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The concept of “normative power” of the EU as a factor in the successful development of integration processes in the Black Sea region

Mykola POPOV*

Abstract

The provision underlying the reforms in the EaP countries, the concept of “normative power” was supposed to ensure their preparation for integration into the EU. But the limited results of the European integration policy in the Black Sea region indicate that the adopted strategy does not meet the conditions prevailing in the world and the capabilities of the EaP countries. The conflict of interests of the key forces, the unwillingness of the EaP countries governments to actively implement the reform policy led to review the integration policy in the region. The analysis of problems includes consideration of the concept of external management and its application in the EaP countries, the main theories designed to justify the existing EU policy in the Black Sea and the assessment of the EU integration policy through the prism of Ukrainian reforms. The results of the research made it possible to offer recommendations for changing EU policies. The possibility of applying the proposed approach is considered on the example of such a special case as the participation of Ukraine in the integration “Black Sea Synergy” initiative.

Keywords: normative power, European integration, reforms in EaP countries

Introduction

The successful development of integration processes in the Black Sea region depends on many factors, including reforms in the EaP countries based on EU norms. The basis for this is their commitment to implement the provisions of the Association Agreement with the EU. Unfortunately, the results of the reforms carried out in these countries indicate that the transition to the EU regulatory model is not always successful.

Assessing the current situation, two main reasons can be distinguished:

1. The absence in the EaP countries the institutional environment, that is necessary to start the reform process;

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2. The proposed concept of the EU regulatory model does not meet the realities that currently prevail in the region and the world.

A detailed analysis of these problems will not only establish the causes of their occurrence, but also suggest possible solutions. The traditional approach to the practice of reforming EaP countries has been the recognition of the EU as a “civilian force”, which is based on its economic potential (Manners, 2006a; Smith, 2005). The well-known definition of this approach in the form of the concept of “normative power” made it possible to justify the process of EU enlargement on the basis of the concept according to which the EU normative model can be extended to other countries. (Hyde-Price, 2006; Haukkala, 2008; Nye, 2004; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004).

But the evolving nature of the EU and ongoing discussions about its status and future lead to a regular change in ENP priorities and, as a result, the conditions and tasks of implementing the “normative force”. It can be argued that today there is no single, universal integration theory justifying the feasibility of cooperation between the EU and the partnership countries.

A possible alternative to such an integration theory is the concept of soft or hard “normative power”, which defines the practice of external management of reforms carried out in EaP countries. The “normative force” itself is no longer regarded as a purely political or economic factor of influence. It is assumed that it should be based on some ideas and opinions that will “form the concept of “normal” (Manners, 2006b; Manners, 2002).

But its use as an instrument of European politics in the Black Sea region is limited by the fact that countries involved do not recognize the EU as a source of any force. Therefore, the study of the theoretical justification of both the practice of reforming in the EaP countries and the justification on its basis of the priorities in the implementation of the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative is a task without which the further formation of “European identity” will be impossible.

The problem of effectively promoting European norms of democracy and law in countries that share a common border with the EU is the subject of numerous studies. Their significance and relevance, first of all, is determined by the task of implementing reforms in the sphere of public administration in the EaP countries, using the concept of “normative power” (Barbe and Johansson-Nogue, 2008; Haukkala, 2016).

The statement of this problem fully applies to the Black Sea region, which includes two countries, EU members (Romania and Bulgaria) and three countries, associated participants of the EaP program.

Recognizing that, despite all the efforts on the part of the EU, the region has not become a zone of stability and prosperity, it is necessary to answer the key question to what extent the concept of external management of ENP is in line with the trends in the Black Sea region. Indeed, the EaP

countries that signed the Association Agreement with the EU are under the increasing influence of such external factors as the conflict of interests of key forces, the need to ensure security and prevent conflicts, and increase the level of threat from Russia.

