

EUROPEAN VALUES AS THE BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN UKRAINE

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Annotation. *The objective of the work is to research the phenomenon of European values through the prism of their influence on democratic reforms in Ukraine.*

The methodological basis of the study. The current political situation and the entry of Ukraine into the European space, which is in its active phase of reforms, must be studied with the involvement of the methodology of system analysis with the dominance of the principles of synergy in combination with comparative studies, normative and institutional approaches, document analysis, the method of historical retrospective, the structural-functional method etc.

This article clarifies that despite the constant interest of science in European values as a subject of research, researchers and legislators have not yet developed a unified vision of their nature, content, and impact on democratic reforms in Ukraine.

The article is devoted to the study of the process of democratic foundation development in Ukraine. It also casts light upon the study of the essence and features of European values, which are the basis for their formation.

The article provides an analysis of the theoretical, political-legal and worldview foundations of democracy, and components of the influence of European democratic values on the formation and development of Ukrainian civil society.

It was emphasized that our state sees integration into European structures as an aid in getting closer to European values, the possibility of borrowing the experience of the EU member states regarding social economic development and raising the welfare of its citizens to the European level.

The conclusions of the study sum up that the announced strategic European course should be supported by concrete actions and measures, and value principles should become everyday political practice. The process of establishing European democratic values can enable maximal contribution to the development of civil society in our country.

Key words: *European values, political culture, democracy, civil society, human rights.*

1. Introduction.

Every historical epoch differs from others with its uniqueness of values orientations, which determine the customs and traditions of people, and the nature and features of political systems of society. They also create the foundations of policy standards and laws and shape the flow and direction of political and social processes. The phenomenon of democracy has always attracted close attention of both researchers and practically every politically conscious person.

Nowadays, values are discussed in the context of contemplations about culture, morality, world politics and issues of war and peace.

Ukraine's entry into the European space has contributed to the formation of pro-European thinking of a significant part of the Ukrainian people, positive guidelines for state building, an effective market economy, a system of legal support for human life, social protection of citizens, national culture, education, etc.

However, after the start of Russia's war against Ukraine, European values acquired a slightly different colour for our country. The reality of implementing the declared political values of a united Europe today sounds like a challenge.

2. Analysis of scientific publications.

The analysis of scientific publications shows that the research issues are quite popular and have an interdisciplinary nature. European values as a subject of research are connected with the complex and unstable formation of the Ukrainian political space. Despite the active study of this problem, it remains insufficiently covered in Ukrainian science.

Definite general scientific components of European values were studied by S. Ratushny, Yu. Shcherbakova, T. Malanchuk, O. Sakhan, A. Kudriachenko, K. Zhebrowska, S. Holovaty, M. Hnatovsky and others. Therefore, there is no objection to the relevance of studying the problem of European values as the basis of development in Ukraine.

3. The objective of the work is to research the phenomenon of European values through the prism of their influence on democratic reforms in Ukraine.

4. Review and discussion.

The transformational changes initiated in the early 1990s in the countries of Eastern Europe, in particular in Ukraine, became a kind of victory for democracy in the continental dimension, where European democratic values began to assert themselves quite confidently.

European values have long gone beyond the geographical borders of Europe they have become universal values. Europe does not have a monopoly on them, but they are best recognized precisely in Europe: in European life, the respect and desire for full observance of these values is manifested to the fullest extent, and their Europeanness often consists only in the extent to which the Europeans themselves are ready to embody and defend them, having created the European Union for this purpose. It explains both the extraordinary attractiveness of the European integration project and the difficulty and even rigidity in determining the prospects of European membership [1].

Based on the fact that the world of values arises and takes shape in the process of the spiritual activity of a person, as one of the elements of culture, and considering values and their embodiment in the political space, it is worth turning to the analysis of the concept of political culture. The nature and directions of the political process, the stability and democratization of the political system of society depend to a decisive extent on the political culture of the people. Its maturity is measured by these criteria. The higher the political culture, the narrower is the sphere of the political counterculture, which contradicts the dominant positive political and democratic values and plays a destabilizing role.

The norm of modern political culture is understanding the priority (supremacy) of human rights over any other rights and interests (class, party, national, etc.), perceiving these rights and freedoms as the absolute value, without which democracy is impossible. True democracy requires eliminating the distance between the declared rights and their actual implementation. Of course, the problem of human rights is eternal, because there will never be some time when the rights and freedoms of the individual will reach absolute perfection. The process of democratization of society can also be determined by such criteria as the implementation of the principles of democracy, which is an extremely important issue for social progress.

