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**The Principles of Transparency in the Civil Service  
Employee Recruitment**

**Koncepcje Przejrzystości Procedur Konkursowych  
na Stanowiska do Państwowych Służb Cywilnych**

**Abstract:**

The article analyzes approaches to the concept of transparency of competition procedures during selection for civil service positions in Ukraine. The author has conducted a thorough analysis of the main competition procedures when selecting applicants for civil service positions. The paper also defines the main problems of ensuring transparency of competition procedures during selection for civil service positions.

**Keywords:**

Civil service, public administration, transparency, civil service position, selection, professionalizing, competition for civil service positions, competencies, testing, situational tasks, interview, evaluation criteria for competition procedures, and selection boards.

**Streszczenie:**

Artykuł analizuje różne podejścia do koncepcji przejrzystości procedur konkursowych podczas wyboru na państwowe stanowiska służb cywilnych Ukrainy. Autor dokonał dokładnej analizy głównych procedur konkursowych przy wyborze kandydatów na stanowiska służb cywilnych. W artykule określono również główne problemy zapewniające przejrzystość procedur konkursowych podczas wyboru na stanowiska służb cywilnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:**

Służba cywilna, administracja publiczna, przejrzystość, pozycja służby cywilnej, selekcja, profesjonalizm, konkurencja na stanowiskach służb cywilnych, kompetencje, testy, zadania sytuacyjne, wywiady, kryteria oceny procedur konkursowych i komisji konkursowych.

**Rationale for the research topic.**

Nowadays, the system of civil service of Ukraine is undergoing major systemic transformations, since not only certain procedures and mechanisms for the development of civil service personnel, but also the concept of the institution of civil service are changing.

Therefore, an important and relevant issue in this context is to provide the system of civil service of Ukraine with high quality and professional staff. It is through open and transparent procedures for competitions that professionally trained personnel who work outside the system of civil service of Ukraine can be attracted.

The current Ukrainian legislation provides for conducting open and transparent competitions during selection for civil service positions. Thus, in accordance with Article 21 of the Law of Ukraine “On Civil Service” (Law on civil service, electronic resource), joining civil service is realized through the appointment of a citizen of Ukraine to a civil service position according to the results of a competition. Such a competition is conducted in compliance with, in particular, the following principles: ensuring equal access; transparency; and effective and fair selection process.

The Strategy for Sustainable Development “Ukraine - 2020” approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine of January 12, 2015, #5, provides for implementing a civil service reform and optimizing the system of public authorities (The Strategy for Sustainable Development “Ukraine - 2020”). This, in turn, implies professionalizing of the personnel of the system of civil service, formation of an effective corps of civil servants in Ukraine through transparency and openness of competition procedures, attracting talented and professional staff.

According to the Strategy of State Personnel Policy for 2012-2020 approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine of February 1, 2012, #45, the main objectives of the implementation of state personnel policy for 2012-2020 are inter alia: developing mechanisms to involve in work in areas of public management highly qualified experts, successful entrepreneurs, financial and economic sphere workers, talented graduates of higher education establishments; forming effective personnel reserve to occupy managerial positions in areas of public administration; training and professional development of senior executive staff of civil service capable of ensuring the effectiveness of state policy in the field of public administration and leadership in conducting administrative and economic reforms (The Strategy of State Personnel Policy for 2012-2020).

Thus, the current legislation norms define the priority of conducting open and transparent procedures of conducting competitions during selection for vacant civil service positions in order to attract talented and professional staff.

### **Formulation of the problem.**

Currently, there is a problem of developing and implementing criteria for evaluation of the results of competition procedures and of transparent interpreting such evaluation. It should be noted that innovations that are defined in applicable legal acts of Ukraine do not allow to evaluate transparently and without bias certain competencies defined in the current legislation. Therefore, there is the problem of developing criteria for evaluation of the results of competition procedures that occur during selection of persons to fill positions of civil service of the category “A”, “B”, and “C”.

### **Analysis of recent research papers and publications.**

Problems of formation and development of personnel in civil service, professionalizing of staff of the system of civil service are analyzed by Ukrainian and foreign scientists including: V. Averyanov, H. Atamanchuk, N. Honcharuk, V. Malynovskyi, R. Naumenko, N. Nyzhnyk, O. Obolenskyi, V. Oluyko, Ye. Okhotskyi, A. Rachyn-

skyi, S. Seryohin, A. Sitsynskyi, I. Suray, O. Turchynov, S. Hadzhyradyeva, O. Yakubovskiy et al. At the same time, Ukrainian scientist M. Holovatyi analyzes the problems of openness and transparency in the economic sphere (Holovatyi, 2015, p. 9-10,4-8.) The aforementioned scientists analyze current trends of the development of staff of the system of public administration, problems of forming personnel in the system of civil service, selection and competition procedures, main stages of reformation and modernization of the civil service of Ukraine.