Methodology

Determining the research methodology presented in the article, the authors proposed an approach based on an empirical case study of the evolution of Ukrainian politics and institutions in the context of the development of the processes of “European regionalization” of the Black Sea region. As the main theoretical basis of the proposed research methodology, it is proposed to use the concept of “normative force”, which underlies the reforms carried out in the countries of the Black Sea region adjacent to the EU.

A feature of the Black Sea region is that it is a system, the processes in which depend on a number of factors, often not related to each other and not even having their own clear definition. To take them into account, the concept of “normative power” will be supplemented by the provisions of the relevant theories of regionalism. This will determine the general principles for the implementation of the «Black Sea Synergy» initiative for the medium term.

According to the proposed research methodology, ENP and the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative should be considered as independent components that affect the selected and dependent units of analysis or variables (assessment indicators) (OECD, 2017; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2002).

These indicators are data on the effectiveness of reforms carried out in Ukraine.

According to the above, as the main hypothesis of the study, it is proposed to consider the thesis that the further successful development of the integration process of Ukraine and other EaP countries will be possible provided that the existing practice of carrying out reforms changes, for each country its own model is created, taking into account its specifics, the level of economic development, national traditions and attitudes towards EU regulatory practice.

To confirm this hypothesis, the following research objectives are proposed:

- assessment of the compliance of the main provisions of the modern concept of neo-functionalism with the real EU practice of supporting the processes of European integration in the EaP countries;
- determining the possibility of developing the existing approach to the EU enlargement strategy based on the expansion of programs for structural reforms in the EaP countries and the policy of countering threats from Russia;
- determination of the prerequisites and justification of the relevance of the search for new concepts of EU regulatory policy based on the rejection of the uncontested approach to the implementation

of reforms proposed by the SIGMA project and the involvement of citizens, civil society organizations, and national experts.

To solve the tasks, the planned empirical case research is proposed to focus on key aspects of the process of forming the identity of the Black Sea region, the formation of the concept of external governance of the EU. The formation of the identity of the Black Sea region will be considered as a derivative of this concept.

For this, in substantiating the prepared conclusions and recommendations, qualitative and quantitative data will be used that characterize the processes of regional identity formation, interstate and economic cooperation, and security policy in the Black Sea region. Establishing a link between the ongoing reforms in the EaP countries and the development of the processes of “European regionalization” will determine the effectiveness of the European integration policy implemented in the region.

To substantiate the results obtained, the analysis of the data will be supplemented by the conclusions obtained as a result of the study of primary and secondary sources. The list of primary sources includes EU official documents, ENP, and the “Black Sea Synergy” initiatives, specialized journals, editorials, dissertations, statistical reports. As secondary sources, synthetic studies and reference works will be considered.

1. The model of external management and the practice of its application in relation to EaP countries

The “Black Sea Synergy” initiative is being implemented in 9 countries of the region. They have a different history and level of development of democratic institutions, economies, and attitudes towards EU regulatory practice. This situation significantly limits the possibility of determining a common approach to the development of cooperation that is common for all countries of the region.

Another limiting factor is a unified and generally accepted approach to the theoretical justification of regional European politics. This confirms the review of well-known publications, which are mainly devoted to the consideration of only some aspects of the ENP, such as:

- the dependence of the EU Enlargement Strategy on the conditions of the current foreign policy;
- application of the concept of institutionalism as a justification for the development of a supranational political initiative;
- an interstate approach in which success at the EU level does not necessarily mean success at the regional level;

- the possibility of external management, as a paradigm for the formation of regional identity of EU countries with EaP countries.

For solving the problem of development and increase the efficiency of the processes of “European regionalization” in the Black Sea region, an integrated approach is needed. To determine it, the study proposes to take as a basis the external management model, as a real-life system of interaction between the region and the EU.

Today, most European countries position themselves as social state that guarantees social guarantees (Wendt, 1999). According to this concept, it is proposed that the experience gained in resolving EU internal conflicts be used to solve problems related to the foreign policy of the community. The rationale for this practice is the concept of "normative power."