Among them, there is the rule of the majority, pluralism, equality, division of powers, electability, publicity, and control [2]. Under a totalitarian or authoritarian regime, the entire state power is usurped by a narrow circle of the ruling elite, who by their actions ignore the will and interests of the people. In a democratic society while regarding some issues a majority is formed as a result of the will of the people. This process



ultimately determines the position of the government. In other words, democracy is not just the power of the people, but the power of its majority, which is the essence of popular sovereignty [3].

European values are considered proper, and inherent in the European identity. Six basic values are unchanging: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights.

The fundamental European values are presented in the form of a triad – “the rule of law – democracy – human rights”. The core of European values is liberal fundamental human rights and freedoms, democratic principles of the state system, as well as the legal and social state. Being a combination of liberal and democratic ideas, European values are labelled as “liberal-democratic”. It was the latter that became the principles of state and political institutions functioning in modern European countries and the European Union.

European values are not only a general abstract concept. They have some practical expression in the form of legal norms enshrined in several basic documents of the Council of Europe and the European Union: “Convention on the Protection of Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”, etc.; “Treaty on the European Union”, “Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union”, etc. The fundamental basis of European values is the rights and freedoms of each individual and the equality of all before the law. These legal values have been transformed in the legal systems of European countries. States wishing to become members of the Council of Europe must, first of all, ratify this fundamental legal act on the protection of human rights [4].

In the Statute of the Council of Europe, adopted on May 5, 1949, the following tasks were formulated: “The purpose of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity among its members to preserve and implement the ideals and principles that are their common heritage, as well as to promote their economic and social progress” [5]. It means that the Council of Europe must strengthen democracy, the rule of law and human rights in its member states and serve economic and social progress.

Since November 9, 1995, Ukraine has become a member of the Council of Europe. Today our state has already joined more than 60 treaties and conventions of the Council of Europe, including, in particular, “the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights”, “the European Agreement in the Field of Culture”, “the Framework Agreement on the Protection of National Minorities” and others.

It is also worth revealing the democratic principles which govern the political practice of the European Union. Among the commitments made by candidate countries for joining the European Union are not only those that have socio-economic dimensions but also those that have a valuable nature: compliance with the principles of democracy, rights and freedoms of citizens, as well as support for the development of associations of the last ones. The basis for this is the provisions of the so-called Copenhagen criteria, which determine the requirements of the European Union to the candidate states and the obligation to accept and apply the already existing law of the EU community, the so-called “*acquis communautaire*”.

Today, it can be confidently asserted that the European Union has become one of the most important dominant countries on a pan-continental scale, where democratic values are exercised.

The ideas of T. Malanchuk are quite interesting in terms of our research. The researcher points out the differences between the values and value orientations of Ukraine and EU countries. In view of the recent events, when it became obvious that these differences are quite significant regarding the effectiveness of their mechanisms for the adjustment of all spheres of social life activities, as well as of values and value orientations. Although they do coincide at the level of archetype to a certain extent, at the level of social practice they vary considerably. Moreover, differences in mentality and nationality traits must be taken into account, as well as today's demands. Ukraine is currently balancing on the borderline between independent development and dependent on other countries.

Therefore, in our opinion, nowadays, more than ever it is necessary to clearly distinguish between those values which primarily determine spiritual orientations for the lives of individuals and social groups, nations, states, etc. and those interests that are formed in individuals and groups of people as a result of the awareness of their needs (primarily – in material goods) and the means of their realization. At the moment, we can observe the conflict of values and interests in European society. The war accelerated Ukraine's progress on the path to EU membership. But we should keep in mind that the European Union is an association of independent states, where everyone preliminarily cares about the safety and interests of their land [6].

European values are the basis of the Ukrainian constitutional system, in particular, regarding this issue S. Holovaty noted that the rule of law, democracy and human rights are the three fundamental principles like a triad of European values which should continue to serve as a methodological basis for the textual updating of the Ukrainian lex fundamentals at any appropriate time [7].

European values are designated as "liberal-democratic". Their basis is liberal fundamental human rights and freedoms, democratic principles of the state system as well as a legal and social state [8].

Ukrainians' rethinking of today's realia, the desire to have confidence in the future and real protection of their rights and freedoms, and the desire to speed up the implementation of European values and standards in all spheres of social life have formed a sense of responsibility for their country in a significant part of Ukrainian society. It has also predetermined the willingness to take an active part in democratic transformations, the processes of reforming the state and the development of civil society institutions, protecting the interests of fellow citizens and trying to find their ways of participation in social and political life and relations with the authorities.

