ukrainian SSR is an equal participant in international communication, actively contributes to the strengthening of common peace and international security, and is directly involved in the European process and European structures."

In 1993, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the Resolution "On the main directions of foreign policy of Ukraine", which a promising objective should be a membership in European communities. Part III emphasizes that one of the areas of foreign policy that

must characterized by activity, flexibility and proper balance is the expansion of participation in European regional co-operation. Subsection 1. "Bilateral interstate relations" defines groups of states for which priority is given to strategic directions in the sphere of reciprocal relations, in particular the active development of political, economic, scientific, technical, cultural and other fields. Among these groups are Western EU and NATO member states. Regarding this group, the position of the legislator manifests itself through the following excerpt from the Resolution: “Western states play a leading role in the modern international system, in particular in the world economic integrity and interstate institutional mechanisms for managing global and regional processes. Based on this, the defining feature of Ukraine’s foreign policy towards these states is the establishment of political and military partnership relations with them, multilateral economic cooperation, and extensive cultural, scientific, and humanitarian ties. The development of relations with Western European countries will create conditions to restore ancient political, economic, cultural and spiritual relations of Ukraine with the European civilization, will stimulate the process of democratization, market reforms and the improvement of the national economy. At the same time, such cooperation will become the basis for expanding Ukraine’s participation in European structures and the further integration of its economy into the common European and global economic space. In this context, relations with the United States of America as a country whose policy significantly influences the evolution of international events have a particular importance for Ukraine. [4]. Instead of the Resolution "On Main Directions of Foreign Policy of Ukraine", in 2010, the Law "On the Principles of Internal and Foreign Policy" was adopted. In the current edition of Article 11 of this Law, Ukraine is positioned as “ European state, performing an open foreign policy and seeks equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with all concerned partners, on the base primarily on the need to ensure the security, sovereignty and protection of the territorial integrity of Ukraine.” One of the main principles of foreign policy is ensuring the integration of Ukraine into the European political, economic and legal space in order to gain membership in the European Union.

R. Sokolov considers the starting point in forming the concept of Ukraine's European aspirations as the message of the President of Ukraine to the Verkhovna Rada "European Choice. Conceptual bases of the strategy in economic and social development of Ukraine for 2002-2011." At the same time, retrospectively describing the 2010 situation around European integration aspirations, the scientist notes: “Regardless of how progressive the changes in Ukraine are, Western European states are not ready to jeopardize geopolitical stability in their relations with the Russian Federation, hence the EU’s attitude to our state is due to foreign policy of Russia. At least the implementation of Ukraine’s integration into the European Union largely depends on political factors, and only then on technical or institutional factors. So, until Ukraine finds a consensus model of a nationwide comprehensive geopolitical positioning strategy, the geopolitical dimension of our state’s relations with the EU will be determined as the unresolved problem. The absence of clarity of Ukraine's European integration prospects leads to a lack of geopolitical positioning on the Ukrainian side and the same situation with regard to "Ukrainian perspectives" within the European Union, which, for a number of subjective and objective reasons, did not finally determine the geopolitics of further expansion to the East and relations with Russia, substituting such uncertainty by geostrategy of "wider partnership". Negative perception of the initiative of the neighborhood status is quite pervasive in Ukraine both for

representatives of the authorities and for the opposition. The pro-Russian interests of Western politicians (first of all, Germany and France) are the main reason that Europe is not concerned in Ukraine accession to the European Union. The high level of the EU's energy dependence on Russia does not exclude the possibility that the EU countries will continue to develop their relations with our state depending on the economic and energy situation." [5]. The multi-vectoral focus of state foreign policy of that time in the sphere of external relations to a certain extent allowed Ukraine to recover from the effects of the global financial and economic crisis, but a social and political crisis matured.The aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in geopolitical issues caused the involvement in the politics of the Eurasian vector of integration and some negative transformations in many different spheres of socio-political life. The consequence of the lack of unambiguousness in determining the way of geopolitical development of Ukraine became the involuntary choice of the path of least resistance. The prospects of joining the Customs Union (now evolved into the "Eurasian Economic Union") practically did not require significant concessions from Ukraine in terms of reforming internal processes, and particularly, judicial system. Most of the requirements of the Customs Union to states which have determined to enter into it were focused on economic issues. Areas of activity of the Eurasian Economic Commission (the governing body of the Customs Union) are limited to customs tariff regulation, non-tariff regulation, product safety supervision, tax policy, etc. In a purely legal field, there are some issues of intellectual property. Given the significant similarities in the models development of legal systems, Ukraine would not require significant reforms in this area.