The practice of “normative power” was successfully used during the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007, until the conclusion of the Association Agreement between the EU, Ukraine, Georgia and R. Moldova. But the situation that has developed on the European continent by 2018 goes beyond the notion of “normal”. Active opposition to the integration process by Russia leads the EU to revise the traditional policy of expansion and the need to use other instruments. Two alternatives are being considered:

1. Continued development of the regulatory approach and diplomacy policy. Developing relations with the EaP countries, the EU continues to extend the universally accepted principles and norms to them. Thus, he attracts them to his side, while increasing his potential for the community and developing the process of formation of the European identity itself. Considering that the expansion policy may meet opposition, the regulatory approach, in this case, is proposed to be supplemented by measures providing the possibility of opposition to Russia.
2. The recognition of the insufficiency of the effectiveness of the policy of democracy made it possible to substantiate the proposal to replace it with economic instruments. It is believed that these restrictions in the economy can become a real tool in deterring external threats and aggression. For this, the instruments of economic pressure on the aggressor should be of such a level that can practically increase and ensure the security of the EU and the EaP countries. Only under such conditions will it be possible to maintain peace and ensure the dissemination of such basic European norms and values as the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, the rule of law and the effectiveness of law, pluralism, and democracy. Of course, the security of Europe should be a priority here, without which all these concepts lose their meaning.

Taking into account the specifics of the provisions of the EU Enlargement Strategy, the ENP, and the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative, the external management model should first of all have such quality as adaptability to changes in the external environment. The national characteristics of the countries and the current geopolitical situation determine not only the conditions of interdependence between the countries of the region but also the practice of extending the EU internal rules to the EaP countries.

By definition, external governance conditions define the institutional boundaries of EU norms, law and policies that are subject to distribution outside the EU. At the same time, external management takes upon itself the provision of reform policy in these countries based on the development of integration and regionalization processes. The possibility of EU membership is not considered.

“Less than the general government and more than cooperation”, external management from the institutional point of view and according to the concept of “normative power” is characterized by its horizontal character (Barbe and Johansson-Nogue, 2008). It focuses on the integration process itself. At the same time, the possibility of determining a result that a priori does not imply EU membership is based only on obligations that do not have legal status. Therefore, at the regional level, the idea of external management in the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative is limited and finds its representation only in the field of security, democratic development, environmental and energy policies. To supplement the argument for adopting the idea of external management is the opportunity for EaP countries to solve regional development problems using the political and material resources of the EU.

Taking into account the specifics of the Black Sea region, for the associated EaP countries, such external management options as hierarchical management, network external management mode and market mode can be defined (Baltag and Romanyshyn, 2011; Zygierewicz, 2018).

Hierarchical management is a formalized vertical relationship between power at all levels and the community. It is based on the mandatory implementation of the rules and regulations of supranational legislation, which in the EU is often associated with the traditional “community method”.

Formal procedures, clear rules, monitoring, and possible sanctions are considered as necessary prerequisites for the effective implementation of the strategy and the conditions of external incentives. Given its prescriptive quality, the hierarchical regime of external governance is sometimes associated with the concept of “normative power” of the EU. But the application of an external stimulation model without taking into account national specificities can lead to the fact that EU regulatory rules will “undermine the autonomy of third countries and their legislation”.

The main feature that distinguishes the network mode of external management from the hierarchical model is the formal equality of all countries, despite the asymmetry between the

authorities. An external management network is formed on the basis of a voluntary agreement when the decision process is carried out on the basis of coordination of normative acts. Thus, network management is more dynamic and adaptive to changes in the external environment than in the case of hierarchical management. An example of implementing the concept of a network mode of external management can be the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative.

In contrast to the previously described network coordination and hierarchical implementation, the market regime is based on competition between formally independent countries. Such competition can be seen as an institutionalized form of interaction in the implementation of European policies in various sectors.

Lavenex and Schimmelfennig see it as the third basic external management method (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009). It is based on the recognition of a single EU market for all countries. EaP countries should adopt and adapt its rules. In practice, regardless of the form of external governance used (or a combination of both), the EU’s ability to influence democratic changes in EaP countries in the Black Sea region depends on a number of factors that can obviously limit the effectiveness of such governance (Schneider, 2010).