Thus, the part of a general problem which is still unsolved is systematic analysis of modern methods of evaluating competition procedures during conducting selection of candidates for civil service positions.

Setting the task. Conducting a comprehensive analysis of legal documents regarding criteria for evaluation of competition procedures for identifying key problems of ensuring transparency and objectivity of these procedures.

### **Presentation of the material.**

In reference literature, “transparency” is defined as a physical characteristic of material objects and also as capability of being perceived, clarity, intelligibility, openness, outspokenness, sincerity, candor (Encyclopedia of Public Administration, p. 473).

Thus, transparency of competition procedures during selection of personnel for civil service positions is ensuring such an evaluation procedure that enables receiving accurate and understandable information about the evaluation criteria of each competition procedure with the justification of its evaluation. Transparency of competition procedures during selection of personnel for civil service positions is characterized by: clarity of evaluation criteria; awareness of key competencies to be evaluated; openness of procedures of competition at all stages (except for cases stipulated by the current legislation of Ukraine).

Let us analyze specific stages of conducting a competition for civil service positions. According to the Procedure of Conduc-

ting a Competition for Taking State Service Positions, a competition is conducted in the following stages:

1. making the decision to declare a competition;
2. publication of the decision to declare the competition;
3. acceptance of documents from persons who want to participate in the competition;
4. preliminary examination of the submitted documents with respect to compliance with the statutory requirements;
5. conducting testing and determining its results;
6. solving situational problems and determining their results (except for the category “B”);
7. conducting an interview and determining its results;
8. conducting the calculation of the results of the competition and determining the winner of the competition as well as the candidate who, according to his/her results, occupied the second place;
9. announcement of the results of the competition (Procedure for Conducting a Competition for Taking Civil Service Positions, electronic resource).

The above Procedure clearly defines score points for certain procedures.

Preliminary examination of the submitted documents with respect to compliance with the statutory requirements is an objective procedure; at the same time, to avoid criticism that this procedure is biased, it is useful to delegate the functions related to determining compliance of the candidates' documents with the requirements set to private recruitment enterprises (with appropriate operating licenses). This will give the opportunity to make such a procedure unbiased and will reduce the burden of work on personnel management services of government authorities.

The next stage of competition procedures is conducting testing. Testing is conducted using computers. Testing is conducted to determine the level of knowledge of the law – of knowledge of the Constitution of Ukraine, the civil service legislation, the anti-corruption legislation and of knowledge of specific legislation. Questions for

each participant of testing are selected automatically from a list of questions. Each question should provide for four possible answers, one of which is correct (Procedure for Conducting a Competition for Taking Civil Service Positions, electronic resource).

For testing, the maximum score is 2 points (Procedure for Conducting a Competition for Taking Civil Service Positions, electronic resource).

Of course, if a candidate correctly answers a question checking his/her knowledge of current legislation, he/she receives corresponding score points. Thus, such a mechanism of evaluation of competition procedure is transparent and unbiased.

It should be noted that other mechanisms of evaluation of competition procedures are somewhat unclear and subjective.

Thus, for evaluation of the results of solving a situational problem, the following system is used:

2 score points are given to candidates who have expressed profound knowledge and have successfully solved a situational problem;

1 point is given to candidates who solved a situational problem to the extent sufficient for further work;

0 points are given to candidates who have not solved a situational problem in due time (Procedure for Conducting a Competition for Taking Civil Service Positions, electronic resource).

However, there are no standards according to which it is believed that a situational problem is successfully solved. Thus, evaluation of solving a certain situational problem occurs at the level of a specific expert included in a selection board or in the Senior Civil Service Board, that is, subjective. In our opinion, it would be appropriate to clearly state in the Procedure of Conducting a Competition for Taking State Service Positions specific evaluation criteria. Thus, for example, when solving situational problems, an applicant must use specific legislation and take the best decision that he/she has also analyzed.

1. In our opinion, as far as solving a situational problem is concerned, one should evaluate the following competencies:

2. Information potential: work with the legal framework and its proper use; structuring information; neatness when doing paperwork; ability to perceive and transmit information without distortion; ability to draw conclusions based on information received.
3. Thinking: ability to evaluate the amount of work and resources allocated for its performance; ability to think logically and consistently.
4. Knowledge of the legislative framework of Ukraine concerning specific issues.