There are quite different requirements for countries intending to join the European Union. These requirements are presented in an official document - "Copenhagen criteria for membership in the European Union", approved by the European Council meeting in Copenhagen, June 1993. They include three groups: political, economic and other criteria. Note that in the first place, are namely the socio-political criteria related to the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

According to the information-analytical certificate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, "EU membership, from the point of view of political standards, requires from the candidate country the stability of institutions which guarantee democracy, the rule of law, respect and protection of minorities." Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union stipulates that "the Union is based on the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law". Countries that wish to become members of the EU must not only consolidate the principles of democracy and the rule of law in their constitutions, but embody them in everyday life as well. The constitutions of the applicant countries must guarantee democratic freedoms, including political pluralism, freedom of speech and freedom of conscience. They establish democratic institutions and independent bodies of justice, bodies of constitutional jurisdiction, which assure conditions for the proper functioning of state institutions, conducting free and fair elections, regular renewal of the ruling parliamentary majority, and recognition of the important role of the opposition in political life. In order to assess the fulfillment by candidate countries of the terms of membership, the European Commission (EC) in each of its conclusions goes beyond the formal description of political institutions and relations amongst. Based on several detailed criteria, it assesses whether democracy is real. It checks how constitutional

rights and freedoms, in particular freedom of speech, are protected in the process of political parties, non-governmental organizations and mass media means " [6].

The group of political criteria includes the following subcriteria [7, p. 3]:

– ensuring freedom of parliamentary and presidential elections, as well as elections to local authorities;

– creation and expansion of activities of democratic institutions, non-governmental organizations, independent media;

– protection of human rights and freedoms;

– adoption of legislation that reliably protects the rights of minorities, the establishment of appropriate institutions;

– implementation of measures to fight discrimination in all spheres of public life;

– guarantees of independence of the judiciary, improvement of the court functioning;

– creation of reliable institutions in the field of justice and internal affairs, guarantees of independence of the judiciary, improvement of courts work;

– strengthening the fight against organized crime and corruption;

– solving legal provision issues and strengthening the ability to combat money laundering.

The current stage of judicial reform could be defined by the following citations expressed by R. Quibida in his analytical work: "The main event in judicial reform is the adoption of the law "On ensuring the right to a fair trial" initiated by the President of Ukraine. The law introduces a number of positive changes, in particular, the competition procedure for the selection of judges for all positions, the competitive procedure for the formation of the High Council of Justice and the High Qualifications Commission, intensifies competition in the disciplinary process, increases the number of disciplinary sanctions, etc… However, legislative changes have not resolved the main thing - the judicial system yet remains dependent on political authorities. Unfortunately, the coalition has demonstrated the neglect of important commitments within the framework of the coalition agreement, the recommendations of the Council of Europe bodies when adopting the Law "On ensuring the right to a fair trial", had violated the regulatory procedures while promoting the law. There is no progress in overcoming corruption in the judicial system, nor bringing judges to justice. Until now, there are no hopes for amending the Constitution of Ukraine, without which full-fledged judicial reform is not possible. Such changes are initiated, but they seem to be mostly cosmetic, aimed at linking the role of the President in the judiciary, but would not change the essence of the justice system"[8, p. 16].

Thus, the issue of further judicial reform remains relevant, and especially important is the formation of the theoretical foundations for the achievement of declarative, sometimes hyperbolized constructs, illustrating the populist rhetoric of generations of politicians though yet important for the assertion of the rule of law in Ukraine.

What is the essence of judicial reform, by the way, as understood by domestic lawyers?

Khotynska-Nor O. Z. believes that judicial reform is a component of a more general legal reform in Ukraine, the conceptual foundations of which were laid down in the draft General Concept of State-Legal Reform in Ukraine. [9, p. 188–189]. According to Ryazantseva N. A., improvement of the legal process or its optimization

should be understood as a permanent process of improving the quality of legal regulation of the procedure for reviewing cases, reducing the terms of their consideration, ensuring citizens' rights, respect of justice and legality, and, consequently, the stability of court decisions.[10, p. 101]. According to Shimon I.P., judicial reform in Ukraine should be defined as one of the priority directions of legal transformation, based on the place of justice as a tool of protection and restoration of human rights, and also on the basis of its role in ensuring the rule of law.[11, p. 336]. According to M. Zolkina's research (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation), on May 2014, judicial reform and the reform of the prosecutor's office took the third position in the list of reforms that the public expects firstly.