First of all, this is the international context that is formed in the region in the process of interaction of the countries of the region with such external forces as the EU, NATO or, for example, the UN. The existing interdependence between the EU, EU members Bulgaria and Romania, and the associated EaP countries is also a resource contributing to the effective implementation of the ENP. At the same time, the Black Sea Synergy initiative proposed by the EU can confirm its effectiveness by interacting on competitive positions with other European and international programs, offering an integration option that has no alternative.

2. The policy and practice of implementing the ENP in the context of ensuring the security of the Black Sea region

2.1. Neofunctionalism as a theoretical platform for substantiating EU policies in the Black Sea

The proposal for reforming the sphere of public administration in accordance with EU norms and law must necessarily be based on the appropriate theoretical justification of the proposed management system and the concept of European integration.

Neofunctionalism should be considered the beginning of theoretical studies substantiating the practice of European expansion using the tools of the ENP (Jensen, 2010; Schmitter, 2005). Neofunctionalism, which considers the possibility of managing integration processes on the basis of

interstate political cooperation, is based on the priority of developing economic ties (Manners, 2002, 2008).

The effectiveness of this approach has been confirmed by the results of EU enlargement to the East of Europe in 2004 and 2007. The ENP and programs that prepared the countries of Eastern Europe for integration into the pan-European institutional sphere (Delcour, 2011; Ehrke, 2007; European Commission and High Representative, 2015). The use of the principles of general and coordinated management at the level of sectoral economic integration made it possible to optimize this process for each of the countries joining the EU.

The development of the theoretical principles of neo-functionalism, the generalization of the integration experience of 2004 and 2007 made it possible to extend the practice of EU enlargement and the implementation of the ENP to the EaP countries. The proposal to consider them as a “circle of friendly countries” is based on the signed Association Agreement with the EU, the implementation of which implies an obligation to introduce its jurisdiction and normative management model at the national level. The main motivating factor, in this case, is the economic factor, including the prospect of attracting European investment, access to the European market, the organization of new jobs and so on.

The preparation and signing of the Association Agreement with the EU and the Free Trade Area between the EU and Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine also confirmed the effectiveness of using the concept of neo-functionalism as an integration tool. At the same time, in the process of implementing the Association Agreement with the EU, a certain discrepancy was revealed between the main provisions of the concept of neo-functionalism and real practice in the EaP countries.

However, the implementation of the ENP based on the EaP program has encountered a number of contradictions related to the fact that:

1. According to the provisions of classical functionalism, it is established that the development of regional integration processes is possible subject to the adoption of a common system of economic and social policy management. But this will be possible only if international governing bodies are formed for participants in the integration process (Merton, 2006).
2. The ENP provides for the integration of Eastern European countries into the economic zone with the transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions. At the same time, the possibility of participation of representatives of these countries in the work of decision-making bodies at the EU level was not considered. This approach not only reduces the effectiveness of ongoing reforms. It leads to the fact that the proposed reform plan will not meet the needs of this state.
3. The level and dynamics of integration of the Eastern Partnership countries ultimately depend on the real desire of politicians and business to come closer to EU standards and norms, and

not the theoretical promises of neo-functionalism. The main factor determining the development of the integration process is the real attitude of politicians and businesses towards the adoption of EU standards and norms. Such a mismatch between the theoretical base of integration and the real policies of the EaP countries in the Black Sea region precludes the possibility of adopting a common action plan for all countries in the region.