In turn, the change in the vector of political consciousness of Ukrainians towards the values of Western civilization influenced the direction of the political processes from stagnation to progress and prosperity by reforming and deepening the integration processes between Ukraine and the EU. Radical transformations of the orientations in the public life of the Ukrainian state, determined by the needs of social practice, were reflected in "the National Security Strategy of Ukraine", which defines the direction of building a new system of relations between citizens, society and the state based on the values of freedom and democracy. Determining the leading role of European values as criteria (standards) for measuring the significance of human actions and activities, the legislation states that Ukraine shares common values with the European Union, and considers integration into the political and economic structures of the EU as a priority direction [9].

For Ukraine, which has chosen a strategy for integration into the European community, the affirmation of democratic values means democratic orientation and the prospect of further development. This is particularly emphasized concerning the events of recent years when our country and society have been experiencing significant trials and overcoming difficult challenges due to the strategies of the European future.

In political and legal theory, there are several dimensions that define the concept of democracy. Together, they determine its essence almost completely. Firstly, democracy appears as a form of state; secondly, it is a form of pluralistic organization of civil society and political parties, trade unions and other public organizations expressing their interests; thirdly, democracy acts as a political worldview and a corresponding socio-political movement. These definitions are supplemented by highlighting the concept of democracy as a social and political value, a political process, etc. The term "democracy" is rightly used not only to characterize a certain form of the state but also to define the structure of any organization where equal participation of its members in management and decision-making is ensured [10].

Many researchers consider socio-political institutions including the institution of civil society to be the most important factors of democracy. Democracy as a political process and worldview has a value load and appears as a sign of the "human dimension". In practice, value approaches and orientations are revealed in those assessments that a person applies to circumstances, political events and to himself/herself. Democracy, being a political worldview, appears in the minds of citizens as a reflection of its very content (primarily, the ideas of freedom and equal rights). Being formed based on social relations, democracy has always found its theoretical basis in these ideas.

In Ukraine, when the main, basic elements of democratic development are being developed, it is natural that a significant emphasis is placed on the development of civil society. A developed civil society is the main prerequisite for the democratic processes in the state, when these two components interact with each other and form developed socio-legal relations. Civil society exists under the conditions of democracy and it ensures the democratization of power institutions and the state, in general. Instead, the underdevelopment and weakness of civil society are one of the conditions for the existence of authoritarian or totalitarian regimes. In this regard, it is worth noting that many scientists pay attention to the problems of forming the institution of civil society. This issue is complex, as it combines not only the



issues of interaction between society and state power, the rights and duties of citizens before the state and the duties of the state before citizens, but also the activities of political parties and public organizations, the role of the mass media as a social institution, etc.

It is also worth paying attention to the fact that in developed democratic countries, human rights violations are not systemic and the entire legal system works much more effectively. Value principles, legal and political culture, democratic regime and civil society contribute to this. Indeed, the common denominators for all developed democracies are the democratic regime and civil society despite all the diversity of the systems of governance, state systems and the configurations of party systems.

In Western European countries, a developed and structured civil society was formed due to the democratic regime and governmental support of public initiatives and non-governmental organizations already in the second half of the 20th century. It interacts with the government, and state structures, and the government is forced to reckon with it. These components correspond and together become effective factors of the general political atmosphere, which in turn becomes a qualitative characteristic of state functioning. It ensures the inviolability of democratic values and, accordingly, the existing social order in the state [11].

At the current stage of development, our country is in the midst of changes in various spheres of life, where one of the main priority directions is "the integration of Ukraine into the European political, economic, and legal space." Because the uniqueness of European values, born back in ancient times, is that over the millennia they have become characteristic of various peoples and have acquired the status of universal principles and norms of human life, society and the state. For millions of European people, these values are socially significant guidelines for life.

Our state defines its task in forming a system of European values, in the conditions of globalization and socio-cultural changes as well as changes in existing value systems. Respectively, integration into European structures can enable us to approach European values, and allow borrowing the experience of EU member states in terms of social and economic development increasing the welfare of our citizens to the European level.

European values were proclaimed as the goal towards which the aspirations of Ukrainian society should be directed. Acquiring full membership in the European Union is defined as the strategic course of our state by the Law of Ukraine "On the Basics of Internal and Foreign Policy" [12].

The process of implementation of European values has a positive tendency in our country. The need for their implementation finds unanimous support both among supporters and opponents of joining the EU.

5. Conclusions.

The state authorities are doing enough to approve in the national legislation of Ukraine the values of democracy, human rights and freedoms, the consistent process of strengthening national security and progressive economic development and ensuring the well-being of citizens. The matter is, the declared strategic European course must be supported by definite actions and measures. Value principles must become everyday political practice. The process of establishing European democratic values is capable of maximally contributing to the development of civil society in our country.

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