The complete list looks like this [12, p. 18]:

1. Anticorruption reform (supported by 63% of the population);
2. Health care reform (50%); pension reform and reform of the social security system (50%);
3. Judicial reform. Reform of the public prosecutor's office (45%);
4. Reform of law enforcement agencies (39%);
5. Lustration of officials (followed by audit and likely layoffs) (38%).

The presented section of public opinion features in a certain way the potential of legal consciousness of the population in different regions, interest in the problems of real European integration, one of the most important elements of which is judicial reform. The commitment and recognition of the priority of judicial reform directly depends on the citizens' understanding of the processes of social transformations and the peculiarities of reforming the judicial system and related institutions. As you can see, a significant deviation from the average factor for Ukraine demonstrates the public opinion of the Western region and Donbass. This is to a certain extent evidence of disagreements in the state information and right-wisdom policy, a retrospective consequence of low attention to the problems of the region related to the judicial system. In general, the analysis of survey data [12, p. 19] indicates a higher interest in the Donbas compared with the average in Ukraine on issues such as decentralization and regional development reform (41.7%, in Ukraine - 26.9%); pension reform and reform of the social protection system (55.3%, in Ukraine - 49.7%). The highest is the rate of those who are difficulties when answering (7.5%, in Ukraine - 4.6%).

Along with high expectations, the results of the Ukrainian population’s expectations regarding the possibility of early reform were extremely low. Responses to the possible completion of judicial reform and related reforms during the year are near 12%. [12, p. 21].

Khotynska-Nor O. Z. claims that the success of judicial reform depends on its accordance with such qualities as progressiveness, predictability, purposefulness, scientific soundness, flexibility, motivation, richness, consistency, irreversibility [9, C. 187]. According to Obrusna S. Yu., the process of judicial reform implementation can be controversial due to: a) political differences; b) lack of scientific support; c) the imbalance of the interaction of the power branches; d) subjectivity in the approaches to reform; e) residual totalitarian thinking; g) geopolitical conflict [13, C. 15]. In general, these factors somehow prove the unsystematic nature of the reforms.

The lack of systemicity in judicial reform is observed by native scientists. Thus, Khotynska-Nor O. Z. emphasizes: "Throughout the time of Ukraine's existence as an independent state acting accordingly to slogan "construction of a law-governed state ", the judiciary and the judicial system of the country are in a state of permanent

reformation. In modern society, reforms are recognized as the best way to progressive development. Today one can state, although, that the steps taken to achieve qualitative changes in the field of judicial protection of the rights and interests of citizens are inconsistent, largely chaotic and groundless. Therefore, judicial reform not only fails to achieve the declared goal, but as a result also threatens to turn into opposite goals" [9, p. 184]. In order to overcome non-systematicity, we must reckon the algorithm of judicial reform, as observes Obrusna S. Yu. According to this algorithm, judicial reform should be carried out in four stages. At the initial stage, the state of functioning of the judicial system, the scientific proof of the need for reform, the development and approval of the reform concept should be carried out. At the second stage, the establishing of legal norms, legal-and-regulatory acts with the participation of the general public should take place. At the third stage, must be met the requirements of gradualness, monitoring, public awareness, in order to achieve the efficiency. At the final stage, the elimination of flaws should occur and the forecasting of further ways to improve the system must be presented. [13, p. 26].

Through the prism of the constitutional aspect, as Savenko M. D. Emphasizes, the judicial reform should take into account such general principles of fundamental nature as the respect of national traditions, the level of general, political, legal culture, the level of trust in judges and other bodies of state power, the rule of law inside the state. In addition, the judicial reform in the theoretical plan should recon in two requirements: to avoid reckless copying judicial systems or elements in such systems of other countries that are marked by the effectiveness in this field, and to complete the judicial reform in the conditions of political and economic stability[14, p. 10].

Analyzing the judicial reform that took place after the Romanian democratic revolution, Shimon I.P. noted the paramount importance of the main goal of such reform in the context of transformations to a clear European integration vector - the achievement of the independence of the judiciary. The scholar concludes that the main objective of the reform in justice system of post-socialist Romania was to ensure the independence of the judiciary as an institutional system and the judges as its carriers. In order to provide appropriate guarantees, developed and implemented legislative measures that make it impossible to influence the system of justice and judges by other branches of government, provision of such a status of a judge, which allows him to exercise constitutional authority. The main factor in the independence of the judiciary and the independence of the judiciary has been the creation in Romania of an example of other states of the European Union of a separate constitutional body - the Supreme Council of the Magistracy, which got some means of guaranteeing independence [11, p. 340].