4. An analysis of the integration processes in the Black Sea region allows us to identify several levels of their development: interaction with the EU, the level of national governments that provide reforms and assess the results of integration at the level of the population of the EaP countries. There are several levels of implementation of integration processes. At the same time, representatives of each of the levels differently evaluate their final significance and effectiveness:
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of the development of integration processes by the EU is primarily determined by the level of its presence and impact on the region. The situation in the Black Sea region does not allow us to assert that the EU policy is decisive.
 - National governments are limited in carrying out strategic reforms that reduce the standard of living of the population with the commitments they made during the election process. A possible motivation for reform policies and the adoption of external management is the possibility of economic integration in the EU. However, since economic integration will become possible only after the completion of reforms, their implementation, which may lead to stagnation of the economy, becomes a problem that does not have a clear solution.
 - For the population, the soundness of the integration policy is associated only with possible material benefits. Their absence in the EaP countries has led to the fact that the level of support for integration initiatives is at a very low level.

These factors necessitated the search for new theoretical concepts of European integration. A possible option was the revival of neoliberalism as a basic theoretical approach to new institutionalism, including in the field of foreign policy. The possibility of using this concept to substantiate EU policies in the Black Sea and the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative will be discussed below.

2.2. Integration processes as a factor of ensuring stability and security in the Black Sea region

Numerous problems arising in the process of EU enlargement in the Black Sea region lead to the opinion that a return to the concept of neorealism is necessary. Russia's aggressive behaviour

towards EaP countries also confirms the need for them to transfer some sovereign rights to EU jurisdiction in order to have great opportunities to confront external threats.

The signed Association Agreement with the EU and the Treaty on the Establishment of a Free Trade Zone, the subsequent unification of legislation provided the opportunity for the EU to cooperate with the EaP countries in the field of economy and foreign policy. After 2017, the defence component also began to be considered. But, despite the fact that the necessary institutional base has been created, events after 2014 have shown that the concept of neorealism itself is not capable of countering the threats emanating from Russia.

The annexation of Crimea, the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine, showed that the EU's policy did not correspond to the real situation in the Black Sea region. The first form of response from the EU was the use of the concept of "soft" power. Proponents of liberalism believed that the use of diplomacy, trade and technical assistance tools would be sufficient to solve the geopolitical problems of the Black Sea region and eastern Europe (Surguladze, 2015; Nye and Joseph, 1968; Hurrell, 1995).

However, the real events of 2014-2017 related to the aggression of Russia against Ukraine, its participation in the civil war in Syria showed that for modernization of the ENP, as a program that is positioned at the global level, following only non-functional principles will not be enough. The concept of "soft" power cannot be effective at the stage of transition from the world to military confrontation. Therefore, its alternative is the concept of "hard" power.

Complementing the policy of economic sanctions and pressure is the EU initiative to strengthen the European Security and Défense Policy. The possibility of maintaining the existing approach to the EU enlargement policy will ultimately be determined by Russia's actions in eastern Ukraine and the Black Sea region. Unfortunately, the situation in the region in 2018 and the conflict to limit shipping in the Sea of Azov lead to the need to return to the model of interstate relations based on material forces and the military factor.

As for the EaP countries, only the economic one can be the determining factor in the expansion policy. The use of such EU-traditional mechanisms as integration, prevention, mediation and persuasion has been shown to be effective. They can also be preserved in the transition to a policy of countering threats from Russia.

The EU's approach to regional integration of markets through the mutual recognition of norms and rules is an indispensable attribute of its foreign trade policy. Significant financial resources are allocated to EaP countries to solve problems and compensate for damage resulting from the transition to the EU market for the implementation of development assistance, technical assistance and structural reforms. This allows you to successfully solve various social, economic and political problems arising in the integration process.

Such assistance should provide a solution to possible internal conflicts, ensure the rule of law, the rule of law, civil administration and the protection of citizens, that is, eradicate the root causes of internal conflicts. By developing national civil society institutions, including public and non-governmental organizations, the EU ensures their constructive participation in resolving internal and external conflicts.

The traditions of adoption of regulatory characteristics by EU countries have a specific historical context (Manners, 2002; Manners, 2006b). Therefore, the condition for associates from Eastern countries to accept the concept of external management is mandatory to start a dialogue on integration. But as conflicts in 2013 in Moldova or a crisis of power in Ukraine in 2014 showed, the adoption of this condition without confirmation of economic preferences leads to a political crisis that forces them to return to Russia's sphere of interests. To this end, the EU should not only help resolve emerging internal conflicts but also ensure the protection of these countries from external threats.