These competencies should be evaluated and, as a result, from 1 to 4 score points should be given with a clear definition what each score means.

As for criteria of evaluation of interview, we should dwell upon them separately.

An interview is conducted to evaluate compliance of the experience, achievements, competence, personal qualities with the requirements for the professional competence of a candidate and for the relevant official duties.

To evaluate each separate requirement for professional competence, during the interview, the following system is used:

2 score points are given to candidates who meet the requirement;

1 point is given to candidates who do not fully meet the requirement;

0 points are given to candidates who do not meet the requirement (Procedure for Conducting a Competition for Taking Civil Service Positions, electronic resource).

Thus, the interview is also evaluated subjectively by members of a selection board or of the Senior Civil Service Board. No evaluation criteria are defined in the Procedure of Conducting a Competition for Taking State Service Positions.

We believe that, during the interview, one can evaluate:

communication skills of a candidate: ability to establish contact; ability to listen and to answer questions asked; ability to set

forth information clearly, intelligibly, and in a structured way; skills of persuasion; presentation skills;

self-organization: stress resistance, ability to control one's own emotions; ability to formulate one's own goals; ability to constructively respond to criticism against oneself; understanding one's strengths and weaknesses;

professional ethics: adherence to the principles of respect for human dignity; honesty, openness, and fairness; commitment to accomplishment of the tasks set and responsibility for the quality and results of work; compliance with norms and rules of business etiquette.

Experience in selection for civil service positions in Japan proves that, in methods of evaluation, not criteria but rather a set of factors is used: hard work; knowledge; activity; physical endurance; ability to plan; discipline; applied skills; determination; ability to conduct a conversation; accuracy of the work performed; sense of responsibility; curiosity; adaptation; ability to understand; mobility; speed of work; ability to manage (Zelinskyi 2016, p. 32).

It should be noted that the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of July 22, 2016, #448 approved the Representative Requirements for Persons Applying for Positions of Civil Service of Category "A" [7], and the Order of the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service of April 6, 2016, #72 approved the Procedure for Determining Special Requirements for Persons Applying for Positions of Civil Service of Category "B" and "C" (Procedure for Establishing Special Requirements, electronic resource).

Among the requirements for candidates, there are requirements for leadership (presence of leadership skills). However, the said competence cannot be detected only by interview or situational problems. This skill can be evaluated on the basis of, for example, an employment reference letter or of several such letters. The same applies to competence concerning implementing changes and management of organization of work and of staff. Therefore, not only criteria for evaluation of competencies of persons applying for civil service positions, but also competencies themselves need to be clarified, as they

have to be evaluated just through methods specified in effective legal documents (test tasks, situational problems, and interview).

It should be noted that in the US, the following principles of selection of persons for civil service are inscribed into law: recruitment of competent persons from relevant human resource sources taking into account representation of all sections of the population; recruitment and promotion based on evaluation of relevant skills, knowledge, and qualification according to the results of an impartial and open competition, which guarantees to all citizens equal opportunities [3, p. 30].

According to I. Melnyk, recruitment to civil service is monopolized by the management of a certain state body, which inevitably creates quite noticeable subjectivity in evaluation of business and moral qualities of candidates (Melnyk, electronic resource).

Therefore, in our opinion, a recruitment interview should be conducted by an independent expert with relevant experience and record of service to avoid appointment of “connections” and bias in conducting evaluation interview.

It should be noted separately that there is a problem of formation of a high quality composition of a committee for selection of candidates for civil service positions. In our view, the committee should include psychologists, managers from the private sector, specialists in personnel management. This will make it possible to approach evaluation of applicants for civil service positions in a high quality way and to ensure a professional approach in evaluation of all competition procedures.

### **Conclusions.**

The main stages of conducting competition procedures of selection of staff for civil service include: preliminary examination of the submitted documents with respect to compliance with the statutory requirements; conducting testing and determining its results; solving situational problems and determining their results (except for category “B”); conducting an interview and determining its results.

The conducted analysis made it possible to note that the current criteria for evaluation of competition procedures during selection of persons for civil service positions are subjective and non-transparent. Only testing, which is conducted using a computer, gives unbiased data. Other procedures have no clear and reasonable criteria for evaluating certain competencies of candidates for civil service positions.

At the same time, a problem regarding correction of competencies of applicants for civil service positions taking into account methods and mechanisms of selection arose – because neither an interview nor a situational problem can identify the leadership potential of applicants.

In addition, the role of competition procedures in the system of selection of staff for civil service and the possibility of delegating certain functions of personnel management services to private recruitment organizations require rethinking.

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