The experience of the Visegrad Group of Four countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) is evident in the path of European integration. Slozarchik I. outlined three main elements that together consisted of the content of judicial reform in the Visegrad countries - the formation of a constitutional judicial system (in a systemic connection with the dilemma of the role of judges in the judicial system and the political environment of the country); the gradual transformation of the common judicial system, in particular, the search for a balance between instruments that are tentative to the independence and efficiency of the work of the courts; the influence of the European Union on the transformation of the judicial system in the countries of the Visegrad Group, including limitations within the judicial system [15].

A clear Eurointegration vector of judicial reform at the present stage can be traced in the study of Kravchik M. B.,who emphasized: "By signing the Association Agreement with the European Union, Ukraine declared its intention to affirm loyalty for itself as a potential member, and keep the rules and general principles of the EU by real actions. In the legal sphere, that means bringing Ukrainian legislation to EU standards in the fields and terms of the Agreement, as well as cultivation of fair justice in Ukraine, which must be based on the human rights principles. Achieving this goal involves a comprehensive reform of the native judicial system. Unfortunately, the past experience of reforming the judicial system in Ukraine was characterized by a predominantly opportunistic, fragmentary approach and for reasons of political expediency. Using speculation about the problems existing in the judiciary, under the pretext of a legal reform there was a lobbying for legislative changes, the adoption of which would mean the complete failure of an independent and objective justice. Judicial reform was substituted by the changes aimed to establish non-judicial control of the courts. Increasing the role and importance of reforming the judiciary as an important component of European integration of Ukraine leads to the reconsideration of many related problems. The effectiveness of judicial reform depends, first of all, on the correctness of the methodological principles, the validity of the ideology on which it is based "[16, p. 3].

The analyzed data testify that there are some positive changes in the field of strategic management of judicial reform. Among the main problems, one may mention insufficient detail of strategic legal documents that should be balanced by well thought-out and suitable for immediate implementation of the actions plan. In the context of solving the particularly difficult tasks related to judicial reform, strategic vision is an essential guarantee of effective and timely reform oriented to the European vector of state development. The logical result of judicial reform should be considered the creation of a single area of judicial law, which could become a system-forming factor and an impetus for the further development of theoretical approaches and practical ways of ensuring human and citizens' rights, the European standards in the field of justice.

Conclusions

Judicial reform in independent Ukraine has gone through several stages from independence to the present. The length of the judicial reform is due to the prolonged crisis of the transformational society, the difficulties of a qualitative transition of the Soviet-European judicial model, the political uncertainty, the lack of unified methodology and vision of the judicial system and the appropriate litigation, ignoring successful examples of reforms in post-communist countries that have chosen the vector for the development to European integration, like Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and others. Until recently, there was no clear objective to ensure the right to a fair trial, and the legislative initiatives were not fully complied with this goal, and did not adequately reflect the recommendations to improve justice provided by international organizations, and conceptual proposals often remained unacceptable, to a certain extent of a populist nature, in connection with attempts to reduce the independence of the judiciary.

The current stage of the judicial reform has affected a significant reorientation of the European integration vector of development, reflected in the change of purpose, principles, main features of the process. Due to the pressure of public expectations aome critical spots were eliminated which discouraged a qualitative transformation of the

judiciary. The analysis of key legal acts of a conceptual and strategic nature shows a progress made in aligning the judicial system in Ukraine with European standards. However, the number of unresolved theoretical and practical issues, namely on the legal and organizational provision of the right to a fair trial, indicates the start of the movement in the right direction, and not about its completion.

Significant influence on the search, selection and testing of the best ways to reform the judiciary was made by the dynamics of foreign policy processes and geopolitical conflicts, in which Ukraine often turned from the role of the subject to the object of the conflict. At the same time, there is a firm link between the effective judicial reform in Ukraine and the legalization of aspirations to European integration, which jointly have created a new direction for the evolution of judicial reform and the judicial system - the paradigm of integration, which is an integral part of the right to a fair trial.

A promising direction for further research is the justification of ways to complete judicial reform in the context of Ukraine's European integration aspirations.

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