2.2. Assessment of the EU integration policy through the prism of reforms in Ukraine

Events of recent years, such as the aggression of Russia and the annexation of Crimea, the military conflict in Syria and the migration crisis in Europe, the Brexit, led to the discussion at the level of individual politicians about the failure of the European integration project. An analysis of these events showed that existing theories, at best, only explain them. But the complexity of the problems that arise, often the incomprehensible interconnection of individual factors, does not allow us to propose a certain universal theory. This assertion is confirmed by the fact that European values and norms aspiring for universality encountered obstacles in the EaP countries that cannot be explained only from the point of view of theoretical analysis.

As a result, politicians in these countries began to form rejection of the ENP, the EaP program, and the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative. Criticism of the concept of external governance arising from the “normative power” of the EU has already gained the level of national discussion.

Assessing the current situation on the example of Ukraine, first of all, it should be noted that there is practically no alternative approach to reform, only that was proposed as part of the SIGMA project. Lack of understanding of the situation in the country, the requirement to carry out the planned reforms in the conditions of the economic crisis and war in the east of Ukraine, obviously had to lead to their failure. An additional factor that predetermined a decrease in the dynamics of integration processes was that the proposed strategy was limited by the level of government and state organizations. The population, as a consumer of the result of European integration, was excluded from the decision-making process.

But it should be noted that, despite the existing problems, the relevance of the reforms that are necessary for the country's integration into the EU, as a whole, finds support among the population.

The data obtained during a sociological study by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation together with the sociological department of the Razumkov Center (Ukraine) in 2019 in all regions of Ukraine indicate the following (Razumkov Center, 2019).

In June 2019, the vast majority of Ukrainians (60.5%) believed in the success of reforms in Ukraine: 16.5% were fully convinced of the success, 44% believed in the success of reforms, although there were some doubts. At the time of the study, 34% do not believe in the success of the reforms, and only 11% do not fully believe, and 23% still have a share of hope. This belief in the success of reforms appeared for the first time: in 2015, 30% believed in the success of reforms, 62% did not believe, in 2016 - 29% and 65%, respectively, in 2017 - 27% and 67%, in 2018 - 35% and 60 %

Moreover, the number of citizens who are ready to endure certain material difficulties for the success of the reforms has increased significantly: in 2018, 9% agreed to material problems, in 19%; willing to tolerate a certain time (no more than a year) - respectively, 24% and 40%. If in 2018, 62% were not ready to endure material difficulties for the sake of reforms, then in 2019 - 31%

Table 1. Assessing citizens about the government's possible responsibility for their future

| | May 2018 | June 2019 |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| The state should be fully responsible for providing everyone with everything necessary. | 44,1 | 28,9 |
| The state must ensure that people have the same "rules of the game" in life, and then the person himself is responsible for how she uses these chances | 45,1 | 60,7 |
| No answer | 10,8 | 10,4 |

Source: Razumkov Center (2019)

These data indicate that the majority of the population of Ukraine supports the European choice. But then, the logical question arises, why the reform program proposed by SIGMA is only partially implemented? A possible answer is to evaluate citizens' responsibility of the government for their future (see Table 1).

The conclusion from the data is obvious, citizens no longer believe in the ability of the government to solve their problems. But then the question arises which of the existing institutions is capable of ensuring success in carrying out the necessary reforms.

Unfortunately, the data obtained during a sociological study of the opinions of citizens of Ukraine indicate that there is no generally accepted opinion in society who can solve the problems of the state (see Table 2), (The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF), 2019)

But despite a negative assessment of citizens, most experts believe in the success of reforms in Ukraine. Here, the estimates of specialists are even more optimistic than the population of Ukraine. The list of the main reform engines in Ukraine was led by public organizations, EU countries, and international financial institutions. Of course, they cannot manage the reform process, but the possibility of their support is a rather important factor. However, they are immediately followed immediately by those institutions that are really responsible for reforms, the President, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the Government.

Table 2. Responsible for implementation of reforms

| | May 2018 | June 2019 | August 2019 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| The president | - | 61,5% | 65,6% |
| Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine | - | 45,8% | 43,4% |
| Government | - | 42,5% | 35,5% |
| Public organizations | 24,7% | 21,5% | 8,7% |
| Citizens of Ukraine | 24,9% | 23,9% | 17,4% |
| EU countries | 24,7% | 7,3% | 5,9% |
| Local public bodies | 10,7% | 16,9% | 12,0% |
| International Currency Fund, World Bank | 24,2% | 6,8% | 2,5% |
| Bureaucracy, officials | 3,0% | 0,9% | 0,4% |
| Prosecutor's Office, Courts, Police | 2,9% | 8,0% | 2,7% |

Source: The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF), 2019

Of particular note is such a limiting factor as the fact that, in the opinion of citizens and experts, the population is not involved in the implementation of reforms. Moreover, local public administration bodies are practically excluded from the reform policy.

Additional factors limiting the implementation of reforms are:

- insufficient level of qualification both in the government and in other power structures;
- the influence of the oligarchs on the decision-making process;
- discussions that indicate the absence of a common vision of society for its future;
- the growing influence of Russia.

The situation with the reforms in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, the political crisis in Europe or the revision of some EU norms in countries such as Hungary and Poland confirm the relevance of the search for new concepts of European integration. An additional argument to this may be insufficient results in the implementation of the EU integration policy and the initiatives proposed by the EaP countries in the Black Sea region.

A possible way out of this situation may be the proposal to present the EU regulatory policy not in power categories, but in terms of influence (Spaiser, 2018). The attractiveness of such a

proposal lies in the fact that its application will reduce the doctrinal approach to reform in the EaP countries and make them more flexible.

A change in the EU integration policy in the form of liberalization of requirements for the reform program should be complemented by a new approach to their implementation in the EaP countries. Authorities at all levels should determine for themselves the priorities of the reforms and form a common vision for their implementation, which will be proposed to civil society.

Discussion

An analysis of the well-known reviews of administrative theories suggests that the traditional assumptions of reforming in the EaP countries are regularly changing. In practice, any proposed theory is probabilistic, multidisciplinary, descriptive and multivariate, considering its ability to adapt as a prerequisite.

There are two main approaches to justifying the application of the concept of "normative force":

- try to develop a unified and universal theory;
- dwell on the development of individual theoretical models corresponding to the national specifics of the countries in which reforms are carried out.

In any case, the theory should first explain the cause of the problems and justify the proposed changes. The second condition is to determine the connection between the reforms of the state and public administration system and integration processes, including "European regionalization".

For this, proposed theory must go beyond the standard provisions of administrative management. In consideration, it is necessary to include the social structure of society, to take into account the dominant political forces that shape the country's policy. Particularly difficult for EaP countries is the solution to the problem of "European regionalization" due to the intercultural nature of the discipline.

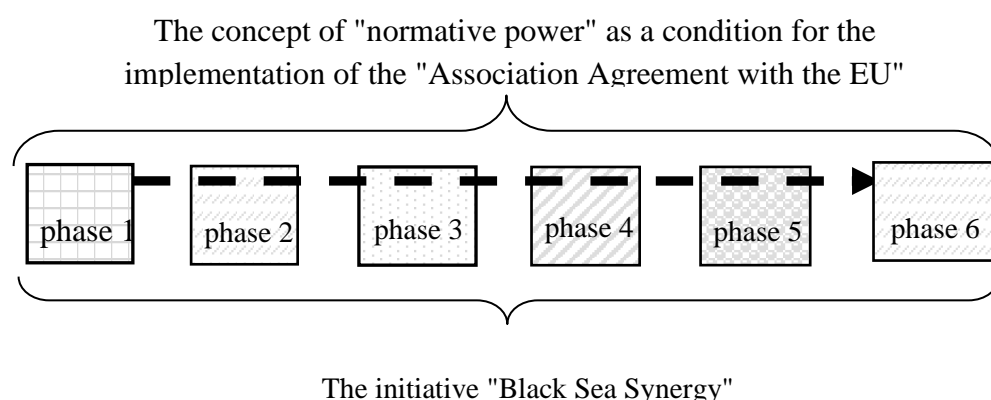
A more specific issue here may be the theoretical justification of the form of government that the countries of Eastern Europe will receive as a result of the reforms. Unfortunately, the reform methodology that is proposed, for example, to Ukraine by the main consultant of the SIGMA program does not include theoretical concepts.

A possible approach to solving the problem of theoretical justification of reform policy in the EaP countries, which determines the development of the processes of "European regionalization" in the Black Sea region, is the formation of a certain basic set of theories and models. This will allow taking into account the existing conditions for the development of the processes of "European

regionalization”: institutional, national, cultural and historical traditions. For this, when developing a reform program, it is also necessary to take into account qualitative and quantitative data characterizing the environment, principles of building the existing administrative system, traditions and culture of the local community. Moreover, the transition from mandatory effectiveness to adaptability should ensure the realism of the proposed theory.

Of course, the list of modern theories is far from limited to the presented review. Application of the proposed approach can be considered on the example of such a special case as participation in the integration “Black Sea Synergy” initiative. The following diagram presents the general structure of the algorithm for preparing the EaP country for participation in the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative, (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Algorithm for preparing the country for participation in the initiative “Black Sea Synergy” initiative



Source: Author’s representation

According to Figure 1:

Stage 1. Identification of the main problem of regionalization: to resume the policy, it is necessary to propose priorities that exclude the mistakes of previous actions to implement the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative.

Stage 2. Determining the reasons (external and internal factors) for which the objectives of ENP and the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative were not achieved.

Stage 3. Establishing a functional dependence of the effectiveness of the process of “european regionalization” based on the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative, from the direct influence and interaction of external factors (EU Enlargement Strategy, ENP, EaP program, desire for leadership and dominance of individual countries of the region) and domestic (dynamics of reforms in the sphere of PA in the country, national traditions).

Stage 4. Assessment of the relationship between the internal structural problems of the EU, as external factors of influence, and the effectiveness of the regionalization process based on the provisions of the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative.

Stage 5. Assessment of the relationship between the internal factors of the EaP countries (dynamics of reforms in the country, national traditions), which influenced the degree of their participation in the process of “European regionalization”.

Stage 6. Assessment of compliance with the conditions of effective external governance of the EaP countries of the practice of implementing the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative.

The proposed algorithm can be the basis for preparing recommendations for adjusting the main provisions of the ENP, implemented with the help of the EaP program and the “Black Sea Synergy” initiative, bringing its provisions and implementation practices in line with the realities prevailing in the region, Europe, and the world. At the same time, taking into account the obligation to solve the problem of ensuring the security of the region, which is the object of Russia's aggressive policy, will also help to increase the effectiveness of reforms carried out in the EaP countries, to develop European integration processes and to shape the region's identity.

Conclusions

The review of the possibility of applying the concept of “normative power” of the EU as a factor determining the further development of the processes of European integration, presented in the article, showed the need to adjust its existing provisions based on the situation in the EaP countries.

As an added value of the presented study, one should consider the confirmation of the initial hypothesis of the study that the development of the ENP is possible only on the basis of creating its own model for each country, taking into account its specificity, level of economic development, national and cultural traditions. This thesis is confirmed by the results of the analysis of data characterizing the attitude to the EU normative practice on the part of the institutions and citizens of Ukraine. Only if the doctrinal approach to reforms is abandoned and liberalized will it be possible, using the support of the majority of the population of Ukraine to make the European choice, to significantly increase the efficiency of European integration processes.

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